



# The Red Star-Ledger

Spring 2022

## Welcome Comrades!

Welcome to the renewal of The Red Star-Ledger, the newsletter for New Jersey Democratic Socialists of America. We're a part of the Democratic Socialists in America (DSA) the largest socialist organization in the USA with 95,000 members and growing. There's no better time to come together and fight for social, racial, environmental, and economic justice!

We're witnessing a long overdue resurgence in labor rights and union growth. Unionizing Amazon and Starbucks and other behemoth industries is underway, as workers are demanding fair wages, hours, and dignity. In New Jersey four Starbucks have already applied. We are working to elect a New Jersey socialist in office for the first time in generations. Soon we will win! Following the pandemic and all the lives lost, the need for Medicare for All is apparent and crucial. Housing is a major problem in New Jersey and our Housing Justice group is organizing tenant unions to build power against the landlord and developer class in communities throughout our chapter. The fight for environmental justice is happening right now in Newark and exists in too many of our communities of color. We are working on many fronts as you'll see in this issue. Time for change is now.

One thing seldom recognized about joining a socialist movement is not only do we fight for the rights of all but joining also breaks down the isolation and hopelessness of our culture. We are a community of folks committed to changing the world together.

All are welcome and all are needed. JOIN US! To find out more, come to a new member meeting, a chapter meeting. Follow us online or email us here: [north-nj@dsanj.org](mailto:north-nj@dsanj.org) or check out our calendar for meeting times and events.



## About Us

The Red Star Ledger is a publication of the North NJ Democratic Socialists of America. We believe that working people should run both the economy and society democratically to meet human needs, not to make profits for a few.

The Red Star Ledger is a collection of individual member op-eds, educational blogs, and other thoughts from the Left. Opinions expressed here are those of the author(s) only.

All our writing is done on a volunteer basis, and we're always looking for more help. Contact us: [northnj@dsanj.org](mailto:northnj@dsanj.org)

## Seizing the Moment

### *How Does North NJ DSA and DSA Support Union Organizing?*

2022 has been a prime time for union organizing. On April 1st, Amazon warehouse workers in Staten Island succeeded in unionizing with the Amazon Labor Union (ALU) by a margin of more than 500 votes. Immediately following the victory, workers at over 100 other facilities have reached out to Chris Smalls, President of ALU, to ask about organizing their own workplaces. This historic victory follows months of growing labor militancy from [Starbucks](#) workers unionizing their stores to strikes in the fields of [education](#) and [healthcare](#).

The growing labor movement can be traced to the eroding conditions workers suffered from during Covid-19. "Declines in the standard of living for the working class and skyrocketing inequality have been accentuated during the pandemic," says Jorge M., a member of North New Jersey DSA and a labor organizer. Forced to work in unsafe conditions within a system of threadbare social safety nets, workers who were symbolically hailed as essential were treated as disposable. Meanwhile, CEO pay soared by nearly [19%](#) during the first year of the pandemic. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos's net worth has ballooned to \$176.9 billion.

During the ALU's union drive, Amazon hired an army of union busters to dissuade workers from joining. They used tac-

## Seizing the Moment By: Julia Tache

tics such as holding captive audience meetings, interrogating workers on the activities of the union, and targeting union supporters with racist messaging, referring to them as “thugs.” These tactics backfired as employees of the heavily diverse JFK8 warehouse rejected anti-union messaging and blatant attacks against their co-workers. One reason why these attacks were successfully resisted is because of the worker-to-worker organizing that was the central strategy of the ALU. The energy and agitation came from workers themselves and not an outside organization. “No one can organize workers better than the workers... they are prepared to point out the contradictions of the quick growth of massive companies and the lack of resources for the labor which made that possible” says Jorge.

A common theme in ALU’s organizing is the emphasis on community building: Smalls, who was fired two years ago (from Amazon for organizing), and other organizers provided support to workers. They gave out food, t-shirts, and engaged people on the issues of low pay, extreme hours, and absurdly high turnover. “When you get hired at Amazon, they don’t expect you to last more than a year,” said Angelika Maldonado, speaking on a panel with other organizers.

This corporate culture of burning through employees creates insecurity and makes it near impossible to build trust with one’s coworkers. It is even more remarkable that the ALU succeeded in a company known for treating employees as expendable. “Amazon is a behemoth of a corporate giant, and despite that the labor union won! There was a lot of creativity in organizers’ strategy, which included cookouts, handing out materials at the bus stop, and tons and tons of one-on-ones,” said Jake E., another labor organizer from North New Jersey.

Another remarkable fact about the ALU is how it was a movement of rank-and-file workers. The ethos of

ALU deviates from the common, bureaucratic structure of larger, more established unions where often there is a disconnect between leadership and membership. “This was a truly ground-up movement and network of people,” says Allie H., a union organizer and chapter member. “They built everything from within the warehouse by people at the warehouse who were consistently holding actions and following-up with people directly.” The ALU is gearing up for a vote at LDJ5, a smaller warehouse on Staten Island demanding the same things as JFK8: a \$30 an hour minimum wage, paid breaks, better medical leave, and additional paid time off.

