

## Uncommitted primary voters demand 'Ceasefire Now!'

Voters in several states have added their voices to the growing demand for a ceasefire in Gaza and justice for Palestine by voting "uncommitted" or "blank" for president in primary elections.

*Percent of uncommitted or other dissenting votes for president in Democratic primaries as of April 5.*

- Alabama (5.1)
- Colorado (7.3)
- Connecticut (11.6)
- Georgia (3.1)
- Hawaii (29.1)
- Illinois (Cook County 12.0 voting blank)
- Iowa (3.9)
- Massachusetts (11.2)
- Michigan (13.0)
- Minnesota (14.6)
- North Carolina (10.5)
- Tennessee (3.3)
- Washington (7.4)
- Wisconsin (8.3 voting uninstructed)

In Georgia, the "Leave it Blank" campaign included 16 political and community-based groups, including the Peach State Muslim Coalition, New Disabled South Rising, The Movement for Black Lives Action Fund, Council on American-Islamic Relations Action, and Jewish Voice for Peace Action.



SHUTTERSTOCK / STEPHANIE KENNER

Pro-Palestine demonstrators gather in front of the White House in Washington last October 28 to protest the ongoing violence in Gaza.

The Georgia ballot does not allow for an "uncommitted" vote, so the voters turned in blank ballots. In five metro Atlanta counties 4,535 voters (3.1%) submitted blank Democratic primary ballots.

In Washington state, more than 48,000 Democratic voters cast ballots for "uncommitted delegates," about 7.4% of the total votes. Washington state's uncommitted coalition includes Palestinian Americans, Jews,

Muslims, members of the East African community, labor activists, and others who want an end to the war in Gaza.

As one uncommitted voter stated, "We have marched, we have called our representatives, we have confronted them in public, and we have made our views loudly known. Now is not the time to lie down in fear."

We are witnessing, as we did with COVID, the open murderous intent of a system that has offered us nothing but war, collapse, climate disaster, pandemics and total ecological destruction. This is the capitalist system in collapse.

The battle against a U.S. regional war in West Asia will set the stage for the new world that is coming. The line is drawn. It's either fascism, war, and more global destruction, or it's abolishing capitalism and its war by taking public control of all the technologies that produce the wealth that is the base of its power.

The clarity and consciousness of revolutionaries globally will shape the new world and a new America!

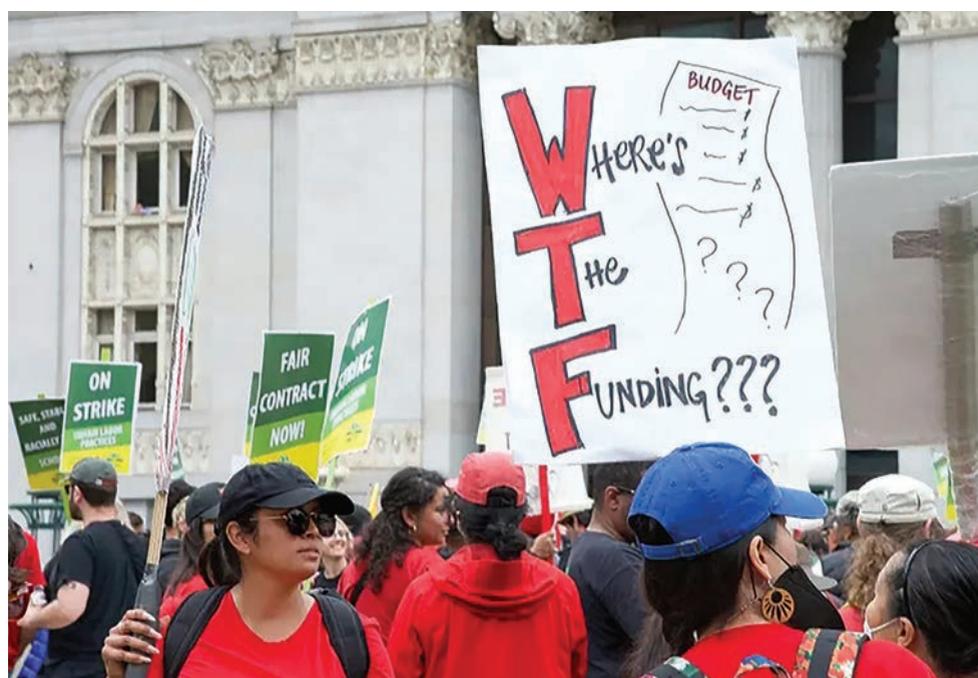
(<https://rally-theleague.org/gaza-war-machine-made-in-usa/>)

