



Class War in West Virginia

Education Workers Strike and Win!



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Education Workers Fighting Back in West Virginia!

By Otis Grotewohl, February 5, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180205OG

Teachers and school support staff are currently in motion in West Virginia. On Feb. 2, roughly 2,000 teachers and service employees from Mingo, Wyoming, Logan and Raleigh counties staged a walkout and took their message to the capitol. It was visually reminiscent of the Wisconsin public employee mass protests in 2011. In other counties teachers held walk-ins or informational pickets with additional school personnel, state employees and parents that day.

The American Federation of Teachers-West Virginia and West Virginia Education Association have been working with each other in a united front across the state in response to anti-union and anti-public education attacks coming from the far-right, Republican-dominated legislature.

All state and education workers are facing unaffordable increases in health care premiums and deductibles through the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA). State employees are represented by the Communication Workers and United Electrical Workers.

In addition to increases in PEIA, a bill was introduced to strip teachers of their seniority, which is the primary factor in determining reductions and transfers each year. Eliminating seniority would permit administrators to openly practice discrimination and favoritism.

For-profit charter school bills have also been introduced; at this time, charter schools do not exist in the state.

West Virginia Teachers rank 48th in the U.S. in pay. The billionaire governor did introduce a 1% increase for teachers, which the legislature passed. Most people feel that is a slap in the face, especially considering the potential increases in insurance costs starting July 1. Carlene Rhodes, a special education teacher at Westwood Middle School, told the Morgantown Metronews, “A one percent raise doesn’t even cover the cost of the healthcare.” (Morgantown Metronews, 2/3/18). It is common for many teachers to work second or third jobs to make ends meet.

Material conditions in West Virginia

Like all of the United States, West Virginia is a state that rests on stolen Indigenous land. It is a place that has been exploited by resource extraction

companies for centuries, where the politicians have always prioritized the needs of coal, timber, oil and gas bosses over the needs of the people that live and work there.

West Virginia is home to many historic class battles between coal miners and companies. Gov. Jim Justice is a coal baron himself and a personal friend of Trump. He was elected in 2016 as a Democrat but switched parties after last year's legislative session. He is also the proprietor of the Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, W. Va., where the GOP recently held its congressional retreat.

The state does not have collective bargaining. The arch-reactionary legislature passed "right-to-work" (for less) legislation in 2016, which negatively affects unions in the private sector. Education and state employees already worked under RTW conditions.

While West Virginia public workers have no collective bargaining, teachers did carry out an 11-day strike in 1990, which brought many gains, including decent pay. Once again, education workers are showing their strength. Union rallies are being held across the state and are expected to continue until the legislative session concludes on March 10. While union membership is optional, most workers belong.

As the people mobilize, legislators are introducing more archaic and barbaric bills against the working class and oppressed. There will be a statewide rally at the capitol in Charleston on February 17. Before or around that time there may be a statewide vote on whether to walk out.

The state has already made some concessions in relation to PEIA policy proposals, but there is still a long way to go. The solidarity among union members and between different unions is showing the strength of the rank-and-file. ♦



Teachers, staff, students and community rally Feb. 2 in Lewis County, W. Va., part of a wave of protests against right-wing attacks on unions and public education.

Statewide education strike looms in West Virginia

By Otis Grotewohl, February 20, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180220OG

Charleston, W.V. — Thousands of public, state and education employees rallied here at the state Capitol on Feb. 17 to protest plans by the billionaire, coal-baron governor and his right-wing-led legislature to increase out-of-pocket insurance costs and break the unions.

Members of the American Federation of Teachers-West Virginia, the West Virginia Education Association and the West Virginia School Service Personnel Association were joined by their sisters and brothers of the Service Employees, the Teamsters and the United Electrical Workers.

Speakers at the rally included state leaders as well as National Education Association Vice President Becky Pringle, who is African-American; American Federation of Teachers Executive Vice President Mary Cathryn Ricker; and Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall.

Kotanya Hart, a member of United Electrical Workers Local 170 and leader of “Race Matters in West Virginia,” told Workers World: “The state’s legislature is trying to divide us public employees by offering a small pay raise to some and nothing to others. They want to build a wall between us and we need to tear down that wall.”

At the end of the rally, the state presidents of the AFT-WV and WVEA announced a statewide walkout of all education employees on Feb. 22-23. The presidents announced that if nothing better is offered by the legislature before then, they are prepared to either stay out or continue other actions.

This is in defiance of the state’s prohibition of strikes carried out by public employees, as well as threats of a possible injunction from the reactionary state attorney general.

A statewide struggle has been looming since the 2018 legislative session started in mid-January. On Feb. 2, workers in four counties staged a defiant walkout and took their anger to the Capitol. (“Education Workers Fighting Back in West Virginia,” Workers World, Feb. 5.) In retaliation, that same day Senate Republicans introduced a Koch-brothers-sponsored bill to eliminate the deduction of union dues through the teachers’ payroll. The labor movement commonly refers to this elimination as “payroll deception.”

The following weekend Feb. 3-4, AFT-WV and WVEA state and local presidents administered an authorization vote taken by their members across

the state. The vote showed overwhelming support for an action. On Feb. 16, workers in six more counties — Cabell, Clay, Lincoln, Mason, Wayne and Brooke — staged another walkout and occupied the Capitol.

The Feb. 16 action was significant because Friday is the day legislators try to leave Charleston and get back to their hometowns. Workers know how much it irritates the reactionary legislators to face a Friday confrontation.

The Senate adjourned a little after noon, thinking the teachers and union members would leave, and reconvened at 6 p.m. But the workers stayed and the politicians were met with angry protesters who continued chanting.

What led to the struggle

In December 2017, the Public Employees Insurance Agency finance board, which covers all state and education employees, introduced proposals to drastically increase premiums and deductibles on health insurance. While West Virginia teachers are ranked 48th in the U.S. in pay, Gov. Jim Justice, already a billionaire, is the fifth-highest-paid governor in the U.S. (CNBC, Jan. 25)

Additionally, Justice is also the richest person in the state of West Virginia and owner of The Greenbrier, a luxury resort for many in the U.S. ruling class, which actually contains a survivalist-style bunker for the U.S. Congress.

When the governor introduced a menial 1 percent raise for teachers, it was viewed as a slap in the face. Since then, the House of Delegates introduced a petty 2 percent increase to be followed by a 1 percent increase three years later. This is also seen as a low blow that will not make education employees' salaries competitive with those in the rest of the country.

To add insult to injury, the legislature also introduced bills to strip teachers of their seniority and replace public schools with for-profit charter schools.

