

Visually impaired? Get help voting with Vote.org and Be My Eyes



By Special to People's World

There are at least 26.9 million American adults with vision loss—a staggering 8% of the U.S. population—and even though not all of them are “blind” (about 1 million), there are still many who need help filling out paper documents, accessing technology, and completing complex government forms.

In the leadup to the 2020 presidential election, Be My Eyes and Vote.org are teaming up to make sure that for any American with a visual impairment, the process of registering and preparing to vote is as clear and accessible as possible.

Vote.org uses technology to simplify political engagement, increase voter turnout and strengthen the ability for Americans to participate in their democratic system. Be My Eyes is committed to making a citizen's right to vote more accessible, in the hope of making this all-important election the most inclusive yet!

“We are so glad to be partnering with Be My Eyes, in order to make sure that any visually impaired American who wants to vote can, and that the process of registering and preparing to vote is as clear and accessible as possible,” said Vote.org CEO Andrea Hailey. “It's critical we lower the barriers to political engagement, and simplify the voting process, whether by mail, voting early, or voting on Election Day. By making voting easier, and in turn,

getting more people to vote, we create a stronger, more representative democracy.”

If you're a blind or low-vision person in the U.S., you can connect with a Specialized Help agent on the Vote.org profile on Be My Eyes. You need to open the Be My Eyes app, enter the Specialized Help menu, and select Vote.org from the list of available organizations (in the “Civic Engagement” category). Vote.org volunteers will be open to take your calls through Be My Eyes Monday through Friday, 12 pm

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to 4 pm ET.

“As blind and low-vision people, we are underestimated and underrepresented every day of our lives,” says Will Butler, Be My Eyes' Vice President of Community. “Voting in an election is our chance to change that. We may only turn out a

With so much at stake on November 3 involving healthcare, jobs, the environment, criminal justice, immigration and more, the participation of blind and visually impaired citizens is vital.

few million strong, but in an election, that can make a big difference.”

Through the Be My Eyes app, Vote.org’s tools will help blind voters check if they are registered to vote, guide them through registering if they are not already (deadlines may have passed in some states for the Nov. 3 election), and provide information about voting by mail and COVID-19 guidelines specific to the voter’s state. In a time where physical distancing is still a huge part of daily lives for all Americans, it’s more critical than ever that everyone has a way to access all necessary information, to make sure that they are motivated and confident about voting between now and November 3.

Visually impaired users of Be My Eyes can call Vote.org for help accessing their tools starting today to make sure they’re all set and ready for November 3.

Those who may be unfamiliar with Be My Eyes and are themselves visually impaired or know someone who is, will find its services invaluable for all kinds

of purposes throughout the year. Trained helpers are available 24 hours a day in virtually all the languages of the world to help clients “see” what they need to—a document, a prescription, a message, or even the color of an item of clothing you may be considering wearing that day. You can even be out on the street and with your mobile device, your “eyes” a continent away can help you find an address or your favorite cereal in a supermarket.

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Mass strikes against ‘catastrophic’ assault on workers’ rights and environment

By Ben Chacko

Millions took strike action in Indonesia Wednesday and thousands rallied in cities across the country in protest at a new Job Creation Law that takes an axe to workers’ rights and environmental protections.

In Bandung, West Java, protesters blocked roads around the local parliament building and burned tires. Industrial workers rallied in Tangerang and Bekasi, walked out of factories and demonstrated in Karawang, Serang and Banten provinces.

The Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions (KSPI) said that two million workers from 32 unions were taking 3 days of strike action against the measure.

KSPI president Said Iqbal said the federation “rejects the entire contents of the law, which is very detrimental to workers.” He demanded that it be canceled immediately. “Workers are already suffering a lot from the COVID-19 crisis.”

The Job Creation Law has been slammed as “catastrophic” by Amnesty International, while the International Trade Union Confederation says it will “destabilize lives and ruin livelihoods so that foreign corporations can extract wealth from the

country.” The Building and Woodworkers International protested at the law, saying it puts “the interests and demands of foreign investors ahead of workers, communities, and the environment.”

