

Speed enforcement cameras further police control



By Andrew Wright

A bill was recently proposed to the Michigan House of Representatives that would allow police to deploy speed enforcement cameras throughout the state. House Bill 5284, introduced by Democrat Sarah Anthony, would allow for cameras that meet the following criteria:

Cameras have a speed timing device inside.

They are connected to Michigan's license plate management system.

They produce an image of the vehicle clearly showing the license plate, where it was located, and when it was taken.

A sign is placed before vehicles are in range of the camera warning of its presence.

The claim is that it would give law enforcement the ability to keep communities safe without increasing the number of police officers on the street. A recent report out of Toronto has shown that, in areas of camera enforcement, drivers have slowed down significantly. With Michigan's traffic fatalities spiking last year, the highest since 2007, it's not hard to make the argument for speed cameras.

In fact, much of the data and concern of speeding is coming from school zones—Toronto having placed all their enforcement cameras in “safety zones” near schools. The question of why funding goes toward speed enforcement cameras and not the school itself is an ever-looming one in these cases, but it's one

with a clear answer: Revenue generated from traffic violations was roughly \$125 million in the fiscal year of 2019-20.

Indeed, reduced speeds are a good thing. Safer streets and fewer accidents will prevent countless injuries and possible deaths. However, this gets law enforcement closer to the limits of omnipresence.

The police already have limitless intervention into our social lives—notably so in Black and working-class communities; excessive violence used against

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people of color, women, and trans people; the use of chemical weapons which are banned by the Geneva Convention; and protection of property over people.

With the push for more surveillance comes other “ambiguous” areas of law enforcement such as the use of “covert” enforcement—the implementation

The new bill would allow police to set them up all over Michigan.

of hidden cameras and law enforcement to monitor traffic. One study found that drivers would maintain steady speeds under “covert” surveillance. The use of signage justifies the inherent “unfairness” of surveilling those who didn’t know they were being watched. The gap that this opens up deals directly with, as one resident put it, the police being “visual predators in Detroit.”

Make no mistake, the state’s use of these cameras furthers the ubiquity of surveillance throughout our communities. As Detroit’s Project Green Light continues to grow, so does the surveillance of our so-called “free time”—whether we’re driving or wandering around a city on foot, our time off the clock is as monitored as it would be spent at work.

As Joel Wendland-Liu points out, the use of collecting massive amounts of data tends toward “predictive analytics” which are inherently racist and classist. Citizens of Detroit missed out on having a voice (albeit, a small one) in such law enforcement decisions by voting “no” on Proposal P earlier this

month, despite concerns over the expansion of this surveillance.

In 2015, the Missouri Supreme Court found such enforcement cameras unconstitutional, because the burden of proof of who was actually operating the vehicle falls onto the defendant in court cases. This is further concerning considering the effect of not having sufficient surveillance would ultimately mean more, higher quality surveillance.

The rhetoric around defunding or abolishing the police is overcome by fear-mongering tactics that have to do with safety only. We’re seeing the same rhetoric employed when it comes to increasing the amount of city surveillance, especially with personal surveillance systems on the rise. What we tend to miss is that the problem isn’t simply the number of police officers but the boundless power that this “eye that sees all” grants to the state and law, not to mention the sale of such surveillance data to other corporations.

Colectivo coffee shop baristas go union with IBEW

By PAI

No, it’s not Starbucks—they may be next—but baristas at Colectivo gourmet coffee shops in Chicago, Madison, Wis., and Milwaukee voted 106-99 to unionize with Electrical Workers Local 494.

The vote was tied at 99-99, but the National Labor Relations Board official overseeing the balloting ordered seven challenged ballots opened and ruled all were valid. And all seven backed IBEW. The board announced the results on Aug. 23.

The vote makes the Colectivo workers the largest unionized group of coffee shop workers in the U.S.

The local will start bargaining surveys among the workers and help them set goals and oversee selecting a bargaining committee.