Momentum growing for statewide action

All across the state, education employees have been holding informational pickets both before and after school. Many pickets have been carried out in front of businesses, law offices and houses of the arch-reactionary legislators who are pushing the anti-union agenda.

Michael, a high school teacher in Morgantown, W.V., told Workers World: "Walkouts and walkins across the state have emboldened us. Talks of a strike



Thousands rallied at the West Virginia state Capitol Feb. 17, 2018. (WW Photo)

are now commonplace. More hopeful, though, is that they are discussed as a solution to our ills.”

West Virginia has no collective bargaining. Work stoppages are illegal here. That the public sector unions are solidified is significant; they are often pitted against one another by management and the state government under such “right to work” (for less) conditions.

The last time there was a major statewide teachers’ strike was 1990. There have been one-day walkouts and “blue flus” since that time. The mobilization happening now is advancing the class struggle. ♦

Defying anti-strike law

Workers shut down West Virginia schools!

By Otis Grotewohl, February 26, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180226OG

Charleston, W.Va., Feb. 26 — Tens of thousands of teachers and service personnel in West Virginia braved rainy weather and carried out what is the first successful statewide teachers’ strike there in U.S. labor history on Feb. 22 and 23. Education employees in all 55 counties forced superintendents of education to close schools on those days.

The strike continued throughout the state on Monday, Feb. 26, with thousands rallying at the state Capitol in Charleston, and reports indicate that a fourth day of the walkout will happen on Feb. 27.

This action followed a union rally on Feb. 17 and a directive from state leaders of the American Federation of Teachers-West Virginia, West Virginia Education Association and the West Virginia School Service Personnel Association. (“Statewide education strike looms in West Virginia,” *Workers World*, Feb. 20)

Striking educators and school support staff packed the hallways of the state Capitol in Charleston on Thursday and Friday, uniting on such chants as “Fired up, fed up!” and “What’s disgusting? Union busting!” Others set up picket lines at their schools throughout the whole state.

Both AFT National President Randi Weingarten and NEA Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss came to Charleston on Feb. 22 and walked picket lines throughout Kanawha County. The next day, state leaders of the three unions issued a joint statement at a press conference in Charleston where they

declared their members would continue to stay out on Monday, Feb. 26, since there was little movement by the Republican-led legislature.

In response to the educators' strong mobilization, state Attorney General Patrick Morrisey has publicly announced that a state injunction would be sent to union leaders. Strikes and work stoppages are illegal for education and state employees in West Virginia. This reveals the action as even more defiant when compared to other legal teacher strikes. Eyewitnesses reported to Workers World on Feb. 22: "Morrisey's staff placed a mounted, stuffed bear in front of his office to avoid the angry crowd."

What is at stake

West Virginia teachers rank 48th in pay in the U.S. Additionally, all public and state employees, including teachers and service personnel, are now facing out-of-pocket increased costs in health insurance coverage through the Public Employee Insurance Agency. Unfortunately for education and state workers, PEIA has not been fully funded since 2011, which has led to higher premiums and deductibles for recipients since that time.

As one 21-year veteran junior high teacher told Workers World, "I didn't become a teacher in this state for the money, but at one time, the insurance seemed like an incentive to stay here and teach." The state's legislature was majority Democrat in 2011, with Republicans taking control of the House and Senate in 2014. But state workers view both capitalist parties as being negligent when it comes to fixing PEIA.

The right-wing-led legislature introduced bills advocated by the billionaire Koch brothers, such as "a payroll deception bill," misnamed "payroll protection," which would stop union dues from being deducted from members' checks. The bill was introduced in deliberate retaliation for the first round of teacher walkouts on Feb. 2. The Koch Family Foundation funds a number of anti-worker initiatives throughout the U.S.

Another bill that has shaken people up would eliminate seniority rights, which would allow blatant discrimination and favoritism practices by the state. Seniority was won through previous historic union battles.

Since 2009, the West Virginia Legislature has been pushing for-profit charter schools. The education unions have been successful in defeating the charter school bills each year, but new charter school bills have



Charleston, West Virginia, Feb. 26. (WW photo)

reared their ugly heads in this session as well. On Feb. 22, the legislature took education off their agenda, which was a victory, since that delays moving forward on the anti-worker seniority bill and the charter school bill.

For the last several years, working-class and oppressed people in West Virginia have faced an onslaught of reactionary bills, from passage of the “right to work for less” bill in 2016 to racist voter ID laws to many anti-choice bills further restricting access to abortion.

At the beginning of the West Virginia legislative session in mid-January, a bill was introduced to require all schools to provide an elective course on the Bible. Fortunately, that bill is not currently moving ahead.

Racist governor and Big Oil

In addition to the reactionary legislature, the workers in motion are taking aim at the major oil and gas companies that have been fracking in the state for several years and stealing from citizens long before that.

Earlier this month, Lissa Lucas, a Democratic House of Delegates candidate, was physically removed from the Capitol building for the “crime” of listing the oil and gas companies that donate money to legislators. Lucas’ courageous action was in response to a bill, sponsored by Big Oil, that would allow companies to drill on landowners’ property without their consent. (Newsweek, Feb. 11)

While Lucas is a candidate for the capitalist Democratic Party, even she was not immune from being dragged out of the House chambers for voicing criticism of Big Oil and its puppet politicians.

Gov. Jim Justice is the richest person in West Virginia. He owns several non-union mines and has ties to Big Oil and Big Coal. Justice prides himself on being a personal friend of Trump and, like the bigot in chief, is not shy about openly expressing white supremacist views.

At a Town Hall meeting in early February, teachers raised the idea of increasing a severance tax on oil and gas to help pay for a salary increase for education workers. The racist billionaire governor responded by saying, “There’s not a Chinaman’s chance.” (wowktv.com, Feb. 6)

The banking industry is also ripping off the workers in West Virginia. Research from the state’s 2018 Executive Budget Report states: “The percentage of each citizen’s income allocated to payment of state debt to the banks and financial institutions is 2.8% or \$1,020 per citizen.”

Jerry Goldberg, an anti-foreclosure organizer with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition in Detroit and a veteran activist who has stood up to the banks throughout the country, commented to Workers World: “The debt owed by the average worker in West Virginia is much higher than that in most of the other states. Therefore, there are huge profits being made.” What is more concerning is the average salary in West Virginia is \$23,000, which is poverty

level. Meanwhile, the average teacher's salary is only \$44,701. (pbsnewshour, Feb. 23)

Struggle spills over to other sectors

Inspired by the militant fight waged by education workers, state and public employees staged a rally at the Capitol building in Charleston on Feb. 19, organized by United Electrical Workers Local 170. On Feb. 23, nurses and hospital workers in Welch conducted a walk-in. These workers also have PEIA coverage and receive low pay. Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania only 40 miles from the northern panhandle of West Virginia, also seems to be on the verge of a teachers' strike.