The co-optation of a grassroots labor movement especially at an early stage remains a serious threat. In nearby Bayonne, the International Brotherhood of Trade Unions, a dubious organization, has since withdrawn filing for an election. As organizers we must identify and stand with the actions driven by people power, not opportunists.

Questions have been raised about what larger unions in related industries, such as the Teamsters, can do to help support and grow ALU. Amazon is also currently [threatening to challenge](#) the National Labor Relations Board on the JFK8 decision. The vote for a union is just the first victory in what will be a protracted battle.

“We are here to meet the moment and centralize attention...this is an opportunity for DSA to come together in a national, unified project” says Jake E. The national campaign to unionize Starbucks, for instance, has supported workers at hundreds of stores across the country, including three in New Jersey. Allie believes that building power from the bottom-up, as Starbucks and Amazon workers have successfully done, can be used as a model to another workplaces. Solidarity from existing unions will also be crucial in supporting workers who are organizing their workplaces for the first time.



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There’s a lot you can do as a DSA member!” says Allie, “Some things any chapter can be involved in is hosting fundraisers, providing striking support, and showing up at the picket line.” “Recruiting salts (workers with the explicit intention to support unionization efforts) to work in the facility will be crucial- we do not have to be on the sidelines, we can be in there and make connections,” says Jorge. Jake, a member of the [Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee](#), created during the pandemic as a response to lack of workplace safety protections, encourages anyone interested in organizing their workplace or supporting other labor work to get involved. Our chapter is also hosting a [fundraiser](#) to send union members to Labor Notes, a conference which connects workers and advocates on taking power back in the workplace.

Labor organizing is more than just a hot new trend sweeping the nation: it is the continuation and result of decades of struggle by workers fed up with exploitation under capitalism. Employers have done all they can to crush workers movements throughout history, but workers have proven that they can win in even the most David and Goliath of circumstances. As socialists, workers, and political actors, we must take advantage of this wave and bring forward the tide which will lift all boats. By joining the North New Jersey chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America, you can be part of an organization helping to rebuild the labor movement.

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## I WORKED AT STARBUCKS. HERE'S WHY THEY NEED A UNION.

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As part of a renewed wave of labor militancy in America, workers at hundreds of Starbucks stores across the nation are filing to unionize their workplaces. In many instances, these organizers face harassment and thinly veiled threats of termination from management as evidenced in one recent example of a 19-year old barista, Laila Dalton, who was fired under the pretext of “violating company policies”, but in reality, was dismissed due to her unionizing efforts at a store in Phoenix, Arizona.

In addition to these more overt union-busting tactics, Starbucks is planning a softer approach to dissuade workers from joining a union. Howard Schultz, the former CEO of the company has returned to head the company and plans to introduce new benefits for workers to combat the “assault from unionization” that he claims many private companies are facing today. Schultz briefly flirted with an independent centrist presidential run in 2020, and reportedly planned to spend anywhere between \$300 million-\$500 million dollars of his own personal wealth to assure that a centrist candidate prevailed over the ascendant Bernie Sanders coalition within the democratic party at the time.

Schultz pioneered within Starbucks the marketing philosophy of “The Third Place”; this refers to Starbucks’ supposed space for comfort and community away from home and work. What “The Third Place” belies is that this comfort is built on the stresses and abuses inflicted on customers themselves and manage-

workers (referred to as partners) at Starbucks by both the ment.

I know these abuses all too well be- in North New Jersey and both wit- es of these unjust practices. Like all by management for signs of inactiv- with poorly managed schedules that I’ve seen shift supervisors beg in off day because the schedule had two where workers who want and need been scheduled for a given shift (these workers would occasionally then take double shifts to make up for lost hours, work- ing upwards of 14 hours and in some extreme cases, both opening and closing the store).



cause I worked for Starbucks at two separate locations nessed and directly experienced first-hand many instanc- other service workers, baristas are under constant watch ity, even when business is slow, and often have to deal reflect corporate imperatives rather than worker needs. group texts for a third or fourth barista to come in on their people set for peak rush hours; I’ve also seen the reverse hours are dismissed because too many baristas have been

I experienced the former myself once where one co-worker during a late night rush had a badly injured back from a recent car accident and could do no more than manage the cash register. The store closed at 11:00 PM that night, but we couldn’t leave until 2:00 AM in order to complete our work. We would have stayed a lot longer had my friend (a barista at another store) not stopped by and lent a hand. Leaving the store a few hours after closing was not an uncommon occurrence when I worked the closing shift, as understaffing created excess work for the 2-3 people on shifts.

These staff shortages are not accidental but rather by design, as the profit-motive that drives corporations like Starbucks dictates that management cut labor costs during down times and provide just enough staff to meet peak business hours. In the former scenario, this denies workers hours needed to make ends meet and in the latter scenario, it pushes workers to mental and physical breaking points.