Ordinarily, after workers vote to unionize, firms throw roadblocks and delays in the union’s way, attempting to outlast and discourage the workers and preventing a first contract. That may not happen this time, wrote Jon Levitan in Harvard’s On-Labor blog, which first reported the win.

And on the same day, IBEW announced their win, a group of Starbucks workers in the Buffalo area formed an organizing committee. SB Workers United posted their letter to company CEO

Kevin Johnson on their website and on Twitter.

The organizing committee appealed to the firm’s self-image as a progressive company and said respecting their right to organize “will help us help the company serve communities.”

“We see unions as the best way to make Starbucks a place to have a sustainable career and a true partnership,” they wrote Johnson. “We do not see our desire to organize as a reaction to specific policies but as a commitment to making Starbucks, Buffalo, and the world a better place.”

The organizers, who got an immediate cheer from Association of Flight Attendants-CWA President Sara Nelson, also asked Starbucks to agree to eight fair election principles—such as balancing captive audience meetings with equal time for the union to reply.

The committee also asked Starbucks to agree to card-check voluntary recognition but said it would settle for an NLRB-run secret ballot election if Starbucks preferred that. The principles were posted, too.

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Judge tosses Trump rollback of clean water safeguards



By M. Phillis & S. Naishadham

A federal judge threw out a Trump-era rule that ended federal protections for hundreds of thousands of small streams, wetlands, and other waterways and left them vulnerable to pollution from nearby development.

The Biden administration had already said it plans to repeal the Trump-era rule and issue new regulations defining which waterways are federally protected under the Clean Water Act. But the Trump rule remained, and environmental groups, Native American tribes, and others said it could lead to the loss of wetlands, damage wildlife habitat and allow businesses and farmers to pollute waterways.

U.S. District Court Judge Rosemary Marquez in Arizona, an Obama appointee, sided with those groups on Monday, determining that the Trump administration's rule last year improperly limited the scope of clean water protections. Marquez said the Environmental Protection Agency had ignored its own findings that small waterways can affect the well-being of the larger waterways they flow into.

The EPA, now headed by Biden appointee Michael Regan, said it is reviewing the decision and declined to comment. In June, Regan said the agency planned to issue a new rule that protects water quality while not overly burdening small farmers.

The water rule — sometimes called “waters of the United States” or WOTUS — has long been a point of contention. In 2015, the Obama administration expanded federal protection to nearly 60%

of the nation's waterways. Because the Obama rule also faced several legal challenges, Monday's decision puts back in place a 1986 standard — which is broader in scope than the Trump rule but narrower than Obama's — until new regulations are issued.

According to an earlier review by the Biden administration, the Trump rule allowed over 300 projects to proceed without the federal permits required under the Obama-era rule. The review also found the Trump rule significantly curtailed clean water protections in states such as New Mexico and Arizona.

Those changes were challenged in court by six Native American tribes that said the Trump rule defied the law's environmental focus. Until it was revoked, the rule was “causing irreparable damage to our nation's waters,” said Janette Brimmer, a lawyer for Earthjustice, an environmental group that represented the tribes.

Mondays' ruling takes effect nationwide and could have an immediate impact. In Georgia, a proposed titanium mine a few miles from the edge of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge could require federal approval after all. Last year, the Army Corps of Engineering determined that it no longer had jurisdiction over the project. On Tuesday, an Army Corps spokesman said it is too early to determine how the ruling will affect its involvement with the project.

Also affected are developers and other businesses that stood to benefit from regulatory and financial relief under the Trump rule. Advocates for less restrictive federal regulation say protection of water-

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Indigenous Brazilians converge on Supreme Court ahead of crucial land rights case

By Morning Star

Thousands of Indigenous Brazilians marched to the country's Supreme Court Thursday, calling on judges to confirm their right to their ancestral lands.

At least 6,000 demonstrators from 173 different ethnic groups sang and danced on the route from behind the National Theatre, where they have been camping, dressed in traditional outfits including feather headdresses and with painted bodies.