While education and state workers initially directed their anger at the racist, billionaire governor and the arch-reactionary legislature, they are now taking aim at Big Oil and the banks. It is becoming more clear by the day that capitalism has nothing to offer workers and oppressed people throughout the world. Only a socialist system can guarantee a society that provides basic necessities for human survival. ♦

Class war in West Virginia

School workers strike and win raise

By Martha Grevatt and Minnie Bruce Pratt, March 7, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180307MGMBP

UPDATE, MARCH 6: After nine consecutive work days out on strike, West Virginia's militant teachers and school staff faced down a right-wing governor and legislature to win a 5 percent pay raise, not just for themselves, but for all state workers. They had vowed to stay out until they won. The bill authorizing the raise passed the House and Senate and was signed by the governor this afternoon. Teachers and staff are likely to return to work March 7 but the possibility of renewed action remains, especially in relation to health insurance funding. To continue to follow workers' struggles in the state, including Frontier workers represented by CWA, still out on strike, go to FB: WWP West Virginia – Strike Support.

March 5 — In West Virginia, famous for pitched battles between union miners and the coal barons, class war is raging. This time it's teachers and all school employees on one side and right-wing capitalist politicians on the other. To quote the old labor song, "Which Side Are You On?" — "there are no neutrals."

Education workers were still out on the picket lines at the end of the day, continuing their historic statewide strike for better wages, as well as blocking health care takeaways and other union-busting attacks. West Virginia ranks 48th in the U.S. for teacher wages — teachers earn less in only two other states. Starting pay is around \$32,000 a year, and teachers with families must often apply for food assistance.

The strike in all 55 counties, which began Feb. 22, will continue indefinitely until the state Senate passes a bill granting state education workers a 5 percent raise.

On Feb. 28, the House approved the 5 percent pay raise, which billionaire Republican Gov. Jim Justice approved in talks with the three unions the day before. But on March 1, the right-wing Senate proposed taking away the pay raise and diverting it toward supposedly “fixing” the health insurance plan. The legislature must believe the workers will fall for this as if it’s a magic trick. This capitalist fakery only made the workers angrier.

Members of both the House and Senate are heavily influenced by the coal, oil and gas company owners of West Virginia.

For three days, including a Saturday when a special session was called, the Senate failed to pass the 5 percent raise. Then they tried to substitute a 4 percent raise under the cover of giving it to all state workers.

A joint statement from the striking unions explained why that was unacceptable: “You do not equalize pay for different groups by simply taking from one group and passing it to another. The purpose of this is clear — to divide us and to pit us against each other.”

The three unions are the American Federation of Teachers-West Virginia, the West Virginia Education Association and the West Virginia School Service Personnel Association.

A Senate clerical error actually endorsed the 5 percent increase briefly before pro-business senators rushed to erase the raise. One striker’s social media comment was that the legislators seemed to need a teacher to help them check their figures and their draft language.

The strikers’ impact was felt early when the governor approved, and the Republican-majority House passed, the pay hike. The governor had to back away from pushing bills that gutted seniority, promoted charter schools, prevented unions from deducting union dues from members’ paychecks, and would expand “Teach for America” — a program that hires new college graduates without teaching degrees at a lower rate of pay. These types of bills are part of a national anti-union campaign funded in part by the far-right billionaire Koch brothers.

The governor’s offer did not create a permanent fix for the Public Employees Insurance Agency, only proposing a temporary “freeze” on health care insurance premiums and a “task force” to find more funding sources. However,

the worst legislative changes to PEIA, mostly various excuses to raise premiums, are paused for the time being.

The strength of what is essentially a general strike of education workers was demonstrated March 2 when 45 county school superintendents told Republican legislators that schools would stay closed until the 5 percent increase passed. Now all 55 superintendents have taken that position.

Statewide wildcat strike

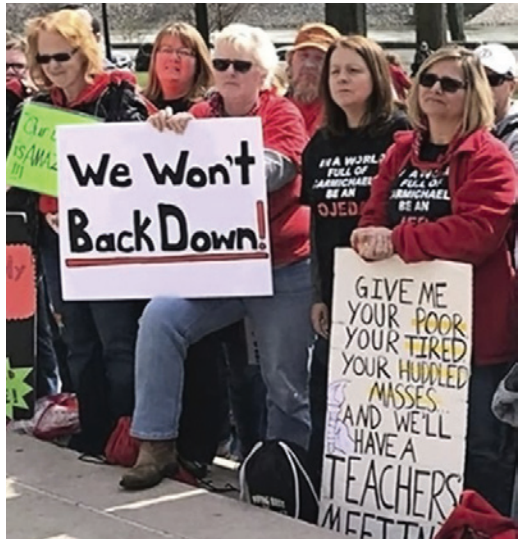
Strikers have rallied around the slogan #55Strong. The multinational, majority-women, rank and file set in motion and unsatisfied by the governor's proposal, felt strongly they deserved a bigger say in the deal's content. So on Wednesday, Feb. 28, workers continued to picket, with shouts of "We're not letting anybody cross this line!" Some who voted for Trump and Republicans in the last election now point to betrayal by the rich, shouting, "Make 'em pay in May!" when election primaries are held. (USA Today, March 1)

Under state law, public sector strikes are illegal, but West Virginia workers know labor history. The Battle of Blair Mountain in 1921 in Logan County was the largest labor uprising in U.S. history, with 10,000 armed coal miners confronting 3,000 police and strikebreakers. Throughout the 20th century the United Mine Workers was a mighty force, with wildcat strikes common, including thousands during the 1970s. Some strikers are wearing the red neckerchiefs that miners wore during the 1921 revolt.

On Thursday, March 1, the workers defiantly began their second week on strike. One union member told WW that most strikers want big businesses, especially Big Oil, taxed at a higher rate so the state can pay education workers better wages and benefits.

On March 2, 3 and 5, militant rallies drew thousands to the state capital, Charleston. On March 2, hundreds of students marched to support their teachers, holding signs and chanting, "Teachers stand for us, we stand for teachers." They have joined teachers in occupying the Capitol building interior for multiple days.

Mond Jones, a Workers World Party organizer for the Defeat Austerity conference in Detroit on March 24, described his day in West Virginia:



WW photo.

“On the morning of March 5 we had breakfast just inside West Virginia. The teachers at nearby tables had on strike T-shirts. They said it’s easier to organize a strike now with social media. At the Capitol there were about 10,000 people — 4,000 occupying inside and 6,000 outside. They were mostly women, all very militant. Our literature was well-received. All the unions had a strong presence, along with the Retired Teachers Association.”