Another knock-on effect of this profit driven time management is shift supervisors tasked with constantly maintaining counts of all inventory, to maintain just-in-time delivery shipments from suppliers. This compounded staff shortage issues at one of my stores because while supervisors were technically the “third worker” on the floor, they spent large parts of their time off it in the backroom counting. Add to this the woefully short, 10 minute break for a 4 hour shift and 30 minute lunch break for an 8 hour shift and it becomes clear how little relief is offered for stressful shifts.

Given experiences like these, it comes as no surprise to me that a wave of unionism has spread through the company, despite Starbucks’ touting of its “great” benefits for partners and family-like relationship between management and workers. Schultz recently claimed he’s not anti-union but “pro-partner” and that “we didn’t get here by having a union.” And on that last note he’s technically right, but for the wrong reasons.

The multinational coffeehouse is valued at roughly \$29 billion dollars, maintains a dominant market share over its competi- tors, and announced in 2020 it’s plan to expand to about 55,000 stores by 2030, up from about 33,000 at the time. All of this exceptional wealth and growth was made possible by the exploitation of its employees through long hours with minimal downtime, stressful work conditions, and constant inventory restock demands needing to be satisfied. A Starbucks union would help workers fight for better working conditions, better hours and fairer pay for the labor they have put into Starbucks. It’s our labor that makes Starbucks so profitable for the stakeholders, but now it’s time for workers to fight back.



## ELECTORAL WORK PAST AND FUTURE

### Joel Brooks For Ward B, Jersey City - November 2021

The Joel Brooks campaign for the Ward B/West Side of Jersey City came very close to winning – only 200 votes away. For first time candidate, first DSA endorsed candidate and first socialist to run in NJ in generations, this was a remarkable achievement! This campaign revealed people would come out and vote for a campaign that spoke to their needs – fully funded schools, affordable housing, clean air and water, and protections from predatory landlords and corporate developers.

Unfortunately, real estate developers and corporate donors were able to just barely keep us from victory. Team Fulop raised over \$1 million dollars and had hundreds of paid staff across the city. Even with all that opposition, we still came within 200 votes. We will continue to organize together to build a Jersey City for All.

Dear North NJ DSA Family,

For those of you don't me, I am Joel Brooks, and I ran for City Council in Jersey City last year. Although our campaign for a "West Side for All" in Ward B of Jersey City came up short by 185 votes, we built something really special together. If you knocked on doors, donated money, made phone calls, helped design our literature, took pictures, ran canvasses, THANK YOU!

The disappointment I felt when the vote totals were final was surpassed by the hope that we can win in the future, and gratitude to all of our volunteers and supporters.

I came to DSA in 2016, right before the Bernie Sanders surge in membership. I was fortunate to work for Bernie 2016 briefly in Pennsylvania, and came back to NJ energized to help build DSA and working class power.

Although we lost the election, we actually won Election Day! The energy of volunteers and supporters during in-person voting on November 2nd was electric, and voters felt that. Part of our mission was to inspire working class people to cast a vote for someone who would stand up to developers, landlords and police unions.

Lessons learned: we need a bigger coalition to win. I am open to how we build that, and I look forward to doing it together.

If you are interested in building democratic socialism in NJ electoral politics there are two things you can do RIGHT NOW!

1. Join our electoral working group to help plan how we win in the future
2. Sign up to canvass for Chigozie Onyema in Newark. His election is May 10th and we need all hands on deck to elect a Black open socialist to the Newark City Council.

Love and solidarity,  
Joel



## NNJDSA WILL SOON SEE OUR CANDIDATES WIN!

### *Chigozie Onyema For West Ward, Newark*



### **NNJDSA & Chigozie Team at 1st Day of Action**

**Election Day is May 10th** for our NNJDSA endorsed candidate, [Chigozie Onyema](#), running for council in Newark's West Ward. This is an exciting, close, but winnable race. It is likely to go to June run-off election yet is very winnable. Having a socialist win in Newark, the largest city in New Jersey, would be a great step forward for Newark, for New Jersey and for democratic socialism.

Chigozie is a DSA member and has worked with our chapter on true public safety and electoral campaigns. This coalition campaign with NNJDSA means a collaboration while his team retains some autonomy on the campaign to ensure that the campaign belongs to the grass-roots movement and not led by DSA, a primarily white organization. Our participation gives our chapter the opportunity to knock on doors and build relationships with residents of Newark's West Ward, as we did in the campaign for Joel in Ward B of Jersey City. One of his priorities for housing is investing in community land trusts, an inherently socialist pol-

icy as it takes land off the speculative market. On labor, he wants mostly to ensure that new job opportunities go to the community where they launch and prioritizes hiring Black and Brown community workers from the community and ideally union. Also, his campaign is responding to the needs of his community, a community we can learn more about and build better coalition and trust.