It replaces 79 separate laws, reducing workers’ holiday entitlement and severance pay, allowing indefinite retention of workers on temporary contracts, and removes the requirement for environmental assessments of business projects, a measure likely to accelerate deforestation.

Indonesia is the leading producer of palm oil, and the palm plantations recently excoriated for widespread abuse of child and slave labor in a probe by the Associated Press—have swallowed up vast areas of forest, driving rare animals like the orangutan and Sumatran rhino towards extinction.

The ITUC called on President Joko Widodo to revoke the law and negotiate any changes to workers’ rights with trade unions. Widodo acknowledged that the law is deeply unpopular, but said he was free to pass it as he was “no longer constrained by politics” as he doesn’t intend to stand for re-election.

The omnibus bill replaces 79 separate laws, reducing workers’ holidays and severance, allowing companies to keep workers on temporary contracts, and removing the requirement for environmental assessments of business projects.

Speaking personally, Poor People’s Campaign co-chair Barber backs Biden



By Mark Gruenberg

Speaking personally, and not as the co-chair of the New Poor People’s Campaign, the Rev. William Barber II said he “will vote for” Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden over GOP incumbent Donald Trump.

Barber told MSNBC Joy Reid on Oct. 27 that he will back Biden, running mate Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., and Democratic U.S. Senate candidates.

His reasons are “the hijacking of democracy” by Trump, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and other GOP lawmakers and Trump’s disastrous refusal to battle the coronavirus pandemic, which has disproportionately hit the poor of all races and people of color in particular.

“They died and they didn’t have to,” Barber said of the pandemic’s national toll, now 227,109.

Meanwhile, “McConnell and Trump are working to put one woman on the Supreme Court”—new Justice Amy Coney Barrett—“and not protect thousands of people from being put into a casket.”

“What is happening” to U.S. democracy “is out of control,” Barber told Reid. “This is political gangsterism and we can’t be ambivalent at all. We have to stop this.”

Barber stressed he was speaking personally, after his daughter challenged him on all those issues “to speak up as my daddy, father and a man.” She reminded him that “to be ambivalent about injustice, or to be silent is to assist in injustice.”

“She said, ‘Dad, can’t you say something, because

these policies are killing people, and could kill me and others like me. And they’re trying to steal the election.’” So he did.

Barber started the campaign as Moral Mondays, peacefully protesting GOP withdrawal of voting rights in his home state of North Carolina. It’s since gone nationwide, bringing the plight of the poor and near-poor—who totaled 140 million before the pandemic hit—to the nation’s consciousness.

The NPPC, using data and mass action, says the U.S. is rich enough to eradicate poverty and should redistribute federal funds away from war, and to aid the poor. It has always been resolutely non-partisan, criticizing politicians at all levels and from both parties for ignoring the plight, poor, or worse.

That includes constant unfulfilled demands from Barber and his campaign co-chair, the Rev. Liz Theoharis, to devote Democratic debates—and later, Biden-Trump debates—to the issue of poverty. The Democratic Party refused, and the networks ignored the demand.

The campaign also demands Congress restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act, which a five-man GOP-named U.S. Supreme Court majority gutted several years ago, and guarantee everyone the right to vote, and to have their votes counted. GOP operatives nationwide have been blocking such efforts, Barber told another MSNBC interviewer the following morning. “Point by point, policy by policy, his [Trump’s] policies have hurt” the poor and the rest of the country, he said.

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LOCAL NEWS

LOCAL CONTACT

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From Michigan to Greece, neo-fascist groups on the rise

By CPUSA Int'l Department

Members of a neo-fascist white supremacist Michigan militia group, storing assault weapons and bomb-making material, have been arrested for plotting to kidnap the governor of Michigan and launch attacks through the state and country.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer has been the target of such attacks, which Donald Trump helped to incite with his "Liberate Michigan" tweet as armed groups demonstrated in the state capitol this year.

