



# Speak Out Now

November 3, 2025 mail@speakoutsocialists.org speakoutsocialists.org IG:@sonsocialists

## Government Shutdown – Certainly Not Our Government!

The federal government shutdown began soon after Democrats blocked legislation to continue to fund the government unless Trump and the Republicans agreed to extend subsidies for the Affordable Care Act. Without the extension, some Obamacare premiums will more than double on average. In response, Republicans refused the extension and used the excuse of the budget impasse to attack and cut government programs they already wanted to get rid of. Now, more people's lives are trapped in this political game.

Ever since Trump took office, he has been threatening to reduce government spending and the federal workforce. Now the government shutdown is being used to implement some of the recommendations made by DOGE, the so-called “Department of Government Efficiency,” which aimed at cutting 300,000 federal jobs. Trump is threatening to permanently lay off more than 4,000 federal workers and furlough another 670,000, which will mean a collapse of many federal programs. The legality of the furloughs has been challenged in the courts, and the courts ruled to block the layoffs. But in the meantime, many federal workers are working without pay, and their union is demanding that the Democrats drop their opposition and end the shutdown.

In the past, federal workers would continue to work and be paid at the end of a shutdown. Trump has threatened that the furloughed workers will not receive back pay for their work. As a result, some federal workers are no longer going to work.

The shutdown and cuts are having countless effects, from airline delays due a lack of air traffic controllers, to longer wait times or no access for those applying for government services. There are also delays for processing disaster relief funds and greatly reduced weather forecasting services, while part of the country is enduring hurricane season. The lack of federal funding is having disastrous effects on already strapped state and local governments' budgets, causing services to be reduced or eliminated, including programs like Head Start.

The Trump administration's threat to cut funding to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the food stamp program relied on by 42 million people (one-

eighth of the US population) as a regular source of essential food, is appalling. They are literally taking the food out of the mouths of babies with the cuts to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which seven million pregnant women or those with young children rely on. The threatened cuts have been halted by the courts. They also ruled that the government could not claim that it was illegal to use the \$5 billion emergency contingency fund to continue to provide food to tens of millions of vulnerable people. It is an emergency. Claiming otherwise is not only absurd but criminal!

These vicious attacks on the welfare of working people come on top of horrific cuts already enacted this year. To increase the profits of the fossil fuel industry, they eliminated proposed workplace regulations that would cut silica pollution in coal mines that result in Black Lung Disease that has crippled and killed tens of thousands of coal miners. They have moved to eliminate collective bargaining rights from more than one million federal workers. They scrapped the minimum wage requirement that federal contractors pay their employees at least \$17.75 an hour; as a result, many full-time workers will see their wages fall by more than \$9,200 a year.

Trump also recently increased the ICE budget, which more and more functions like his private military force. With a budget of \$170 billion, ICE is now the largest law enforcement agency in the U.S. and more highly funded than most nations' military budgets! His administration has sent thousands of those armed troops, along with the National Guard, into our cities and towns to attack and arrest immigrants and their families. Could it be any clearer where the Republicans stand and whose interests they defend?

And the Democrats? All they can offer as an alternative is the hope that the shutdown will be blamed on the Republicans and help them win in the upcoming elections. Our hopes certainly don't lie with them!

What more proof do we need? This is not a government of, for, and by the people. It is a government of, by, and for the billionaires.

## *The Triangle, North Carolina:*

### **Durham Says No Kings... and No Billionaires!**

On October 18, about 5,000 people marched in Durham as a part of the national “No Kings” demonstrations. A special focus in Durham was the connections between the growing authoritarianism and the open class war being waged on working people. The rally featured several organizers who are active in a range of industries: an Amazon worker, a Social Security worker, an electrician, a teacher and more. They made it clear that even in the current climate and in a state extremely hostile to unions, it’s possible to stand up and fight.

The courts and politicians won’t save us from the rapid descent into authoritarianism today. Only working people’s struggles have the potential to win. All of the attacks on our lives and livelihoods are connected... our struggles must be connected to each other!

## *Newark, New Jersey:*

### **“No Meal November” in NJ and the Rest of the Country**

The federal government shutdown is ending SNAP food benefits that help 42 million low-income people survive. Federal funding for the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) nutrition program is also ending, although some states will cover it temporarily. Food banks don’t have nearly enough to address this catastrophe.

In New Jersey, for example, nearly 900 thousand people (about one out of nine) are losing SNAP completely, while WIC funding is expected to end November 10. About half the states, including NJ, Maryland, and California, have sued the federal government to continue the funding now. The Community FoodBank of New Jersey held an event to give food to hundreds of federal TSA airport workers, who have been working without pay.

The government shutdown is happening because Congress can’t agree on a budget bill. Republicans and Democrats are engaged in a partisan blame game, but for working-class people struggling to eat, none of this is a game.

We live in the wealthiest country in the world, and it is our labor that has created all of this wealth. We aren’t the ones who benefit from this. The super rich — the bosses of the big corporations and banks — keep the wealth and make all the decisions. Working people do the work that makes society run, and we can organize to unite our forces. When we do, we have enormous power to change things and make a better world.

## *Baltimore, Maryland:*

### **AI and the Police Will Not Keep Our Students Safe!**

Cops pointed their guns at a group of high school students in Baltimore County, told one student to kneel on the ground, and handcuffed and searched him—for eating a bag of Doritos outside school. An artificial intelligence (AI) detection system had tagged his chips as a gun, causing the system to call the police on the young Black man.

The system was supposedly being used to protect students, but it encouraged the police to show up, guns drawn. As long as people in Baltimore and elsewhere are under constant threat from racist, violent police, we cannot rely on technology like AI to keep us safe.

## *Bay Area, California:*

### **Trump’s Troops Invade the Bay Area**

In the latest of Trump’s string of city invasions, over 100 federal agents, including Customs and Border Protection, were deployed to Coast Guard Island in Alameda on October 22. Protesters who blocked the street were met with pepper spray, flash bangs, and other violence. It’s clear that “fighting crime” was not this deployment’s mission. The goal was to terrorize the immigrant community and repress any opposition.

Now, Trump halted the “surge” after calls with billionaire Mayor Daniel Lurie and Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff. But this isn’t about whether federal troops in the streets are bad for business! Many in the Bay Area and elsewhere around the country are still afraid to even leave their homes for work or school. Attacks on immigrants are evil in themselves and will likely lead to attacks on us all. We must continue building our power to resist!

#### **Speak Out Socialists Public Meeting**

## **WE WILL NOT PAY FOR THEIR CRISIS!**

The chaos of Trump’s policies serve as a cover for the increase of wealth being transferred from the working class to the rich. Join us for a discussion with economist Clara Mattei.

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