There is no incumbent running, as current incumbent is under indictment for taking bribes in the role of Newark CEDC (now Invest Newark) chair. The main opponent is the local democratic slate which will be somewhat of a hurdle. However, Chigozie has high fundraising numbers and has a strong campaign infrastructure and is well-known, respected, and liked in the community. And he has NNJDSA! Us!

Come volunteer with us! [Come out for the last Day of Action before the election](#) - May 10th!



**Our Electoral Working Group meets to discuss and plan the future of our chapter's electoral work.**

**Winning these things won't be easy - but the only way we're going to win is together. [Join us.](#)**



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## BDS & PALESTINIAN SUPPORT

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### *Introducing the BDS and Palestine Solidarity Working Group!*



Greetings. We wanted to introduce our new working group, The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) and Palestinian Solidarity Working Group (BDSPSWG) to you all, tell you a little bit about ourselves, and invite you to join us in our organizing work going forward.

The North Jersey BDSPSWG arose from the debate around DSA endorsed (and DSA member) Representative Jamaal Bowman voting for a package of military funding for, and making a diplomatic visit to, the apartheid government of Israel. These actions violate DSA's well-established support of the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement. The increased visibility of this issue following the Bowman incident helped us realize how much work we needed to do locally and nationally to support Palestinian liberation. We started meeting informally in December. As of February, we officially became a chapter working group, with Brian F. as our co-chair.

#### *What have we been up to?*

At our January convention, we introduced and passed resolutions dissenting from the decision of DSA's National Political Committee's "failure to expel or otherwise discipline" Jamaal Bowman and calling on them to reconsider their vote to censure and/or revoke their previous endorsement and to commit to refusing to endorse Bowman in 2022. The resolutions also called for improving organizational issues including discipline for candidates and elected officials, more transparency, and better communication.

We also took part in our first Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW). We kicked off the

week by hosting Alex and Laurie, members of the BDS national working group at our March chapter meeting to educate our members about Palestine and discuss the importance of the BDS movement. Later that week, we held a screening of *Naila and the Uprising*. We were excited to be able to screen and host a discussion on this powerful film of Palestinian resistance to Israeli oppression. That week, our working group also released a tweet each day, highlighting apartheid, resistance, and local events. We hope to expand our efforts for next year's IAW.

#### *What are we doing now?*

Our primary ongoing focus is on local organizing. We are engaging in outreach with local groups organizing on behalf of Palestinian solidarity, especially Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim led organizations. These groups include: The NJ Coalition for the Liberation of Palestine, Palestinian-American Community Center, American Muslims for Palestine-NJ, Jewish Voice for Peace North/Central NJ, Rutgers Students for Justice in Palestine, Jews for Palestine Right of Return, People's Organization for Progress, Palestinian Youth Movement NY-Cand more There is a substantial Palestinian population in North Jersey, and we know our work needs to be informed by those most impacted on the ground here.

We have recently joined a [letter campaign](#) calling on Rutgers University to cancel its recent [Memo- randum of Understanding](#) with Tel Aviv University. We have also initi-

ated a [petition](#) endorsed by seventeen other organizations/branches, calling on Rutgers President Holloway to repudiate US Representative Joshua Gottheimer's recent slander of Rutgers supporters of Palestinian rights with false accusations of antisemitism and of having "sided with the terrorists." We also note that Rep. Gottheimer's attack is part of the [well-documented Zionist campaign](#) to smear Palestine advocacy into silence, on college campuses and beyond.

We are encouraging all our members and everyone in North Jersey to sign a pledge card to support the BDS movement, and boycott brands that profit from the apartheid Israeli regime. ([bit.ly/DSAforBDS](http://bit.ly/DSAforBDS)).

We are also wholly supportive of repealing New Jersey's shameful anti-BDS law that prohibits the investment of state funds in companies that honor the BDS picket line. New Jersey should be taking the lead in joining the BDS movement, just as it did in protesting apartheid South Africa, not targeting those who would affirm the humanity of Palestinians.

The BDSPSWG meets every other Monday at 7:45 PM. If you have any questions, would like to learn more, or would like to join our working group, please reach out to BDS channel on Slack (if you're a member) or contact us: [northnj@dsanj.org](mailto:northnj@dsanj.org)

***From the river to the sea,  
Palestine will be free!***



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## IMMIGRANT JUSTICE IN NEW JERSEY

***November 12, 2021 marked a major turning point for immigrant justice in New Jersey. For the first time since they opened, not a single immigrant was held at any of the three county-run ICE detention centers in Bergen, Essex, and Hudson Cts.***

Closing down all of New Jersey's ICE detention centers and kicking ICE out of the state for good has long been a major goal for local organizers. The North New Jersey chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (NNJDSA) has worked for the past several years in coalition with the immigrant justice movement in our state to wage a militant battle against the machine politicians keeping these ICE detention centers open. Only through a massive, organized movement that unapologetically demanded the abolition of immigrant detention was our campaign able to achieve the success that it did.