Jerry Goldberg, of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition in Detroit, told the rallying strikers: “We are with you 100 percent.”

This historic struggle is not just between pro-union workers and anti-union politicians. It’s labor vs. capital. All West Virginia workers face dangers to their health and livelihoods from the predations of Big Oil and Big Banking. The state’s 2018 Executive Budget Report states: “The percentage of each citizen’s income allocated to payment of state debt to the banks and financial institutions is 2.8 percent or \$1,020 per citizen.”

Fighting for the union

Unions benefit everyone. Their structure offers combat assistance, resources and organizational communication. Unions enable members to connect and build militancy from the ground up.

While worker anger has been widespread at top union leaders, who appeared ready to end the strike prematurely, strikers are reacting positively to the unions’ official announcement that the walkout would continue until the 5 percent raise becomes law. They fought to have unions and they are fighting to make them fight.

Teacher and union activist Phil, demonstrating at the Capitol building on March 1, told WW: “There’s been lots of anti-union talk from ultra-left and conservatives. Folks need to fight within their unions, to make them more progressive and class conscious. We need to radicalize and transform unions from within at the local level.

“Some believe the association leaders are negotiating directly with the governor. It’s really the legislators striking the deals and selling out the workers. These politicians have the interests of energy companies and private capital.

“The struggle of education workers and teachers is a class struggle for social justice, a social struggle against racism and capitalism and against austerity. We hope to build the idea of class consciousness through the participation of local unions. When people drop out of unions, we don’t build class consciousness. Hopefully, after this struggle, people will continue to participate and strengthen and radicalize their unions.”

Despite failings in upper-level leadership, the union is not the enemy. The enemy is the billionaire capitalist class!

Solidarity multiplies

Tremendous solidarity has come from other unions: Teamsters, Mine Workers, Communication Workers and even unions in other countries.

The Southern Workers Assembly issued a solidarity message: “In the days as we await the Supreme Court decision on the Janus case, which would effectively make public sector workers in all states right-to-work, we are reminded that even workers in the RTW states, concentrated in the U.S. South, can build their unions, fightback and win. The type of mass rank-n-file action displayed by WV educators is an example for us all to follow.”

More solidarity messages have flowed in, including from the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751; Harvard TPS Coalition, a group of union cooks, custodians and clerical workers at Harvard University supporting immigrant workers losing temporary protective status; and New York-based Parents for Improved School Transportation.

The West Virginia example is already being followed. About 1,400 members of the Communication Workers in West Virginia and Ashburn, Va., walked out March 4 at midnight and are striking Frontier Communications. Many of them were learning about strikes by picketing alongside teachers. They are fighting for job security as Frontier has eliminated 500 jobs since acquiring Verizon landlines in 2010.

The world is watching the class war in West Virginia. Power to the rank-and-file union members directing their burning anger against the viciousness of the capitalist system! ♦

Otis Grotewohl contributed to this article.

West Virginia education workers, teaching how to fight

Editorial, March 5, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180305ED

When people familiar with U.S. labor history hear about a strike in West Virginia, what is their first thought? It’s about armed miners battling mercenaries, about open class warfare, about the Matewan Massacre in 1920 and the Battle of Blair Mountain in 1921. They think about how physically courageous the miners were. They think about how the women and men in miners’ families picked up arms. They remember how important it was to

build unity in struggle among African-American miners, Italian-immigrant miners and others who had been born in the region.

It was vital for each section of workers to have leadership in the union. It was vital for the leadership to reflect the militancy of the union rank and file. Or to step aside.

Only by battles to the end could unions grow and strikes win a living wage for the miners and other union workers of mountainous West Virginia.

Fast forward 97 years since the Battle of Blair Mountain. There have been ups and some very big downs for union workers in the United States, including West Virginia. That state is now the site of another historic confrontation.

It involves not just miners — whose work force has shrunk due to changes in technology like “mountaintop removal” — but education workers. Many of these teachers and other school staff, mostly women, are children and grandchildren of the miners who built the United Mine Workers union. They learned early in life that unity and militancy were needed in any strike. That only by fighting and fighting could they win.

Teachers’ pay in West Virginia is 22 percent lower than the national average. They have inadequate medical coverage — and even that is under attack. Like all teachers, they have been the target of the bosses’ lies, blamed for all the failures of an underfunded school system and the crisis of the economic system.

They have little to lose, many say. They know they need unity to win and the support of their students and communities. They have made sure to provide food for their students, a majority of whom depend on school breakfasts and lunches. When the leaders of their unions agreed to a deal they found wanting, they rejected it and have tenaciously continued the strike.

As of Monday, March 5, they have built unity among themselves. They carry placards citing the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. They have shown the courage to confront the repressive state apparatus — headed by a right-wing billionaire governor named Jim Justice who dishes out injustice. They are facing down the oil and gas bosses and their legislative lackeys in the state’s House and Senate.

The workers are facing down anyone trying to sell them a bad contract. They are setting an example for workers around the country, who are inspired to see the West Virginia struggle unfold.

In nearby Pittsburgh, the threat of a teachers’ strike brought an immediate better offer. In West Virginia and Virginia, Communications Workers members at Frontier Communications are beginning a strike with many of the same issues as the teachers and other education workers. Oklahoma teachers are organizing to strike.

The bosses fear that the West Virginia mood might “go viral.” Yes! Bring it on!

What those on strike need is the active solidarity of all other unions and workers around the country. Speak up and express your solidarity with and admiration for their struggle. Ask them what they need — people, funds, local actions — and come through.

The outcome of this struggle in West Virginia is vital to building the strength of workers and the labor movement throughout the country. ♦



State Capitol building,
Charleston, W.Va., March 2.

From a teacher to West Virginia educators: An open letter

By a guest author, March 5, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180305G

Dear education workers of West Virginia,

Your militancy is phenomenal. Your courage to stand up and fight back is inspiring. Your bravery is powerful. Your 55-county-strong strike is historic. You are what we all need.

You have stood in defiance of billionaire Gov. Jim Justice and the anti-worker West Virginia Legislature in order to fight for decent family-supporting wages, for access to affordable health care and in defense of your union rights. You have inspired by showing us a militant strike led overwhelmingly by women.

You have shown that this strike is not just a fight for educators. This is a fight for students, communities and all workers to have these same basic rights.

I am a social studies teacher in a neighborhood high school in Philadelphia, and your action has caught the attention of me and my co-workers. While we have collective bargaining for public employees (a right won through a strike similar to yours), we still went over four years without a contract, losing hundreds of millions of dollars in wages. While we are not “Right-to-Starve,”

we have lost 30 schools to closure and over 60,000 students to privatized charters, as well as over 6,000 union members in the past few years. Your struggle is ours.