Justices are evaluating a lower court's ruling that invalidated a claim by some Indigenous people in Santa Catarina state to what they say is their ancestral territory. The Supreme Court's ruling is expected will be a landmark ruling.

The lower court based its decision on allegations the group wasn't occupying the land in October 1988, when Brazil's constitution was signed after the nation's return to democracy, which the group denies.

Protest organizers say the Santa Catarina case is of wider importance as a positive ruling would force judges to apply the same conclusion to many similar cases.

It could also have implications for a bill going through the Brazilian Congress that officially establishes October 1988 as a reference date for Indigenous people seeking full protection of their territories.

Many Indigenous groups say the date is unfair, as they were forced off their land during Brazil's military dictatorship in the preceding 20 years.

President Jair Bolsonaro says allowing earlier claims would create "chaos" and see legal claims placed on land that has been farmed or developed for centuries.

Sanders: la expansión de Medicare de Biden es un paso hacia Medicare para todos

By Mark Gruenberg

Las propuestas del presidente Biden para expandir el Medicare tradicional para cubrir a más personas y ofrecer más beneficios son un paso en el camino hacia Medicare para todos, sostiene el principal defensor de este tipo de atención médica de pagador único administrada por el gobierno.

Es por eso que el senador Bernie Sanders, Independiente, Vermont, los está presionando ahora, dijo a National Nurses United, el sindicato que ha liderado una cruzada de una década por Medicare para todos y contra el sistema privado de atención médica con fines de lucro.

Y los defensores que escucharon a Sanders también dejaron en claro que van a seguir adelante, tratando de conseguir más copatrocinadores del Congreso para la última versión integral de la Cámara de Representantes de Medicare para todos, HR1976. Sanders aún tiene que presentar su proyecto de ley complementario Medicare For All del Senado.

Pero el proyecto de ley de "reconciliación" de 3,5 billones de dólares que Sanders, como presidente del Comité de Presupuesto, aprobó en el Senado dividido en partes iguales en una votación partidaria abre el camino para los cambios de Medicare de Biden sin la amenaza de un obstructionismo republicano, señaló. La Cámara de Representantes, dirigida por los demócratas, la aprobó, también siguiendo las líneas del partido.

El trabajo organizado apoya la legislación de Sanders y la agenda de Biden, ya que los planes y prioridades del presidente y los trabajadores son prácticamente idénticos. Una gran diferencia: Biden se opone a Medi-

care para todos y prefiere ceñirse solo a las reformas a través de la Ley de Cuidado de Salud a Bajo Precio.

Biden, Sanders, NNU y los demás ampliarían Medicare para cubrir problemas dentales, de la vista y auditivos, reducirían la edad de elegibilidad para Medicare a 60 y darían a Medicare el poder de negociar con las grandes farmacéuticas para reducir los precios de los medicamentos recetados. Medicare tiene esa influencia: él, Medicaid, la defensa y los sistemas hospitalarios y de salud de VA juntos representan casi la mitad de todos los ingresos del sector médico en los EE. UU. Solo Medicare no puede negociar con los fabricantes de medicamentos.

Sanders ve "la esencia de" la agenda del proyecto de ley de reconciliación, que también incluye la lucha contra el cambio climático, la inversión en transporte público, el fin de la dependencia de los combustibles fósiles y el pago de gran parte de esto eliminando el recorte de impuestos Trump-GOP de 2017 para las corporaciones y los ricos. como prueba al país que el gobierno trabaja para ellos, no el 1%.

Promocionó otros beneficios para los trabajadores y sus familias de la reconciliación, incluido el aumento de los fondos federales para el cuidado infantil y los salarios de los trabajadores del cuidado infantil, licencia familiar y médica pagada permanente, y cheques mensuales inmediatos de \$ 300 para familias con niños.

"Los sindicatos tienen una batalla cuesta arriba en sus manos" en la lucha de Medicare para todos. "Estás asumiendo la codicia de la industria farmacéutica y la industria del cuidado de la salud", concluyó Sanders.