

## Fire Fighters demand Trump release funds for 9/11 victims' care



By Mark Gruenberg

**T**he Fire Fighters are demanding the GOP Trump government pay the New York clinic that treats post-September 11 victims some \$3.7 million the Trump Treasury has withheld from the medical facility for several years.

IAFF President Harold Schaitberger told Treasury to pay up, now. The New York Daily News had reported the withholding on September 10, the day before the 19th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, al-Qaeda attacks.

“On the eve of 9/11, the failure of your department to act is offensive and unacceptable,” Schaitberger wrote Trump Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin the day of the news story. “The Treasury Department must act immediately to reimburse FDNY for their services to Fire Fighters made ill by the response and recovery efforts at the World Trade Center.”

“Nearly Half of FDNY First Responders have a WTC Sickness,” Fire Fighters Local 94 told New York media. “Nearly half of the 15,000 FDNY responders who were working on 9/11—and survived—have gotten sick from their exposure to the toxins that swirled around the World Trade Center site.”

Members of Fire Fighters Locals 94 and 854 rushed to the Trade Center when it was attacked. They helped save more than 10,000 people. But almost 3,000 people, including 343 Fire Fighters and their Catholic priest, died when the Twin Towers

of the World Trade Center collapsed after the two al-Qaeda-commandeered jetliners hit them.

Since the attacks and the subsequent cleanup, a special federal fund, established under the James Zadroga Act—named for a dead Fire Fighter—pays for medical bills for the surviving ailing, ill and dying first responders to the WTC site.

Those responders also include union members, many of them from the Operating Engineers, the Laborers, and other building trades, who came to the

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site to search for bodies and remove the rubble in the following weeks.

But those survivors suffer and die from high rates of unusual cancers and other ills caused by the lethal particulates, toxins, asbestos, and flaming jet fuel unleashed when the towers collapsed. The GOP

**Democratic New York Rep. Jerrold Nadler calls upon the administration to “stop betraying our nation’s heroes. Shame on them.”**

George W. Bush administration told first responders it was safe to search and later to clean up the ruins without maximum protection against the fumes.

It wasn't. Some 228 members of Local 94 alone have died since then. Number 228, Timothy Burke of Rescue Company 5, died on Sept. 11, 2020, of WTC-related cancer. Meanwhile, the medical center that treated Burke and treats others is short of the money it's supposed to get, Schaitberger said.

“It is my understanding the Treasury currently owes the FDNY an estimated \$3.7 million, and this matter has been brought to your attention by the FDNY, members of Congress and others to no avail,” Schaitberger wrote Mnuchin.

“The FDNY World Trade Center Clinic provides comprehensive physical and mental health services to all active and retired FDNY members who responded to the 9/11 attacks. As you know, the health impacts on 9/11 responders are significant and far-reaching.”

Besides the Fire Fighters killed when the Twin

Towers collapsed, “Thousands more suffer daily from lung diseases, cancers, gastrointestinal diseases, mental health ailments, and many other ailments,” Schaitberger pointed out. They're considered line-of-duty deaths.

The treatment center used the same corporate ID number as other New York City medical agencies, including one that owed almost \$2 million to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Treasury said. So it withheld the FDNY center's funds to offset that other agency's debt.

Tweeted Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., whose congressional district includes the Trade Center site, and its memorial: “There is no excuse for behavior this callous and cruel. #NeverForget means more than words—it's the actions we take to support the 9/11 victims & survivors who sacrificed so much for us. The Trump administration has betrayed our heroes. Shame on them.”

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## **Ashland, Wisconsin rallies for student safety, demands end to SRO program**

**By Elise Kehle**

**S**igns reading “Black Lives Matter” and “Keep Ashland Safe—Don't Arrest Our Kids” greeted traffic as scores of Wisconsinites rallied for racial justice this past Saturday. The event was organized by the Communist Party of Chequamegon Bay Area as part of its continuing stand with the people of northern Wisconsin for trust and racial equity amid the nationwide uprising against police violence.