As socialists, we have long called for the abolition of ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CPB) and for the creation of a world where working people are allowed to move freely across borders without fear of incarceration and deportation. Rather than competing for an increasingly shrinking piece of the American Dream, immigrants and non-immigrants must be united in fighting for high paying jobs for all and challenging the power of capitalism together. Unlike many liberal organizations whose focus was on reforming immigrant detention to make the system less overtly cruel, the North Jersey DSA has always kept a clear-eyed vision of an abolitionist future where no person has to fear being picked up by ICE.

At the peak of immigrant detention in New Jersey, hundreds of immigrants were being held every night in the atrocious conditions that make up our state's ICE detention centers. The three county detention centers were notorious for [suicides](#), [medical neglect](#), [sexual assault](#) by guards, and becoming [public health](#) nightmares during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Department of Homeland Security's own inspector general [documented](#) rotting food, dirty water, and severe mold at the Essex County detention center. While activists were often accused of exaggeration when comparing ICE detention to concentration camps, it is hard to read reports about the conditions inside these centers and not be reminded of some of the greatest tragedies in human history.

New Jersey is undoubtedly a safer place for immigrants now that ICE has significantly fewer beds to hold detainees in a part of the country that is key to their deportation machine, but the work is not over yet. The Elizabeth Detention Center (EDC), privately run by CoreCivic, [quietly renewed](#) its contract with ICE in August of 2021 for an additional two years while Governor Phil Murphy was [vacationing](#) in Italy. After he returned, Murphy signed a landmark piece of legislation banning the state and local governments as well as private entities from renewing or entering into ICE contracts, but the EDC was given just enough time for their own renewal to go through.

Activists have long targeted the EDC, which has been not-

ed in [reports](#) for its overuse of solitary confinement, poor ventilation, and food served with maggots, for closure. At the height of Trump's family separation policy, hundreds of protesters gathered outside the Elizabeth Detention Center as a congressional delegation from NY and NJ ["forced"](#) their way inside to visit with detainees, promising to fight back against an immigrant system that was ripping kids from their families and forcing them into cages at child prisons near the southern border. Four years later, with the boogeyman of Trump no longer in office, we have seen almost no follow-up from New Jersey Representatives Frank Pallone, Bill Pascrell, and Albio Sires who visited the EDC that day with the [last report](#) about the detention center coming out of Rep. Pallone's office in 2019.

Trump's outrageous xenophobia and cruelty toward immigrants sparked much of the renewed interest in closing the EDC and allowed Democrats to posture as a humane alternative to the open racism of the Republican Party. In reality, the Democratic Party from the local to the national level, has always been a party of deportations and border militarization that differs in rhetoric, but very little in policy from Republicans. If anyone thought President Biden's administration would break with the viciousness of Trump's immigration rules, they need to look no further than images of Haitians at the border being violently expelled through [Trump's Title 42](#) policy, which Biden has continued up until very recently and is now facing [push-back](#) in his party to extend. The question immigrant justice organizers must answer is what is to be done with the Elizabeth Detention Center.

While a [lawsuit](#) against the EDC makes it way through the legal system and Murphy's anti-detention law could signal the end of the EDC in 2023, it is clear that we cannot rely on the legal system to close New Jersey's last immigrant detention center. A militant mass movement is the only guarantee that the EDC will be closed for good.

That is why the Immigrant Justice Working Group of the North Jersey DSA is calling for a recommitment to ending ICE detention in our state and for organizers to once again target the Elizabeth Detention Center for closure.

Our movement already closed three detention centers in New Jersey and there is no reason we can't close the last one. We need to bring the Elizabeth Detention Center back into the public consciousness through an unapologetic abolitionist campaign that confronts the politicians complicit in upholding its existence and brings people into our movement through street protests, canvassing, and independent electoral work. Join the North New Jersey DSA to help us continue the fight for immigrant justice in the Garden State!

## LABOR NOTES

To build working class power, the answer is in our new and exciting labor movement. But the question remains: how do we meet the moment, and grow our worker militancy in North Jersey?

During our chapter convention this year, the North New Jersey DSA resolved to build up our Labor Working Group with ambitious projects, and separately to establish a Fundraising Committee to make sure we have the resources we need for chapter work. Just a few months later, the new Fundraising Committee launched by collaborating with the Labor WG to achieve a big goal: raise \$5000 in solidarity funds to send comrades in our chapter to the Labor Notes Conference.

This June in Chicago, [Labor Notes will be gathering a huge assembly](#) of rank-and-file workers, union organizers, and “troublemakers” to train and build our network of leftist labor power. Labor Notes, a media and organizing project started in the 1970s, is committed to building the labor movement from the bottom up, with rank-and-file union members and radical organizers taking the initiative to make it happen. The 2022 conference will offer vital training and connections for worker leaders in our chapter and across the United States. Our chapter is looking to send organizers and rank-and-file workers to the conference in June. What is it going to take to get there?

