

SEIU Local 140 Newsletter 11.15.23

Take Action!

- Support teachers on picket lines 7:45am-10:30am! Rallies starting at noon at various locations, check PAT social media for updates or sign up for updates on their [resources](#) page!
- Add your name to the vote of no confidence in Superintendent Guerrero, and share with others: <https://secure.ngpvan.com/pP4mU6swgkaPzQU2qt5ICA2?ms=qrshare>

Union Updates

Bargaining Update

We requested [mediation](#) on November 3rd on the same day as Portland Federation of School Professionals (PFSP) which represents paraeducators, educational assistants, secretaries and many other job classifications, which puts us on a similar bargaining timeline as them. Because there are only a handful of mediators for the whole state and they are all busy right now, the next tentative date we have for bargaining with a mediator is January 11th. This pushes back our timeline for settling the contract and/or going on strike to some time in March. Our bargaining team has attempted to schedule other bargaining dates with the district prior to mediation, but the district has not agreed to meet until November 27th. We'll keep everyone updated as we get more information about how bargaining is moving forward, including future bargaining dates. As a reminder, everyone is welcomed and encouraged to attend bargaining outside of their working hours. This support helps demonstrate to management that we have the bargaining team's back and helps boost morale for bargaining team members.

Local Solidarity

Teachers' Strike Continues

The Portland Association of Teachers (PAT) strike has continued this week after last week saw inflammatory rhetoric from the district [accusing](#) the teachers' union of "terrorism" following an incident where protestors marched to the Oregon Convention Center. On Thursday, unionists, activists, parents, students and community supporters gathered outside Superintendent Guerrero's condo building in NW Portland where the energy was still very strong after a week taking to the streets. This Monday demonstrators gathered outside the PEC district headquarters and chanted, listened to speakers and enjoyed music including student groups performing various songs. On Tuesday union supporters amassed at PEC once again and held a community get-together that lasted into the evening as the district announced the building would be closed for security reasons. As of the time this newsletter is going out the PAT bargaining team has crafted a new [proposal](#) that reduces the gap between both sides by \$121.6 million while prioritizing six core issues for educators: cost of living, class size, planning time, mental

health support services, special education, and safe school buildings. To support the strike you can attend picket lines and rallies, and sign the [vote of no confidence](#) petition for Superintendent Guerrero.

Union Workers at Benson Refuse to Cross Picket Lines

Unionized construction laborers [walked off](#) the job at Benson High School in solidarity with striking teachers at the site and around the district. An electrician and unionist from International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 48 stated that workers at the site aimed to stand in solidarity with teachers during their continuing struggle against PPS and its agenda of privatization and austerity. Although not declared as such, this type of spontaneous direct action could be considered a type of wildcat strike, where rank-and-file workers engage in a strike without going through the usual process leading up to a walk out. These kinds of solidarity actions are crucial to cultivate between the unions in the district as well as across the labor movement more broadly.

Judge Rules Against Camping Ban

On November 9th, a judge granted a temporary injunction prohibiting the City from enforcing a camping ban that would have started this week. The Oregon Law Center [filed](#) a lawsuit against the City representing houseless Portlanders whose lives would be impacted by the proposed ban. As the litigation around the suit continues, the judge ruled that the ban can't be enforced in the meantime. Street Roots reports that "The Oregon Legislature passed ORS 195.530 in 2021, requiring all local laws governing homeless residents' "survival activities" to be "objectively reasonable" and take the availability of alternatives like shelter into account. The city can currently offer overnight shelter to fewer than 30% of homeless Portlanders at most, based on the county's tally of 2,000 shelter beds and its estimates of the homeless population." A [report](#) earlier this year found thousands of Airbnb properties listed in Portland, with many operating without much oversight or the necessary permits. How many properties in Portland are Airbnbs or are being purchased by massive private equity firms? It's also worth asking why housing, food production, energy production, public transit, healthcare or any necessary services aren't provided completely free to all. It's necessary to examine the normal functioning of our current economic system that [forces people](#) onto the streets.

International Solidarity

Thousands Protest APEC Summit in San Francisco

Following a 1,000-person APEC Counter-Summit held on November 11th, around 5,000, including members of SEIU 503, [took to the streets](#) on Sunday, November 12th to protest the start of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders Meetings taking place this week. The No to APEC Coalition, representing almost 150 grassroots organizations from around the US, led the mobilization to within 2 blocks of the Moscone Center where APEC meetings are taking place behind a highly militarized security perimeter.

Rhonda Ramiro of the No to APEC Coalition exclaimed, “Look at us today! Thousands are joining our movement. We built this coalition from all walks of life, all corners of the Bay area, from all corners of the globe that represent the 99 percent. We don't stand for what they are doing there in the Moscone Center. We don't stand for the occupation and plunder of our lands, for the exploitation of our workers, for the squeezing of our blood just so they can make another billion dollars.” Throughout the march, the crowd chanted, “Money for jobs and education, not for wars and occupation!”

“APEC is the epitome of all that is wicked and corrupt in our society today,” decried Simon Ma, a family doctor and member of the progressive Korean-American organization Nodutdol. He described APEC as a “cabal of billionaires and politicians scheming behind closed doors, trying to come up with new and innovative ways to further exploit the working class of our planet.”

Organizers drew clear links between the ongoing genocide in Gaza, corporate plunder of land and violation of labor rights, heightening militarization, and the neglect of people's basic needs like food, housing, and healthcare. Violette Mansour from the Palestinian Youth Movement said of APEC ministers and corporate representatives, “They are conspiring to figure out how they can make a profit off of the death of our people, how to make a profit off the plunder of our land.”

Speakers [condemned](#) “Genocide Joe” for his unconditional support for Israel's all out war against the Palestinian people, which has resulted in the deaths of over 4,000 children. Participants chanted, “from Palestine to the Philippines, stop the US war machine!”

Criticism was not only reserved for Biden. “The leaders meeting this week are some of the most egregious perpetrators of violence against women,” said Katie Comfort of the International Women's Alliance, who cited the example of Yoon Suk Yeol of South Korea. Yoon recently rolled back the demands of justice for comfort women in order to sign a new military agreement with Japan and the US.

Kobi Guillory, a Chicago public school teacher and Board member of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression noted, “All of our movements are connected by a common enemy, which is US imperialism. We are here protesting against APEC because imperialism always violates the right of self determination of oppressed people.”

“We know this is not just a moment, this is a movement,” Mansour concluded. “Today is just the first day of shutting it down!” Despite being surrounded by swarms of police and secret service, the crowd dispersed peacefully chanting, “We'll be back!”

As of the time this newsletter is going out, protestors are attempting to block participants from entering the APEC CEO Summit where speakers include the CEO of ExxonMobil Darren Woods talking about climate solutions. This kind of blatant contradiction represents the future that these corporations dream of, and it's up to us as marginalized groups, including working class people, to shut them down. In next week's newsletter there will be more information about these events and more detailed report backs!