We know that we, as teachers and education workers, are the most unionized sector of the economy. While the Supreme Court threatens to destroy our organizations, encouraging the decline of unions to lower our wages and benefits, they will not stop us from struggling for our rights.

While your strike was not “legal,” you have shown that legality is nothing compared to people’s power.

Every day, we teachers have a tremendous responsibility to our students and our communities. Every day that you are on strike you are showing you take this responsibility seriously. West Virginia educators have shown that you are ready to take the responsibility to fight for our entire class and to galvanize us in the first major workers’ struggle since the last election.

Let this be a lesson for workers across the U.S. to “Strike for our rights!”

We hope your struggle to win better pay and benefits, along with building your union, connects with teachers in Oklahoma, who are planning to strike for the same reasons. We hope you connect with educators in Detroit fighting to defeat austerity attacks and with educators in Puerto Rico, where U.S. banks set up financial dictators to try to close 300 schools and bring in charters to bust unions, using Hurricane María as a battering ram of austerity. We hope you connect with the movement that rose up after the death of cafeteria worker Philando Castile, a Black school worker and union member killed by Minnesota police.

Solidarity wins! Let’s continue to build solidarity with our students’ lives who are under attack and with our communities facing crisis after crisis. This means fighting racism, fighting violence against women and LGBTQ people, fighting for health care for all and more, in order to unite all people in a struggle for dignity, respect and equality.

In honor of the Battle of Blair Mountain and the many militant workers’ strikes in the history of West Virginia, let’s continue to build solidarity and union power!

Solidarity Forever!

Scott Michael

American Federation of Teachers Local 3,
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers.



Lessons of the West Virginia strike

By Otis Grotewohl, March 13, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180313OG

Charleston, W.Va. — West Virginia teachers and school service workers triumphed in a major victory on March 6. After striking for nine working days, 20,000 teachers and 13,000 school service employees wrung substantial concessions out of a right-wing billionaire governor and reactionary state legislature. The strike began on Feb. 22.

Their win included a 5 percent, single-year wage increase, not just for themselves, but for all state employees. Potentially. West Virginia teachers rank 48th in the U.S. in wages — just two steps above rock bottom.

Education worker militancy also succeeded in forcing Gov. Jim Justice to pull anti-education, anti-worker bills from the legislative agenda. These included a charter schools bill, a “payroll deception” bill (stopping deductions for union dues) and a bill to eliminate seniority protection for teachers.

The education workers were also fighting for lower health insurance premiums and proper funding of the state Public Education Insurance Agency. This issue remains unresolved.

The strike won creation of a taskforce to study how to adequately fund PEIA to reduce worker payments. But of 23 appointees the governor recently announced, only five represent the workers’ interests, including the heads of the striking unions: the American Federation of Teachers-West Virginia, the West Virginia Education Association and the West Virginia School Service Personnel Association.

The preponderance of the taskforce are CEOs of insurance companies, heads of hospital conglomerates and West Virginia legislators who fought tooth and nail against the workers’ demands. There is even a representative of the state police, historically used as deadly strikebreakers in the state, the same as police are used everywhere.



Teachers on the picket line in Beckley, W.Va., Feb. 27 (WW photo)

The anti-worker composition of the taskforce makes it highly likely that workers may once again have to mobilize and act to get their basic demands met.

Breakthrough tactics

In West Virginia, all teacher wages and working conditions are determined by the state legislature. The teachers and school service personnel were striking against the state, not a corporate boss. Though represented by their unions, the workers had no right to strike under state law, so their strike was “illegal.”

This was not a conventional strike where the union’s collective bargaining agreement expired and the boss refuses to bargain. The education workers had no options: no contract and no bargaining rights. And their situation was worsening.

So the West Virginia rank-and-file members escalated their tactics beyond lobbying and rallies to direct action. They took class struggle to a higher level. Perhaps they had learned a lesson from the 2011 struggle in Wisconsin. There, under assault from a right-wing austerity governor, a mass uprising of workers and community actually occupied the Capitol building for a month.

But the majority of labor leaders in Wisconsin, working with the Democratic Party, told union members to abandon the occupation and take no other forms of direct action, such as a statewide strike. Subsequently, right-wing, anti-worker, anti-oppressed, anti-community, Big Boss initiatives were passed and rolled over workers in Wisconsin.

Rank-and-file leadership

The biggest lesson of the West Virginia struggle was that the rank and file led the strike. Workers saw the power they truly have — and this was recognized by and had an impact on the union leadership.

Even before a formal strike authorization vote, roughly 2,000 teachers and service employees from Mingo, Wyoming, Logan and Raleigh counties walked out on Feb. 2 and took their demands to Charleston, the state capital. Significantly, the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain, the militant union struggle of 10,000 workers against Big Coal bosses and state police, took place in Logan County.

Rank-and-file strike leadership was primarily in the hands of women. Their effectiveness in building solidarity was such that when the three unions walked out on Feb. 22, all 55 counties went on strike simultaneously. Historically, women have been the backbone of West Virginia strikes — as strikers, strategists and the support that sustains strikes.

When the governor proposed a “deal” to end the strike and the union leadership urged workers to accept what seemed to be a premature

compromise, the rank-and-file leadership remained militantly steadfast in continuing the strike.

Dave Sole, a former president of United Auto Workers Local 2334 in Detroit, was in Charleston March 5 as part of a Workers World Party-Detroit delegation to support the strikers. He reflected on the seeds of the workers' militancy for Workers World:

"The West Virginia strike was distinguished by the unity between the [teachers of] NEA [the National Education Association], the AFT [the American Federation of Teachers] and the school support staff union. Talking to many staff and teachers at the March 5 rally in Charleston, it was clear that almost every striker had connections to the mineworkers in their family or neighbors and friends, whose history of struggle still permeates the state. When national leaders thought they could get the workers back on the job with some backroom promises, the workers refused and the union leaders had to rush to get back in front of the strike. Teachers we spoke to revealed that the rank and file were able to organize from below using their smartphones, combining old West Virginia traditions with the modern age."

West Virginia's education worker militancy is spreading to other states.

Oklahoma teachers have commented on social media: "If West Virginia can do it, so can we!" That state's pay for teachers is the lowest in the U.S. The Oklahoma Education Association is initiating "Together We Are Stronger" community meetings in every county to prepare for an April 2 strike. ([tinyurl.com/y77ns598](https://www.tinyurl.com/y77ns598)) The Oklahoma Public Employees Association, representing all workers employed by the state, voted on March 10 to join the action.