Networking with and learning from comrades at Labor Notes means that most of us need to take time off

work and pay for travel to Chicago. We in the working class commit to supporting each other financially, and we’re encouraging chapter members to apply for solidarity funds. Our membership [dues](#) can’t cover all expenses, which is why we’re fundraising through phone-banking; calling our comrades is the best way to ask them to attend the Labor Notes Conference, and ask them to donate and help send others there. We’ll be making calls each week, leading up to our biggest fundraising phone-bank on April 28th.

Our fundraising will keep moving along with a May Day party. Stay tuned for more details on the exact time and location of this event, where we’ll get together and collect donations to contribute to our solidarity funds.

Following Striketober of 2021, and in the midst of this year’s breathless unionization drives, it’s time to meet this moment. Are you ready to join thousands of union members, officers, and labor activists in Chicago this June? Can you donate to help send our comrades, so we can build worker militancy right here in North Jersey? Will you call our chapter members and help fundraise with us? Fill out our [interest form](#) to get plugged in!

*Labor Notes Conference takes place at Hyatt Regency O’Hare at Chicago’s O’Hare Airport, starting Friday, June 17, 2022 at 9 a.m., through Sunday, June 19, 2022 at 3 p.m.*

**1. Get plugged into all our Labor Notes, fundraising, and Labor Working group activity here:** [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfrLI1AZLUwcEZg6uS2IA3WGsX7g1-Y1i33kKr-j\\_hIP-wvbGQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfrLI1AZLUwcEZg6uS2IA3WGsX7g1-Y1i33kKr-j_hIP-wvbGQ/viewform)

**2. Donate right away to North New Jersey DSA solidarity funds here:** <https://actionnetwork.org/fundraising/labor-notes-conference-solidarity-funds-north-new-jersey-dsa/>

**3. RSVP for the Solidarity is Calling phone-bank:** [https://actionnetwork.org/events/solidarity-is-calling-labor-notes-fundraising-phone-bank-2?source=direct\\_link&](https://actionnetwork.org/events/solidarity-is-calling-labor-notes-fundraising-phone-bank-2?source=direct_link&)

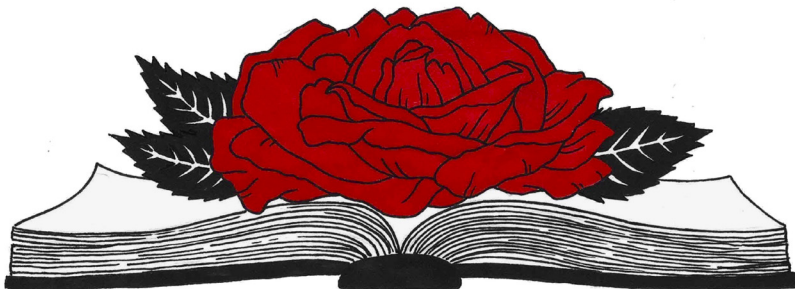
**4. Donate here:**





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## WHAT THE HECK IS THE C.R.E.W. (CAUCUS REPRESENTING EDUCATION WORKERS)



A few years ago, the thought was “Why Socialists Should Become Teachers.” I think a number of us would agree we need to rephrase that as “Why Socialists Should Become School Workers.” Why the expansion? One of the many things about education in this country that came to light over the past two years is the importance of every part of the school community - teachers, social workers, aides, psychologists, custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, secretaries. In the Spring of 2020, two members of North NJ DSA talked about starting a group for school workers. We knew that so many things in education needed to be addressed, including just having a safe place for socialists to talk about the issues we face and how to best handle them.

Our first activity was a rereading of Paolo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. When the world shut down in March, through to the end of the school year, we school workers were hailed as heroes. Once the summer came and capitalist powers convinced the world that it was time to get back to “normal”, that sentiment quickly reversed. Reading and discussing Freire that summer reenergized us to work toward what we knew was best for our students, their families, and the greater school community.

As school buildings reopened in September 2020, we faced a host of issues: student trauma was not being adequately addressed, staff were not receiving the necessary PPE, our colleagues were overwhelmed with a return to work in the midst of this ongoing

ing pandemic, we were all expected to do this while being vilified by the public as the enemies for fighting for the safety of all. One thing we know needs to be done is strengthening out unions - on the local, county, and state level. A few of us attended Jane McAlevey’s six session Strike School in the Fall. We gained methods and strategies that we have applied to the ongoing struggle for truly representative unions in our districts. Through working together, C.R.E.W. members have sought out and taken positions within their locals to implement changes that address the inequities both within and without their school buildings, campuses, and communities.

In addition, we are all there for each other, regardless of what our positions at our schools. We are teachers, aides, school psychologists, and professors at all grade levels, from K-12, in public and private schools. Meeting topics have included addressing proposed state legislation to stop inclusive curriculum, running better candidates for union office, supporting your Gender and Sexualities Alliance in a hostile environment, and what the role of a town’s Board of Education is.