The rally was organized to urge the removal of Ashland High School's SRO, or “School Resource Officer.” These are heavily armed policemen increasingly deployed in schools, ostensibly in response to the rise of modern school shootings. Rather than apprehending terrorists, however, SROs have mostly intervened to menace, arrest, and assault students of color. Dr. Dani O'Brien, a Northland College professor who wrote a dissertation on racism in school discipline, opened the Saturday's rally with some sobering statistics.

“There is a plethora of research that indicates that when police are used in schools, they do more harm than good,” O'Brien said. “When schools have SROs, students in those schools are more likely to wind up involved in the juvenile justice

system. The mere presence of police in schools, regardless of their actions, can create a culture of punishment and fear. It is important to point out that Black, brown, and Indigenous youth are more likely than white youth to experience these harms.” O'Brien expressed hope that the funds be spent on programs expanding student access to mental health resources.

The Ashland City Council is currently debating whether to continue participating in Ashland High's SRO program after the reassignment of the long-time SRO. A majority of the council, led by Councilman Wahsayah Whitebird, the Communist representative in Ward 6, voted to postpone the final approval vote on Sept. 8. The final vote will now occur on Sept. 29.

A smear campaign is being conducted against Black and brown youth at every level, from national television to street corner graffiti. Racist forces continue to cheer terrorist Kyle Rittenhouse, the alleged Kenosha shooter. This week, the people of Ashland have declared their intention not to become the next Kenosha and to build a system that treats all students with respect.

**The community is urging the removal of Ashland High School's SRO, or “School Resource Officer.”**

# Parents, students, teachers hit Cuomo's school cuts



By Tina Nannaarone

**P**arents, children, teachers and school aides gathered in front of Gov. Cuomo's office in New York City Tuesday, September 8 to protest projected cuts to the New York State School's budget.

The rally was organized by the Alliance for Quality Education, Parents Supporting Parents NY and Make the Road, an immigrant rights group. Children and parents held posters proclaiming "Let our children bloom" and "Stop the Cuomo cuts."

Zakiyah Ansari, New York City director of the Alliance for Quality Education and an award recipient at the 2013 New York Better World Awards dinner, a fundraiser for the Peoples World, was the first to speak.

She said, "In April 2020, Gov. Cuomo, in the middle of a pandemic, cut \$1.1 billion from high-needs, low-income schools for fiscal year 2020-21. The cuts to the city's public schools were \$717 million. The cuts to the Rochester Schools, a district that was already facing a \$60 million deficit before the pandemic, were \$29 million. In fact, 87% of the aid cuts in 2020 were made to high-needs, low-income school districts. Is that equity? Is that right?" The crowd responded with a resounding "no" after each question.

In August, the New York State budget office informed school districts that it was withholding an additional 20% from local school districts. Districts with majority Black and brown students have been

hit the hardest with the city slated to lose \$2 billion, Buffalo \$157 million and Rochester \$130 million.

High needs school districts are facing a \$2,626 per student cut while wealthier districts are seeing a per student cut of \$873.

State Sen. Robert Jackson, who represents Washington Heights, spoke at the rally.

In 1993 as a Community School Board President, he filed a lawsuit against New York State to fix an inequitable school funding distribution formula that disadvantaged New York City schools and won a court judgment in 2006 that awarded billions for city schools.

Although the schools received part of that money, the State of New York still owes a substantial part of that award. Jackson told the crowd, "We all know that the state budget is deep red now, about \$14.5 billion, and New York City is about \$9 billion in the red caused by the pandemic. Let's be real. They have failed to properly fund education in New York State. They have held up \$5 billion in New York State and \$2 billion in New York City. Are you willing to be engaged in the fight? We want the Assembly and Senate to pass a bill to raise taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers. When we pass that legislation, we will have a hot, hot piece of coal in our hands. We are going to put that coal in the governor's hands and he will have to sign that bill!"