In Kentucky, right-wing politicians are plotting to steal 33 percent of retired teachers' pensions. Opposition is mounting, with teacher and student walkouts, "walk-ins" and rallies. ([tinyurl.com/y8vuughj](https://www.tinyurl.com/y8vuughj))

Building solidarity

Before the strike, there had been some stress and tension between teachers and school service workers. But solidarity was constantly increased through the process



Students on picket line for striking teachers, Bluefield, W.Va., Feb. 26. (WW photo)

of on-the-ground struggle, the conversations on the picket line, mass rallies in Charleston and the #55United digital-age communication.

Education workers were quite clear that they were striking for all state workers. WW talked to one high school teacher who said: “We want to get 5 percent. And we want all the state employees to get the same. They can’t strike and we can. We are striking for them, too.”

The teacher explained that workers employed directly by the state of West Virginia are subject to no-strike restrictions. But teachers, who are employed by counties, have more due process if fired.

When the strike ended on March 6, the education workers were proud they had fought for and won a 5 percent raise for all state employees. They clearly expect all state workers to receive the raise.

The workers also built solidarity with other unions and community groups. In parallel to the school workers’ strike, about 1,400 Frontier workers, organized by the Communication Workers in West Virginia and Ashburn, Va., went out on March 4. When WWP organizers visited school picket lines across the state on March 6, and school workers were getting news of a likely win, they immediately began packing up extra food and supplies to take directly to CWA picket lines in their county. When the Roanoke Peoples’ Power Network contingent from Virginia arrived at the Capitol with their banner “Class Struggle in Session,” they raised cheers from the strikers.

Widespread solidarity among students, community members, striking teachers and school workers was evident everywhere in the state. Students organized a separate march and rally in Charleston on March 2 to support their teachers. The teachers, well aware that many students would go hungry without school meals, put together comprehensive plans to feed their students when schools were closed. Teachers made sandwiches, packed meals, worked with churches and other community groups to get food delivered. They made it clear they were not “abandoning” students, as right-wingers accused.

Role of a communist party

In the 2016 election, every single one of West Virginia’s 55 counties voted for Republican billionaire Trump, with his false promises to “save” workers and his solidarity-wrecking racist slurs. Trump got 70 percent of the state vote.

Workers overturned that vote with the 2018 West Virginia strike. Education workers united as a multinational force and came out for their own class interests in every one of the 55 counties

Faced with the grim reality of their struggle for livable wages against the legislative dominance of Big Oil and Big Banks, the education workers rose up independently of existing political parties and took action for themselves and for all workers. This unity was forged despite the atomization of workers in the past decade, despite differences and contradictions between workers,

despite anti-worker, racist propaganda spewed by the capitalist class.

When workers rise up in this way, the duty of a communist party is to support the workers in their struggle. We know that no matter how hard the contradictions, it is possible for workers to face them, unite through solidarity, rise up and forge new strengths to move forward. That is the potential for growth in the living struggle.

Workers World Party was committed to that support during the West Virginia strike and had a presence there from the beginning. A WWP organizer on the ground visited workers on picket lines throughout the state, handing out informational leaflets, literature and this newspaper. One banner raised by WWP comrades was “Money for People’s Needs, Make the Banks and Oil Companies Pay.” That sentiment was strongly echoed by education workers who want Big Oil taxed at higher rates to pay for their underfunded health insurance agency.

The delegation from Workers World Party-Detroit passed out thousands of union statements and resolutions on March 5 in support of the strikers, including those from the Southern Workers Assembly and the United Steelworkers Local 8751, Boston School Bus Drivers.

Workers eagerly took hundreds of WW newspapers featuring the front-page headline “Defying anti-strike law, Workers shut down West Virginia schools” and photos of the strike.

From banners, headlines, photos — even without reading the text — workers knew immediately: “WWP supports you.” The party offered support to resist the capitalist ruling class and political parties, to resist racism and other bigotries, and to move forward in an anti-capitalist, internationalist, socialist direction.

WWP-Detroit organizer Jerry Goldberg spoke on the steps of the state Capitol on the racist predatory bank foreclosures in Detroit, the attacks on pensions, the school privatizations. He invited strikers to the National Conference to Defeat Austerity in Detroit on March 24: “We understand the attacks waged on all of us by the banks and the corporations. We stand with you. We have confidence in your victory. You are



Mond Sankara and David Sole, from a WWP-Detroit delegation, join CWA picket line at Frontier in Charleston, W.Va., March 5. (WW photo)

inspiring people all over the country. The struggle is spreading. Solidarity!”
(Complete statement at tinyurl.com/ybl782dp.)

Militancy sparks militancy

The West Virginia strike has many lessons about the connections that must be made between the broadest workers’ struggles and the fierce struggles by oppressed peoples against injustice — the fight against racism, immigrant bashing, hatred of LGBTQ people and women, and discrimination against people with disabilities.

At the Capitol rallies, thousands of multinational people, though majority white women, chanted: “I believe that we will win!” — a chant that rings out during Fight For \$15 and Black Lives Matter marches. Never has it been more important for workers to fully live the old slogan: “An injury to one is an injury to all” and join with all workers across bigoted divisions the bosses impose.

Cecil Roberts, president of the United Mine Workers and famous for his legendary role in the 1989-90 Pittston strike, rallied strikers to militancy on Feb. 26. He emphasized the civil disobedience tactics of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “We need to fight like Dr. King. I call on every union member in the state of West Virginia to stand with these workers. Workers who stand united will never be defeated.” ♦

Martha Grevatt also contributed to this article.

Is a ‘Defiant Workers’ Spring’ coming?

By Otis Grotewohl, March 20, 2018

WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180320OG

The class war is still stirring in West Virginia since the conclusion of the courageous, 9-day education workers’ strike. Some 1,400 members of Communication Workers Local 142 walked out statewide against Frontier Communications on March 4. They were joined by their sisters and brothers in Ashburn, Va.

Members of Workers World Party visited CWA picket lines while also showing solidarity with the teachers and school support staff waging battle against capitalist government officials.

One CWA striker told Workers World, “This fight was a long time coming, but there is no denying the school workers inspired us. We have been trying

to negotiate a decent contract since August, but we have had two extensions and the company wants to lay off 200 workers.”

Pickers pointed out that when Frontier bought out Verizon in 2010, there were 2,100 positions; today there are only 1,400 employees. The strikers described automation and the contracting out to non-union work as the reason for job losses.



CWA Frontier strikers in Charleston (WW photo)

Frontier uses modern day ‘gun thugs’

Frontier bosses filed for an injunction against the strike on March 15. A Kanawha County Circuit Court Judge approved a temporary restraining order limiting picket lines to six strikers on March 16. The bosses have falsely charged the strikers with “unlawful unrest” and “abuse.”

But it is the company that is being violently abusive toward the picketers.