We still have a ton of work to do, but none of us is doing it alone. C.R.E.W. has been a source of great support for its members and continues to do so. We meet every third Thursday evening at 7:00pm - our meetings are on the NNJDSA calendar. We are on facebook at NJ CREW and you can email us at [nnjcrew@gmail.com](mailto:nnjcrew@gmail.com). All are welcome to join us.

CAPITALISM ISOLATES US

QUARANTINE WORSENS THIS ISOLATION

**Socialism brings us  
together to tell us  
-we’re not alone-**

*This crisis demands that we keep building  
comradery, solidarity, and togetherness,  
even when we’re forced to be apart.*



# NNJDSA STATEMENT ON THE OVERTURN OF ROE V. WADE



The [leaked draft of the decision](#) in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* by the illegitimate Supreme Court paints a bleak picture for the future of reproductive rights in America. As socialists we not only condemn this but are prepared to fight tooth and nail against the upcoming overturn of *Roe v. Wade*.

This decision was written by the archconservative Samuel Alito and concurred by a simple majority of Supreme Court Justices, selected by multiple Republican Presidents that did not win their presidential elections, and several of whom were confirmed by a simple majority of Republican senators that represent a smaller section of the American population. We are living under minority rule, with little to no opposition by the Democratic party. While abortion access continues to be available in New Jersey, we are not without risk of this and other human rights from being taken away at any moment.

Who suffers from *Roe* being overturned? The working class. Who else suffers? Children who are unwanted or from families that can't adequately feed and care for them. Millions of children were placed back in poverty after the Child Tax Credit expired, and with no new stimulus check in sight,

families will be forced to continue stretching themselves even further to make ends meet. This is the inhumanity the right-wing wants us living in.

These abortion bans are part of a 40-year orchestrated attack by the capitalist class, led by the Republican Party and the religious right, on the working class and our healthcare. Thirteen states have laws on the books prepared for the minute *Roe v. Wade* is overturned by the Supreme Court to begin making abortion illegal in their states, with more expected to follow. This sets a dangerous precedent for other landmark cases, such as those which protect gay marriage and against anti-sodomy laws, which have historically been used to criminalize LGBTQ+ people. There will be attempts at restricting contraception once the doors for a post-*Roe* America are opened, making things even more dire.

This attack on *Roe* is an attack on all of us. It continues to perpetuate the patriarchal idea that men, and only men, can determine who has control over their bodies and that men, and only men, can determine when to have children. This is not a fringe idea for the right-wing, it's perpetuated into its elected leaders and even the minds of Supreme Court

justices like Amy Coney Barrett who was a "handmaiden" in the People of Praise cult. They wish to force upon others the idea of the nuclear family as sacrosanct, headed by the authoritative "strong man" father – a nostalgic return to a fantasy of the 50's era.

The capitalist class will have always have access to abortion, while the rest of us in the working class are destined to suffer. This decision like the [abortion ban in Texas](#) will hurt working class women, particularly women of color, queer people, and their families and communities. We must continue to fight for a system where the rich and powerful cannot legislate peoples' bodies, and where reproductive care and abortions are available to all.

The North New Jersey Democratic Socialists of America will continue to fight for working people seeking access to abortion, an essential right of healthcare for working people to keep control over their reproductive rights.

Our demands are clear:

**FREE ABORTION.  
ON DEMAND.  
WITHOUT APOLOGY.  
NO EXCEPTIONS.**

*sign our petition:*

[NNJDSA Petition](#)

*If you can, please donate to the [New Jersey Abortion Access Fund](#) locally and the [Abortion Access Fund](#) nationally, which provides financial assistance to those seeking abortions.*

# MEDICARE FOR ALL

## *Jersey City Profiles in Healthcare: Uninsurance, Underinsurance a Barrier to Care for those with Physical, Mental Health issues.*



Why do we as socialists support Medicare for All? Because “the healthcare system in America – a profit-driven, limited-coverage, patchwork, employer-based, multi-payer model – is a nightmare for working people.” ([source: DSA M4A Organizing Guide](#)) The struggles three real people living in North Jersey have faced accessing adequate healthcare illustrate the necessity for a more humane system. Joey is a wheelchair user, Arnold is an immigrant on shaky ground with immigration officials, and Harold is a middle-aged man who suffers from mental illness and walks with a cane (not their real names). Here are their stories, and how a public healthcare system could change their lives.

Joey was 24 years old when we first met. He was in a wheelchair and often spent his days at the park. He always had on the same clothing, and his personal hygiene was lacking. We started up a conversation about his favorite cartoons. We talked often, and a friendship developed. I learned about Joey’s background – his mother was from Jamaica, but he was born in the US. Despite many struggles he always kept a smile on. Eventually, he let me into his living space – a basement in complete disrepair, where he lived with his mother and brother. I asked him “Joey, aren’t you disabled, don’t you have insurance?” He said that he did. He told me that when he tried to get a home health aide, his insurance company wouldn’t cover it. Eventually, upon my advice, Joey checked himself into a hospital in Hoboken. Last time I checked, he was able to start walking for a little bit and get into a more stable environment.

