

PEOPLE'S WORLD

www.peoplesworld.org

July 20, 2013

Ohioans protest Social Security cuts



By Special to Peoplesworld.org

Protesters from Cleveland, northeast Ohio, and as far away as Pittsburgh, formed a human chain in Cleveland Public Square, recently to protest the “chained CPI” cuts in Social Security benefits proposed by Congress and the Obama administration.

The 150 participants came from Toledo, Canton, Akron, Columbus, Ashtabula, and even Pittsburgh, as well as Cleveland. They were part of at least 45 “human chain” protests around the country.

Norm Wernet, president of the Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans, chaired the rally held in the square. He spoke of the impact the proposed cuts would have on millions of retired workers who are living on Social Security benefits. He noted that the cuts would be as much as \$800 a year by 2014, just a year from now.

Working America spokesman Seran Norris said, “Social Security did not add one cent to the debt crises” and added, “Don’t try to solve problems with the economy on the backs of retirees.”

“We worked and paid for our Social Security retirement benefits every day of our working lives,” Norris said.

Petey Talley, Ohio AFL-CIO secretary treasurer, said, “In six years, retirees will see a

\$6,000.00 loss in benefits. Benefits need to be raised, not lowered, and the way to keep the trust fund solvent is to raise the cap on payroll taxes so that higher income people who receive the highest benefits pay their full share of the cost.”

Pam Rosado spoke of the health crises suffered by her family. Only with the help of Social Security benefits was her family able to survive, she said. These benefits are critical not only for survival of families, she said, but for the survival

T H I S W E E K :

- **Ohioans protest Social Security cuts**
- **Stop and Frisk: What Bloomberg really thinks**
- **California prisoners begin hunger strike**
- **Inmigración: Sube de temperatura en la cámara**
- **Labor’s Holt-Baker, arrested at West Virginia protest**

READ MORE NEWS AND OPINION DAILY AT WWW.PEOPLESWORLD.ORG

of entire communities, and struggling small businesses depend on income provided by Social Security.

Rep. Marcia Fudge’s spokesperson Beverly Charles said the Congresswoman opposed the chained CPI cuts.

Social Security, won as part of the New Deal reforms, is now under attack by the one percent billionaires.

Wernet followed up by noting that Northeast Ohio Reps. Fudge, Tim Ryan and Marcy Kaptur, are opposed to the chained CPI, and that Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown is co-sponsor of a petition being circulated opposing the cuts. All are Democrats.

Wally Kaufman, vice president of the OHIO Alliance for Retired Americans, who lives in Ashtabula, said, "Chained CPI is the name given to the proposed cuts by Wall Street corporate economists to confuse people on what they are trying to do." If adopted, he said, "chained CPI will reduce the cost-of-living increases that were built into Social Security benefits for the 78 years of its existence to keep pace with rising inflationary costs for everything we buy."

"They try to justify these cuts with the false claim that workers have already cut costs when they retire, so they don't need full cost of living increases," Kaufman said. "Try telling that to millions of workers and their families who are trying to live out their retirement years with the dignity and comfort they worked so hard to earn."

Kaufman notes that Social Security, won as part of the New Deal reforms, is now under attack by the one percent billionaires, their think tanks, and paid political handmaidens. The graduated Income tax, another New Deal measure passed to increase the tax burden on the super-rich and lower it on the lowest paid workers, is also under attack in many states, with the Republican-controlled Ohio state government and legislature giving a 20 percent cut in the top income tax rates and increasing sales taxes on most products working families must buy.

Says Kaufman: "Wall Street corporate financiers are conducting an ongoing hatchet job on living standards of working families and retirees. Once again, we are called on to fight back, and the Town Square human chains show people are ready and able."

Participants in the event say they were inspired by the experience and are ready for more.



Stop and Frisk: What Bloomberg really thinks

By PW Editorial

New York City Mayor Bloomberg, speaking before the gay rights parade, tried to defend his position supporting the NYPD's massive stop-and-frisk program directed against minority (mostly African American and Hispanic) youth. His remarks were so out of line that the New York Times wrote an editorial criticizing his "loopy logic" and U.S. Representative Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., was moved to say that his comments "were sad, disrespectful, hurtful, and quite unfortunate."

The mayor dismissed the concerns of the minority community that they were being disproportionately stopped by the police and were, in fact, being harassed by the department. The fact that only nine percent of the stops in 2012 involved whites was not seen by the mayor as in any way evidence that the minority rate was overly disproportionate. In fact he thought too many white people were being stopped and they were the ones who should be complaining about disproportionate treatment. His reason was that only seven percent of the 2012 murder rate was due to white

people (this was the only crime statistic he gave).