Frontier is contracting a scab outfit known as “Mercury Z” to despicably cross the picket lines and do installation and repair work during the strike. One scab pulled a gun on a picket line in Flatwoods.

If that is not shameful enough, the company has actually hired Securitas and Pinkerton Consulting & Investigations as armed rent-a-cops to escort the scabs. The Pinkerton agency has a bloody history of being murderous paramilitary guards used against heroic workers’ struggles since 1859.

Historically referred to as “gun thugs” and “goon squads,” Pinkerton agents were most famous for their violent behavior during the 1892 Homestead Strike. They were also used against many railroad and coal miner strikes. They have a reputation of harassment and intimidation, even infiltrating unions to disrupt and destroy organizing campaigns.

Despite the company’s use of the courts and Pinkerton thugs, the CWA strikers are standing strong in West Virginia, where the education workers’ strike also encouraged teachers to strike in Jersey City, N.J. Education employees may soon strike in Oklahoma, Kentucky and Arizona. It’s starting to look like a defiant workers’ spring! ♦

Battle of Blair Mountain still rings true

'Solidarity Forever'

By John Steffin, March 7, 2018

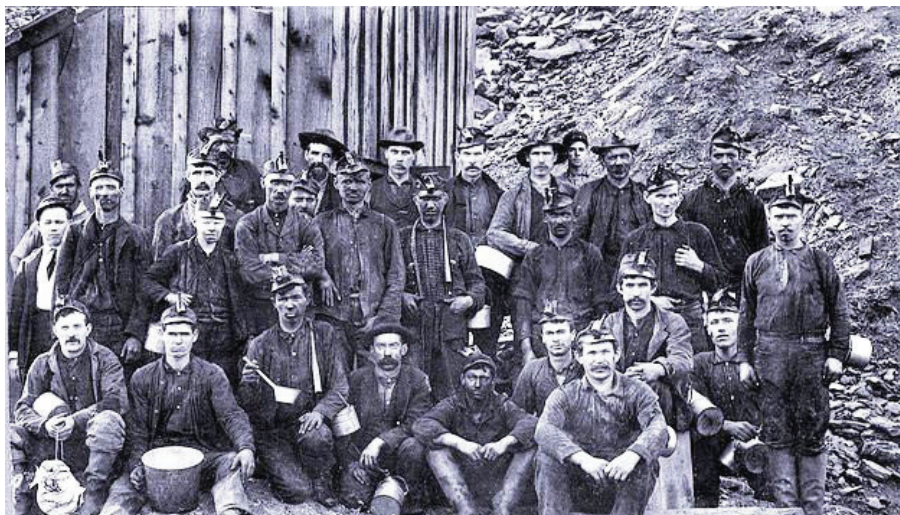
WWW.TINYURL.COM/WW180307JS

Veterans of the Battle of Blair Mountain, W.Va., fought against federal troops by Black, Irish, Italian immigrant and Appalachian-region workers in 1921.

The role of West Virginia's education workers who are reviving a militant spirit in U.S. labor should come as no surprise to those who know this mountainous state's labor history. West Virginia is, after all, the land that gave us "Solidarity Forever," one of the most famous union anthems.

Wobbly (Industrial Workers of the World) organizer Ralph Chaplin wrote the song after a bloody campaign in 1913 to improve the working conditions of coal miners in Kanawha County, W.Va. The criminal coal companies turned to violence to break the strike, firing on the workers with machine guns and high-powered rifles. But the workers persevered, and after a year of striking — and tragic bloodshed — the coal miners won a favorable contract.

It was this heroic solidarity that inspired Chaplin to write the lines, "When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run / there can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun."



Veterans of the Battle of Blair Mountain, W.Va., fought against federal troops by Black, Irish, Italian immigrant and Appalachian-region workers in 1921. **WITH JS 3/7**

During the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain, West Virginia miners showed the meaning of Chaplin's lyrics. In addition to braving the dangerous conditions in the mines, the workers were fed up by the violent harassment of the "gun thugs" hired by the coal companies to silence any labor unrest.

Arming themselves in self-defense, a multinational formation of over 10,000 Black and white coal miners — some of them first generation Italian and Irish immigrants — marched through southwestern West Virginia to liberate the coalfields from the owners. The state responded by sending in federal troops, which turned the miners' righteous struggle for union rights into the bloodiest episode of class warfare in U.S. history.

It was during the Battle of Blair Mountain that the miners wore iconic red bandanas, leading to the term "redneck." Since then, workers in West Virginia — from the striking miners of the 1960s and 1970s to the education workers demanding what's rightfully theirs at the Capitol in the early days of March — have worn the red bandana in remembrance of past struggles.

It is a history all workers can benefit from and be proud of. It has already impelled the bravery and solidarity of the mostly women education workers on strike in the state's 55 counties, sending an inspiring message to union workers everywhere. Some, like the teachers in Oklahoma, have voted to take action.

Support the workers' right to strike! Livable wages and affordable health care now! Solidarity forever! ♦

— SOLIDARITY STATEMENTS —

Harvard TPS Coalition Solidarity Statement

March 4, 2018

The Harvard TPS Coalition, a group of union cooks, custodians and clerical workers from Harvard University, send our solidarity to the brave striking teachers of West Virginia.

You are inspiring the world. In 2016, Harvard's UNITE HERE Local 26 dining hall workers went on strike to save their healthcare, and today its union members with their siblings from SEIU 32BJ and AFSCME Local 3650 at Harvard are struggling to protect all immigrants because after the strike victory, nothing seems impossible.

The same powers that want to destroy our unions want to deport millions of immigrants with Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, but this has just united us. We learned no tolerance for discrimination in our strike, because An Injury to One is an Injury to All. We are under attack but our movement is growing.

We union members lead the fight for healthcare, for families and kids, protect immigrant labor from abuse and give women and workers of color our best chance to earn a fairer wage and fight against discrimination. Laws don't give us these protections, we only need to look to the history of Matewan to know that! Everything we have came from struggle and we have to struggle to keep it. We salute your struggle of teachers leading the way from Chicago to West Virginia to Oklahoma and everywhere your inspiration takes us in the future. ♦

Southern Workers Assembly

March 1, 2018

Solidarity with West Virginia Teacher Walk-outs!

Deepen the class struggle, strengthen our unions and fight against austerity!

The Southern Workers Assembly sends our solidarity to the education workers and their unions across West Virginia that are in a tremendous class struggle against austerity. For more than a week, rank-n-file educators have been defying state law and leading rolling walk-out strikes to fight for a decent family-supporting wage, for access to affordable healthcare and in defense of their union rights.

