

Drivers at Bronx-based FreshDirect set to strike; Nova Scotia long term care workers moving toward strike

Workers Struggles: The Americas

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The *World Socialist Web Site* invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature
Latin America

Argentine workers protest new, anti-worker, legislation

On Thursday, February 5 thousands marched in the industrial city of Cordoba, in central Argentina, protesting a new labor reform law presented to the national legislature by the government of President Milei.

The demonstrators included steelworkers, auto workers and education and health workers, accompanied by students. The marchers rallied at several downtown intersections.

Workers denounced the new law for attacking the past gains of the working class to boost the profits of the financial oligarchy. Included in its provisions are attacks on bargaining rights, guaranteed health insurance and working hours, using the excuse of “modernization of work.” In combination with the abolition of legislation protecting the freedom of the press, the new legislation prevents workers from being informed of corporate and government attacks on their contracts.

One of the greatest concerns of the demonstrators is that the legislation allows the union apparatus to negotiate away the 8-hour day, allowing the working day to extend to 12 hours. Workers would be forced to work up to 12 hours, with no overtime pay with the extra hours being “banked.”

In addition, the new legislation limits compensation for laid off workers.

Buenos Aires police attack protesting retired workers

Retired workers were attacked by Buenos Aires police across from the National Legislature building on February 4 during their weekly protest at the National Legislature building—which has taken place every Wednesday since President Milei took power. The protesters are demanding that their pensions be raised to

compensate for inflation.

Among those arrested was Father Paco (a militant priest), who usually accompanies the protests, after being sprayed with tear gas. Also singled out for tear gas attacks were newspaper reporters covering the event. Four other demonstrators were also arrested including a disabled protester.

Hermosillo, Mexico telephone workers rally for 40-hour workweek

Scores of telephone workers rallied in protest in the city of Hermosillo on January 31 demanding a 40-hour workweek, the ending of contingent labor for maintenance and cleaning employees, and wage increases that will make it possible to rent “dignified housing.”

Also at the protest were retired telephone workers.

The workers demanded to be paid on schedule; an end to company attacks on pensions, updates in benefits, and the hiring of more telephone workers to make up for years of speed-ups due to 2000 unfilled jobs.

Some 50,000 telephone workers are employed by the privatized Telmex company, practically given away to Mexico’s richest oligarch Carlos Slim Helu during the pro-business government of Salinas de Gortari in 1990 after benefiting from years of government subsidies. According to the telephone workers union, beginning in 2009 Telmex systematically violated the rights of retirees.

Administrative workers strike El Colegio de Mexico University

On February 2, administrative university workers launched a strike against El Colegio de Mexico University in Mexico City. At issue are wages and working conditions. Originally, workers demanded an 11 percent raise plus 18 percent in benefits. Later, the union apparatus reduced the demand to 7.5 percent and 6 percent. The strikers are also demanding the hiring of 30 more

workers.

The workers voted down management's offer of a 4 percent raise, 2 percent in benefits and a bonus of 3,000 pesos as well as 100 pesos in food coupons.

However, management is refusing to negotiate, hoping to wear down the strikers. Instead, classes will be taught online beginning Monday.

Students are backing the strikers, insisting that their work is an essential part of education at this prestigious university, initially established by President Lazaro Cardenas in 1938, to host Spanish intellectuals and academicians who had fled the Franco regime during the Spanish Civil War.

United States

Faculty at New York University to vote on strike authorization as talks stall

Faculty at New York University (NYU) began voting February 9 on whether to strike, as negotiations over a new contract have stalled over issues such as salaries, benefits, job security, academic freedom, the use of AI and workloads. The 950 full-time professors and librarians at NYU's 12 facilities are represented by the Contract Faculty United (CFU), part of the United Auto Workers.

The professors, non-tenured, represent nearly half of NYU's full-time faculty. Among them are non-citizen professors and the CFU is pressing for contract language for NYU to protect and defend them.

The CFU is negotiating for their first contract since unionizing back in February of 2024. But 23 bargaining sessions have failed to produce a settlement. Last fall, university negotiators put forward the demand for the union to accept a mediator. The union has rejected mediation due to the fact when they propose compromises during negotiations, the administration does not.

Negotiations are tentatively scheduled to resume February 13. Voting on strike authorization will continue until February 20.

Drivers at Bronx-based FreshDirect set to strike

The 670 workers at food delivery company FreshDirect in the Bronx, New York, are girding for a strike over the company's plans to outsource work. The drivers, runners and loaders, represented by the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 2013, are opposed to management's demand to increase the number of deliveries performed by non-union contractors from the current level of 14 percent of deliveries to 40 percent in the first year of the company's contract proposal, 50 percent in year two, and 60 percent in year three.

Wilfredo Chapel, a union steward who has worked for FreshDirect for 15 years, told the *Bronx Times* there is "a lot of

tension" over the company's demands. "I thought I was secure in my job—until recently."

The old agreement expired at the end of 2025 and the union negotiated an extension until February 6. While negotiations are ongoing, the union predicts that the issue of outsourcing will lead to the elimination of hundreds of jobs and force the union to strike.

FreshDirect received \$100 million in subsidies from New York City in 2012 to move to the Bronx location rather than New Jersey.

Canada

Nova Scotia long term care workers moving toward strike

Workers at 36 continuing care facilities across the province of Nova Scotia have overwhelmingly voted for job action up to and including a strike to secure a new contract that addresses their demands for a significant wage increase. The voting began last autumn with results tabulated at over 95 percent on average with some facilities registering 98 percent affirmation for job action. About 14 facilities have yet to vote.

The long-term care and home support workers are members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and are demanding improvements to address the cost-of-living crisis, chronic understaffing and to bring their pay, often less than \$20/hour, in line with other Atlantic Canadian provinces. Beyond wages, workers are fighting for better retention, guaranteed hours, and safety against burnout, with some workers reporting they are forced to take on multiple jobs just to make ends meet.

Bargaining with the Conservative government of Premier Tim Houston continues to be a "slow walk" over a contract that expired some two years ago. However, a final conciliation meeting will take place on February 11. Should no tentative settlement be reached, the provincial labour conciliator will file a report and call back both parties after a 14-day "cooling off" period.

Despite all such collective bargaining hurdles placed in front of the continuing care workers, there is a growing groundswell for strike action to press their claims for a living wage.



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