



On The Move

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Senators Introduce Bill to Crack Down on Union Busting

On May 16, 2022, Pennsylvania Senator Bob Casey, joined senators Wyden (D-OR), Murray (D-WA), Booker (D-NJ) and Van Hollen (D-MD) to introduce the **No Tax Breaks for Union Busting Act** to end the taxpayer subsidies for corporate union busting campaigns.

As workers around the country fight for higher pay and better working conditions by unionizing, they often face million-dollar corporate intimidation campaigns to block unionization. To add insult to injury, these anti-union corporations are allowed to write off their union busting efforts as “business expenses.”

Corporations shouldn’t be rewarded for union busting, making it time to change the current law that allows them to take a tax deduction for the money they spend on anti-labor activities. On the day Senator Casey and his senate allies introduced the **No Tax Breaks for Union Busting Act**, 15 other senators, all democrats, signed on as co-sponsors.

The refusal of Republican senators to support the legislation should come as no surprise. Republicans have long been the party of the rich and fiercely opposed to the very existence of labor unions. What may surprise some is that the Republican Party remains as anti-union as ever after being “remade” by former President Trump. While Trump talked a good game about the “forgotten people,” he did little while in office to benefit working class people. His only legislative success was a big tax cut for the rich and the super-rich, folks like the Wizard of Oz and hedge fund manager, David McCormick, the candidates still in the race to be the republican senate nominee.

Just like other republican politicians, Trump proved to be nothing more than a *huckster*, exploiting the anger of voters who are having a hard time getting by in difficult economic times.

Voting Rights under Attack

Despite losing the 2020 election by 7 million votes nationally and 306-232 in the Electoral College, Trump, became the first president in more than two centuries to refuse to hand over power peacefully. His incitement of the Jan. 6 assault on the Capitol--his last-ditch attempt to remain in office--killed five, including one police officer, and injured another 140 police officers.

On May, 17, Republican Doug Mastriano, a Trump bootlicker, won the nomination for Governor of Pennsylvania. He will face Democrat Josh Shapiro in the general election. Pennsylvania voters chose Democrat John Fetterman to run for the U.S. Senate. He will be pitted against whoever ultimately gets the republican nomination.

There are many important issues that will be decided in the November election, the most important of which is voting rights. Close behind for working people is the right to organize and bargain over wages and conditions of work. So where do the candidates stand on these issues?

Shapiro and Fetterman are strong supporters of voting and union rights. In contrast, Mastriano and both McCormick and Oz favor voter suppression and union busting. Why do we say this? Let’s start with voting rights.

In 2019, Pennsylvania passed Act 77 with overwhelmingly republican support. Act 77 gave voters the right to vote by mail without having to provide an excuse, thereby making it easier for voters to gain access to the polls, especially working people who may not otherwise have been able to vote because of their work schedules, or their inability to lose pay in order to get to the polls.

In 2020, Trump lost Pennsylvania and other battleground states. Unable to accept defeat, given his egotistical personality, Trump tried to steal the election by pushing the idea, without a shred of evidence, that mail balloting led to a rigged result. Now Mastriano, Oz and McCormick want to undo our right to vote by mail.

In addition, Pennsylvania's governor appoints the Secretary of State, who is responsible for administering elections. If Mastriano were to become Governor and appoint a partisan hack to the position, we could face an unprecedented crisis in 2024, brought about by republican officials who are willing to ignore the will of the people. That's why we support Josh Shapiro for Governor.

Juneteenth a new paid floating holiday

Juneteenth ("June 19th") marks the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people be freed, marking the end to slavery in the United States. On June 17, 2021, President Biden signed legislation making Juneteenth a federal holiday. However, marking Juneteenth as a *federal* holiday did not extend to SEPTA employees and other public employees working for state governments.

As a result, Local 234 had to negotiate with SEPTA to secure Juneteenth as a paid holiday under our contract. Like other issues involving money, SEPTA initially resisted the idea. However, the Local's bargaining team emphasized that SEPTA's recognition of Juneteenth was a matter of respect for its African American workforce, as well as, a matter of supporting the diversity and unity of all TWU represented employees. While some view Juneteenth as a strictly African American holiday, Local 234 views the successful struggle against slavery, which it commemorates, as a step in the yet to be achieved emancipation of the entire working class from the poverty and oppression so often associated with the system of wage slavery.

This year Juneteenth falls on a Sunday. That means that members who work on that day can float the holiday, or receive eight hours pay, while those who are off on June 19 will receive an additional eight hours pay for the week, provided that they work the last scheduled day before and the first scheduled day after the holiday.

Response to audit of dependents behind schedule

The audit of qualified dependents is running behind schedule, while creating a number problems in the way it is being done. In the short term, this means that some members will soon receive threatening letters about their dependents being dropped from our medical plans. At the same time, Consova is trying to undercut our contractual agreement to provide medical benefits to all of our members' dependents, by knocking *eligible* dependents off the benefit rolls. For example, Consova wants to disqualify spouses who are temporarily separated, but not divorced, even though there is no such thing as being "legally separated" in Pennsylvania. We will be meeting with SEPTA and Consova this week to straighten these problems out, before we have a big mess on our hands.

WE MUST AND WE WILL