I met Arnold around the same time I met Joey. Arnold is an electrician, originally from Trinidad and Tobago, and was living in the US on a permanent resident visa. He had a history of assaults and violence connected to substance abuse. There were days where he would stumble out of his apartment in a groggy state. We would go to a bar in the neighborhood around 11am. He would drink and play pool and pass the day there. When he was sober, he would lament beating his ex-girlfriend. He hated that he was nearly forty and had no kids. At one point he helped another ex get out of jail, but then she blew him off. I encouraged Arnold to see a therapist, but he wouldn’t do it. Arnold was trying to maintain, but given the high cost of therapy, even telehealth services like Better Help could cost \$65 a session. He wasn’t able or willing to receive that service.

My last story is about Harold. We met years ago at our therapist’s office. He walked with a cane and was dealing with mental health issues. Harold was a religious man and deferred to God all the time. Eventually, Harold stopped attending his sessions. He contacted me and asked me to reach out to our therapist on his behalf. I couldn’t do that because his case was very different from mine, but I wished him well. I offered him the phone number so he

could set up his own sessions, but he refused. Hopefully, he carried on elsewhere – but the barriers he faced in returning to therapy, or switching providers, concerned me.

Socialists understand that a capitalist system does not derive profit from insuring sick people, and our current system creates extremely poor health outcomes and impoverishes millions.

The solution that the Democratic Socialists of America support is Medicare for All. “Medicare For All” means the establishment of a single, public, universal health insurance system, managed by the federal government, where everyone, regardless of their employment or immigration status, will have insurance. It means comprehensive care: all services provided by a medical professional will be covered. It means free, on demand, unlimited care at the point of service, paid for not on the backs of the sick but through taxes on the rich. That means no fees, no co-pays, and no deductibles. And it means the establishment of a jobs program to replace the existing jobs lost if the private health insurance system were abolished.” ([source: DSA M4A Organizing Guide](#))

With M4A Joey could have stayed at his home with an aide, who could have bathed him and helped his home feel more hospitable. Arnold would have been able to find a support group or maybe a therapist who wouldn’t have scared him off, with costly copayments. Perhaps Harold could have felt more comfortable reaching out if the process of returning to therapy, or switching providers, wasn’t so long and complicated.

Medicare for All wouldn’t deny claims to pinch pennies, like Joey’s for-profit health insurer did. Medicare for All wouldn’t have saddled Arnold with costly trips to the hospital. Our current healthcare laws are failing the residents of North Jersey. Americans are paying double what other advanced industrialized countries pay for health care, and because of this, the most marginalized folks in our communities often fail to get the care they need. Medicare for All could have prevented this needless suffering.

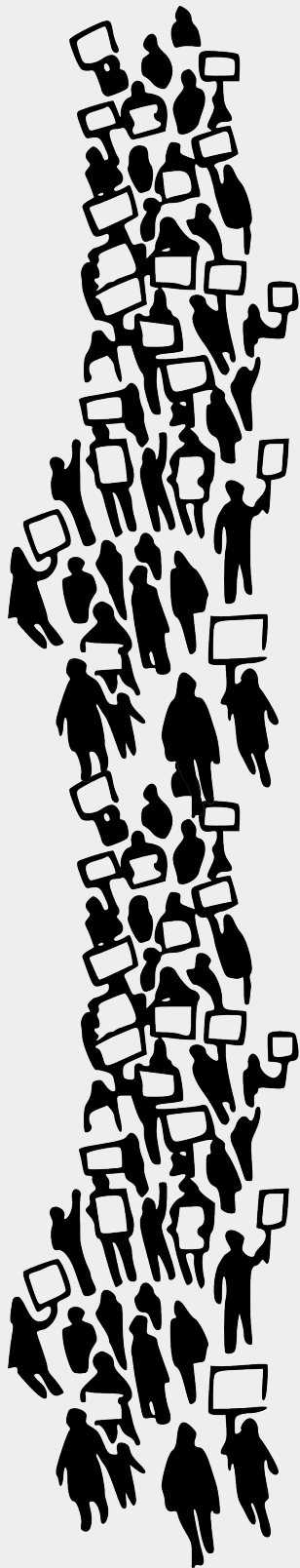
# HEAL THE SICK TAX THE RICH



DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS FOR

## Medicare for All





## CAMPAIGNS AND WORKING GROUPS

### 2022 Campaigns

Building NNJDSA Campaign  
Housing Justice Campaign  
Class Struggle Campaign in Jersey City

### Working Groups

BDS/Palestine Working Group	Medicare for All
CREW (Caucus of Education Workers)	Labor Working Group
Electoral Working Group	Media Comms Committee
Fundraising WG	Member Engagement Comm.
Housing Justice WG	Tech Committee
Immigration Justice WG	

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