It may come as a surprise to many New Yorkers that the problem with the NYPD is that it is harassing white people, not minorities, but that is Bloomberg's position.

He is reported as maintaining that "The numbers are the numbers, and the numbers clearly show that the stops are generally proportionate with suspects' descriptions and for years now critics have been trying to argue that minorities are stopped disproportionately." The numbers show not enough minority youth are being stopped and too many white folks are. "The numbers don't lie," the mayor said.

Well, if that is the problem in New York - harassment of white youth by the police - we don't understand what the mayor has against a federally appointed monitor to make sure the NYPD is not violating people's constitutional rights. The federal monitor would at least clear the mayor and his police commissioner Ray Kelly of discriminating against minority youth and thus undermine the charges of racism in high places. What are you afraid of Mr. Mayor?

We don't understand what the mayor has against a federal monitor to make sure the NYPD is not violating constitutional rights.

California prisoners begin hunger strike

By Marilyn Bechtel

Thousands of California inmates July 8 renewed a hunger strike begun in 2011 to protest prison practices they say amount to torture, and it was revealed that between 2006 and 2010, nearly 150 women inmates were sterilized without required state approvals.

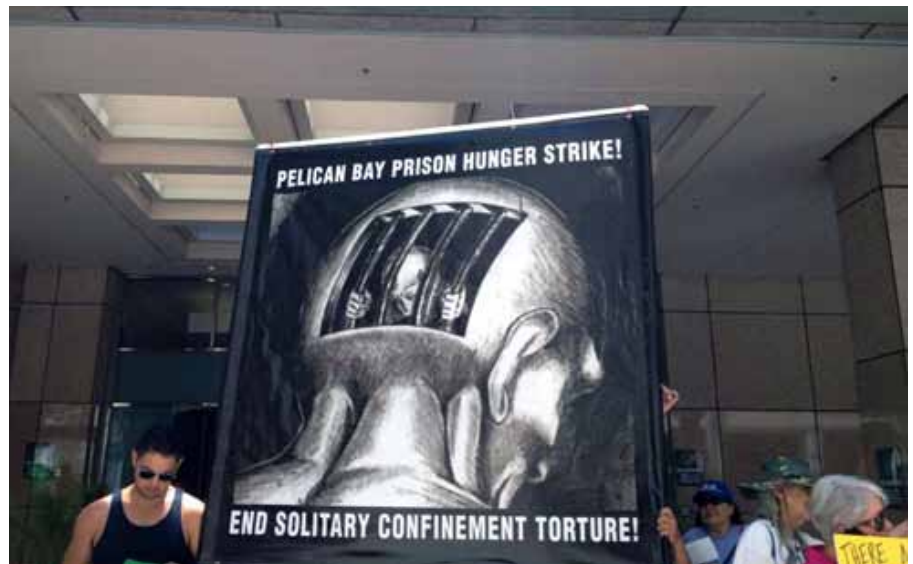
Inmate leaders at Pelican Bay State Prison's Secure Housing Unit (SHU) launched the renewed action just days after the two-year anniversary of a three-week hunger strike in 2011 over inhumane conditions including keeping inmates in isolation indefinitely.

Over 4,500 inmates are held in "segregation" cells at four state prisons, including 1,180 at Pelican Bay.

Some inmates have been in solitary confinement for over 20 years over allegations they are affiliated with a prison gang.

Prison officials said some 30,000 inmates at 22 of the state's 33 prisons, and four out-of-state lock-ups, refused meals on Monday.

A committee of Pelican Bay SHU inmates had warned of a new strike because, they said, state corrections officials had failed to meet five core demands: an end to group punishments for individual rules violations, modification of gang status criteria and an end to "debriefings" requiring



inmates to make allegations about other inmates, ending long-term isolation, providing adequate food, and more constructive programs and privileges for indefinite SHU inmates.

The committee of four Pelican Bay SHU inmates said the new action would be "a combined hunger strike and work stoppage," to continue indefinitely until the core demands are fully met.

"We have kept our word, while patiently waiting for the CDCR to keep theirs. However, at this point, it is clear to us that the CDCR has no intention of implementing the substantive policy changes that were agreed to 15 or 16 months ago," Todd Ashker and three other inmates wrote in a late June statement. At the same time, they pledged to keep lines of communication open with the governor and CDCR administrators up to their July 8 deadline, and afterwards during the renewed strike. The original three-week hunger strike in July 2011 spread to 13 other state prisons and involved some 6,600 male and female inmates. Prisoners renewed the strike two months later, again ending it after three weeks when California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) said they would start talks over the inmates' demands.