Meril Mousoom, a high school student who introduced the speakers, demanded, "Tax the rich and fund education now!"

**They demonstrate in front of his New York City office.**

## LOCAL NEWS

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**Call to action:**

**Vote against fascism!**

**By Communist Party USA**

**T**he upcoming 2020 elections set to take place on November 3rd are, without a doubt, the most important elections of our time. So much is at stake: our health, our safety, our planet, and our lives. Trump's extreme-right policies, which include the Muslim travel ban and the forced separation of immigrant families at the border, on top of the already worsening economic crisis as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, brew a recipe for disaster if indeed the GOP wins big in November.

As Communists, we understand that our role in the people's front against the fascist danger is that of prompting and fighting for working-class unity around issues. As the Communist Party's Political Action Commission states, "The 2020 elections aren't about getting Biden elected as president. This is mainly about defeating a right-wing agenda in the United States."

The progressive and left forces are not strong enough on their own to defeat the full power of the capitalist ruling class in this country, but we can certainly look for points of unity with working people in the so-called center in an effort to defeat the extreme-right agenda of the Trump administration in an effort to avoid further setbacks for the working class. Defeating the right-wing of the ruling class is our goal in these elections, and the future of the class and democratic struggles depends on what we do now!

## En Chile: La recordación a Salvador Allende

Rafael Calcines Armas

**E**l monumento a Salvador Allende, frente al palacio de La Moneda, se cubrió de flores en homenaje al presidente mártir en el 47 aniversario del golpe de Estado contra el gobierno de la Unidad Popular.

A pesar de las limitaciones en la participación a causa de las medidas restrictivas por la pandemia de Covid-19, representantes de los partidos Socialista, Comunista, Por la Democracia y del Frente Amplio, entre otros, así como de la Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) acudieron a rendir homenaje al presidente socialista. Para ello depositaron ofrendas florales al pie del monumento y en la entrada al palacio de La Moneda por la calle Morandé, utilizada tradicionalmente por Allende durante los mil días de su gobierno, para acceder a sus oficinas en la casa de gobierno.

Estas ofrendas se sumaron a los modestos ramos que cientos de personas a título individual acudieron a depositar durante la jornada.

Al pie del monumento, Marcia Tambutti, nieta de Allende y presidenta de la Fundación que lleva su nombre, recordó que el 4 de septiembre se celebró el 50 aniversario del triunfo electoral de la Unidad Popular y llamó a difundir los logros de ese gobierno, que se basó en la más amplia participación social, propugnada por el presidente Allende.

Asimismo, prácticamente todos los oradores de la jornada señalaron que este aniversario de la asonada fascista tiene la particularidad de ser el primero tras el vasto movimiento de protestas iniciado el 18 de octubre de 2019, y a poco más de un mes de que se celebre un histórico plebiscito

donde se da por seguro el triunfo del Sí a una nueva Constitución.

Al respecto, puntualizaron que las últimas palabras de Salvador Allende se hicieron realidad después del 18 de octubre, cuando millones de chilenos tomaron las calles, para exigir una sociedad mejor con muchas de las demandas que buscaba hacer realidad el programa de la Unidad Popular, truncado por el golpe militar.

Asimismo expresaron que el plebiscito del 25 de octubre permitirá que el pueblo de Chile pueda decidir su futuro mediante la soberanía popular, un principio que es conculcado por la actual ley fundamental, impuesta por la dictadura en 1980.

En ese sentido, la presidenta de la CUT, Bárbara Figueroa, señaló que no se tratará solo de votar por una nueva Constitución, sino lograr que esa carta magna recoja los fundamentos para la construcción de un Chile nuevo, con igualdad de oportunidades y derechos para todos los ciudadanos. Paralelamente a los homenajes frente al palacio de La Moneda, cientos de personas portando fotos de víctimas de la dictadura, marcharon en peregrinación hasta el Cementerio General, para recordar y pedir justicia y reparación para todos los caídos.

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