The crisis of funding for public education and all public services has been brewing in West Virginia, and in fact across the South and entire country for a few years. However, it was the brave rank-n-file members in the southern counties of West Virginia that took the initial efforts to organize walk-outs from their schools, shutting many down across several counties, which spread in the following days across the entire state in to rolling walk-outs in all 55 counties, and thousands of workers rallying at the state Capitol in Charleston for several days. They also did the critical work to build support amongst the students, parents and their communities, so when they walked out they were supported. The community and the unions helped organize food distribution, childcare and other survival mechanisms to support the education workers in their actions.

Thousands have been rallying at the state capitol in Charleston for over a week in some of the largest worker demonstrations in the state since the days of the major struggles of the mine workers. In fact, on Feb. 26 raising the fighting legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a strong union supporter, United Mine Workers of America President Cecil E. Roberts gave a fiery speech at the rally, saying that “workers who stand united will never be defeated.”

Many teachers were angered by the Republican-controlled state legislature and Governor Jim Justice who were refusing to offer any wage increases. Educators and state employees have had wages frozen for a few years without any increases. Teachers earn less than 47 out of 50 states across the country. The state was also threatening to make drastic cuts to the state insurance agency, Public Employee Insurance Agency, which would drive up costs for state employees, teachers and their families. They were also facing

three other major anti-worker attacks including passing of a Koch brothers-sponsored payroll deception bill to eliminate payroll deduction for union dues, privatization of public schools through allowing the creation of charter schools, and stripping seniority rights for reductions in force.

After four days of statewide walk-outs and thousands rallying at the state Capitol on Thursday, February 22 and Friday, February 23, and again on Monday, February 26 and Tuesday, February 27, the unions were able to force Governor Justice into a deal. Gov. Justice promised a 5% raise for educators and 3% raise for state employees, agreed to find funding to support PEIA, and also to eliminate the 3 anti-worker proposals.

Governor Justice didn't become a billionaire and richest man in West Virginia without having some nasty tricks. He immediately called a press conference to announce the deal, before union leaders were able to bring back the proposals to their union members. This had a big impact on the rank-n-file workers which felt betrayed because they had not ratified any deal. Many leaders of union chapters across the state are upset, and in defiance of the statewide leadership, called for continuance of walk-outs to oppose the deal. Workers have effectively shut down schools again on Wednesday, February 28 and Thursday, March 1.

We have confidence that the national leadership of both the AFT and NEA will very soon issue to their members a detailed breakdown of the tentative settlement and will convene meetings throughout the state at which teachers may discuss the settlement offer and vote their decision. Until the teacher-members reach their decision, we urge teachers, students, parents and allies to continue to support this very impressive walk-out.

Teachers, nurses, state employees, fast food workers and industrial workers — in fact all of us — continue to grapple with the unresolved crisis of our health care system. School districts and teachers and other school employees cannot solve this problem alone. The only sensible answer is found in a national health care system that covers all of us — Medicare for All.

An active member of West Virginia Educators Association, Phil, spoke to SWA and told us there is “lots of right-wing populism and anger. Lots of anti-union talk from ultra-left and conservatives.” He reminded us about the primary fight here is not against our union leaders, but that “there is rank-n-file activity standing up against neoliberal politicians. The belief that the association leaders are negotiating directly with the Governor, is not true. It's really the legislators that are striking the deals and selling out the workers. These politicians have interest of energy companies and general private capital. Folks need to fight within their unions, to make them more progressive and class conscious. We need to radicalize and transform unions from within at the local level.”

The Southern Workers Assembly affirms our support for the rank-n-file members in this historic battle, and urges you to continue to build your unions. West Virginia, like many southern states, bans public workers from having collective bargaining agreements. This forces unions into a different relationship with the decision-makers. In the days as we await the Supreme Court decision on the Janus case, which would effectively make public sector workers in all states right-to-work, we are reminded that even workers in the RTW states, concentrated in the US South, can build their unions, fightback and win. The type of mass rank-n-file action displayed by WV educators is an example for us all to follow.

Defeat Austerity!*

Medicare for All!

Defend Union Jobs and Public Services!

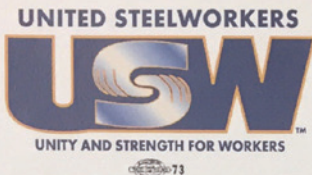
Defeat Right-to-Work for Less!

Organize the South!

Southern Workers Assembly, Coordinating Committee

March 1, 2018





USW Local 8751 - District 4

Boston School Bus Drivers' Union
25 Colgate Rd. • Roslindale, MA 02131
Telephone (617) 524-7073 Fax (617) 524-1691
www.BostonSchoolBusUnion.org

March 5, 2018

**USW Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers' Union,
Salutes the West Virginia Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers
and the West Virginia School Service and Personnel Association
in your Strike for Economic Justice!
Healthcare Is A Right!
W VA School Workers Show How to Fight Austerity!**

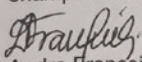
Whereas, West Virginia teachers and school workers continue united, in all 55 counties of the state, On Strike in a display of union power to say "NO MORE" to poverty level wages, precarious working conditions and substandard, unaffordable health insurance, and

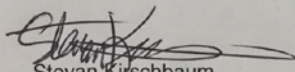
Whereas, The super-rich mining, oil and banking corporations and their bought-and-paid-for politicians who control the resources and budget of the state need to be taught a lesson that their greed can no longer be tolerated when it comes to the most important workers in the state and the families and children you daily nurture and serve, and

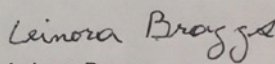
Whereas, Your bold and militant action gives heart to organized and unorganized labor across the country, where we all are fighting government and corporate imposed austerity, union-busting and racist affronts from the Trump administration, the Supreme Court and the billionaires they serve, from attacks on our families' TPS and DACA status to "Janus" and corporate America's push for national "right to work" laws to dismantle our hard-fought unions, benefits and rights, and

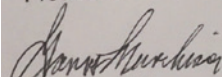
Whereas, "Healthcare For All" should be the law of the land, and your strike proves that we must fight for it and not fall for slick promises of some future "fix" while we are suffering and need to take care of our families now!

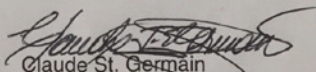
Therefore Be It Resolved, That the Executive Board and 900 strong Membership of USW Local 8751 will do everything in our power to assist the strike of the West Virginia teachers and school workers, until victory, and that we are in solidarity with and in gratitude for your courageous example and sacrifice.

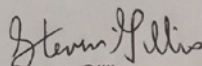

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Inité! Unidade!

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

Join Us! Workers World Party (WWP) fights for socialism and engages in the struggles on all the issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latinx, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed, undocumented and students. If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact us.

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