Over 4,500 inmates are held in "segregation" cells at four state prisons, including 1,180 at Pelican Bay.

Labor's Holt-Baker, arrested at West Virginia protest

By Press Associates

The Mine Workers-led monthly protests against the bankruptcy ruling for Patriot Coal that robbed tens of thousands of retired miners and their dependents of health care coverage continued and escalated on July 9: 31 people, led by union President Cecil Roberts and AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Arlene Holt-Baker, were arrested in the latest demonstration, in Fairmont, W. Va.

The protest there, which drew 5,000 people, was the 14th in a series the union launched months ago to highlight how the Patriot bankruptcy ruling hurts retired and active miners. The bankruptcy court not only let Patriot throw the retirees off health care, but also let the firm drastically cut wages and benefits for active union miners.

Before the arrests, Roberts, Holt-Baker and Steel Workers President Leo Gerard took turns denouncing Patriot, along with Peabody Coal Co., and Arch Coal. Those firms spun the retirees off to Patriot several years ago without providing assets to pay for health care, and when Patriot filed for bankruptcy the process puts workers at the back of the line and bankers first when a firm goes broke. Gerard was not arrested.

"The United States of America is not great because of CEOs," Roberts said. "It's not great because of lawyers. It's great because of the working people of the United States. This is a faith-based movement, it's a civil rights movement, and it cannot fail.

Inmigración: Sube de temperatura en la cámara

Por Emile Schepers

Esta semana, los 435 miembros de la Cámara de Representantes son el foco de la acción legislativa sobre la reforma migratoria.

La Cámara tiene una mayoría de voto republicano de 234 a 201. Esto a pesar del hecho de que en las elecciones generales del 2012, 1'403.602 más personas votaron por candidatos demócratas de la Cámara que por los republicanos. Esto se debe a la manipulación de los límites de los distritos congresionales por legislaturas controladas por republicanos. Esto es importante porque las encuestas de opinión pública han demostrado consistentemente de que la mayoría de personas en los Estados Unidos desean una solución en la cual los inmigrantes indocumentados tengan una oportunidad de conseguir un estatuto legal y eventualmente ciudadanía.

El presidente de la Cámara, John Boehner de Ohio, y el presidente del comité judicial de la Cámara, Bob Goodlatte de Virginia, han dicho que ellos no permitirán consideraciones a la ley que se aprobó el mes último en el Senado, a pesar de que sus "administradores" la "empacaron" con tantas "tentaciones" para atraer los votos de los republicanos a nivel que han creado asperezas dentro del movimiento por los derechos de los inmigrantes. El "Grupo de los Siete" de la Cámara está trabajando en su propia ley integral, pero Boehner dice que él no permitirá que ninguna legislación avance a ser votada en la Cámara a no

ser que la mayoría de republicanos en la Cámara la apoye. Esto tiene la intención de prevenir cualquier intento de hacer avanzar cualquier legislación en base de un apoyo conjunto de una mayoría demócrata y una minoría republicana.

Así es que los republicanos están postulando una serie de leyes que no incluyen la legalización de los indocumentados, y que de aprobarse significaría un incremento de represión en la frontera y al interior del país. Las organizaciones de los derechos de los inmigrantes y sus aliados, los sindicatos de trabajadores están organizando acciones de mayor presión sobre miembros republicanos de la Cámara para que apoyen una propuesta más bien integral que provea de alivio a los inmigrantes.

Es probable, si estas propuestas se aprueban, ningún respiro será ofrecido a los indocumentados por la legislación de la Cámara. El escenario en el Comité de Conferencia del Senado/Cámara será uno de "reconciliación" entre la ya aprobada ley del Senado con una o más de las medidas aquí señaladas. Esto podría conducir al completo fracaso de la legislación de la reforma migratoria en el Congreso # 113.

Las organizaciones de los derechos de los inmigrantes y sus aliados, los sindicatos de trabajadores están organizando acciones de mayor presión sobre miembros republicanos de la Cámara para que apoyen una propuesta más bien integral que provea de alivio a los inmigrantes.

NATIONAL CONTACT

Editorial: (773) 446-9920 Business: (212) 924-2523
Email: contact@peoplesworld.org