Acts like this were part of the fascist movements in Italy and Germany — the murders of socialist deputy Matteotti in Italy before Mussolini established an open dictatorship and German Jewish minister Rathenau in the Weimar Republic. Similar acts include CIA-supported kidnappings and assassinations in Africa and Asia.

This week in Greece, leaders of the "Golden Dawn" fascist party were convicted of carrying out murders similar to what the "Michigan Militia" group was planning. A court in Greece ruled that the extreme-right Golden Dawn party is a criminal organization. This neo-Nazi group had become Greece's third-largest party, and some members were found guilty of murdering a singer and attacks on Egyptian fishermen and left-wing activists.

These white supremacist militia groups are being incited in the U.S., directly by Trump today, as they were by Hitler and Mussolini in the past and by extreme-right governments in Brazil and other countries. They must be disarmed, and their organizers and leaders must be held to account as the leaders of "Golden Dawn" fascist party have been.

Organizaciones sociales de Colombia marchan en apoyo a Sintracarbón

IndustriALL

Bajo el llamado "Kato'u Wajira" ("Despierta Guajira" en lengua originaria) marcharon decenas de personas pacíficamente por las calles de Riohacha de la capital de La Guajira el 9 de octubre. El objetivo fue mostrar el apoyo de la comunidad a la huelga del Sindicato nacional de los trabajadores de la industria del carbón (Sintracarbón, afiliado a IndustriALL Global Union).

"La marcha sirvió para que la comunidad y los trabajadores le expresaran, tanto a la empresa Cerrejón como al gobernador de la Guajira (quien se mantiene silencioso frente al conflicto), que estamos en pie de lucha y dispuestos a negociar.

Siempre dijimos que tenemos voluntad de diálogo y que la huelga es simplemente una herramienta. El fin del sindicato es alcanzar un acuerdo que le brinde tranquilidad a la Guajira, a los trabajadores y que le permita a la empresa reactivar la producción" dijo el presidente de Sintracarbón, Igor Días, en declaraciones a RCN radio.

Los trabajadores se encuentran en huelga desde el 31 de agosto, fecha en que detuvieron las operaciones en la mina de carbón de Cerrejón (propiedad de las multinacionales Glencore, BHP y Anglo American).

Tomaron la medida para rechazar un cambio de turno de trabajo que agregaría 72 días laborables por año, sin ningún aumento salarial. A su vez, rechazan la intención de la compañía de reducir los beneficios establecidos en el convenio colectivo de trabajo.

Hace una semana iniciaron una hoja de ruta propuesta por el Ministerio de trabajo, la cual incluyó reuniones de la autoridad laboral con cada una de las partes involucradas. Si bien anunciaron que el próximo paso será una instancia tripartita, Sintracarbón dice que hasta el momento no conoce cuándo se va a llevar a cabo.

"Hasta el momento no ha sido posible sentarnos a la mesa con Cerrejón porque se niega. No sabemos qué posición tiene respecto a encontrarnos presencialmente las tres partes. Esperamos que si tenga la voluntad para encontrar caminos para un acuerdo, que es lo que necesita todo en el país, especialmente la Guajira que tan afectada está" agregó el dirigente de Sintracarbón.

IndustriALL se comunicó más de una vez con las tres multinacionales para exigir que asuman la responsabilidad por esta crisis. La organización sindical mundial también le escribió a los clientes de Cerrejón y a inversionistas institucionales para ponerlos al tanto de la situación.

Por su parte, el secretario regional de IndustriALL, Marino Vani, expresó: "Felicitamos tanto a los trabajadores como a la comunidad de la Guajira por estar al frente y a la vanguardia en la lucha por la defensa de la vida y de las futuras generaciones. Esta unidad es ejemplo de cooperación y solidaridad con el prójimo. Hay que seguir en la unidad porque sin sacrificios no habrán avances ni un futuro".

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