The uncommitted voters across the United States have taken a step toward freedom. It is up to the rest of us to continue the march towards freedom. **R**

## MAGA school-voucher plans flunk in some red states

In this critical 2024 election year, MAGA and other fascist forces use public education as a venue for the performative politics of fear, anger, hatred. They claim they are victimized by certain public school programs, which are actually aimed at meeting the educational and emotional needs of all students. Yet Americans everywhere want the government to do far more to support and expand public education, including special support for historically disadvantaged marginalized communities. This is as true in MAGA-controlled states and rural communities as it is in every major urban area.

To influence this election, the fascist Heritage Foundation has published Project 2025, a blueprint for politicians of every party at every level of government. The report calls for the end of public education as we know it by instituting "education freedom" at every level. Project 2025 calls for national and state systems of vouchers, where public funding for schools is diverted into payments to families so they have the "freedom" to go to private schools. This bait-and-switch trick is advertised as helping poor families to get good education. In fact, it is blowing up state budgets by authorizing the private looting of public schools.



SHEILA FITZGERALD / SHUTTERSTOCK

Teachers and supporters holding signs protesting at a Teacher Strike Rally in Frank Ogawa Plaza in Oakland, California in 2023.

### ARIZONA DEFICIT

Arizona has the country's most developed voucher program. Voters were told that the first-year 2022 costs would be \$33 million.

In fact, it cost \$550 million and has been increasing every year. This money is taken from public schools and given to parents, thereby breaking the state's public education budget.

However, 80% of vouchers go to families that have never had children in public schools at all! Parents with children already in private schools have used this money for skiing trips, pianos and lessons for driving luxury cars. Meanwhile, Arizona's budget deficit for 2024 could run as high as \$835 million.

In Iowa, vouchers run \$345 million for only 17,000 private school students. This is about \$20,300 per student in a state where public school students are budgeted about \$7,800 per year!

Project 2025 openly calls for abolishing "the administrative state." Vouchers are a major means to achieve this aim since they tend to bankrupt school budgets, local, city, county and state budgets.

Most government support for the basic human needs that we all need comes from city budgets. Public schools are a critical part of most local budgets. They are also the broadest form of democratic government that exists in the United States. Destroying public schools goes a long way to destroying government's responsibility to the public.

As of March 2023, voucher bills have been introduced in at least 24 states. They passed in four states: Iowa, Utah, Arkansas, and

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# MAGA school-voucher plans flunk in some red states

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Florida and have failed in at least six states so far in 2023: Georgia, Texas, Idaho, Virginia, Kentucky, and South Dakota – all MAGA-controlled states. In Texas, the governor called four special sessions in 2023 to implement vouchers, only to be rejected each time. Similar rebellions against vouchers are occurring right now in Georgia, Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska. Once Nebraska passed a voucher law, Support Our Schools Nebraska gathered nearly double the number of required signatures to put its repeal on the ballot this November.

School vouchers are also historically deeply rooted in segregation. This understanding is growing across the country. A 2024 poll of 1,800 Georgians shows that people of every political stripe believe the state should provide additional support for K-12 public schools, especially those that serve students from families with low incomes. In Central Bucks School District in Pennsylvania, the community is also rising

up against MAGA school board members who are implementing a top-down campaign that is financed by outside money to ban books.

Vouchers attack both urban and rural public schools. Across the country, rural folks well understand that vouchers will destroy rural public schools. These relatively smaller school districts run on a shoestring as it is. The loss of even 10 students to vouchers might mean that they would have to start laying off teachers and staff such that the schools would no longer function. And the MAGA plan to hold back “failing” third-grade students likewise devours scarce resources and is opposed by many rural areas.

## DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Project 2025 calls for abolishing all government accountability over school funding and wants to legalize states’ rights so that any state can refuse to implement any federal law. In essence, parents are given a voucher and told to fend for themselves in an unregulated market. Privatizing public schools across

the board is the goal. To achieve this, fascists rely on divide and conquer.

Public education faces regular and open coordinated attacks on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) as well as book banning, censorship and vouchers. A woman’s right to her body is fundamental in schools, yet it is under attack. Higher education and free speech have been hounded by agitators who deliberately conflate criticism of Israeli genocide with antisemitism. African American History, which is fundamental to our understanding of where we are as a country, is deplored and banned.

The Heritage Foundation report equates the interests of LGBTQ+ people with “pornography.” It would end all rules and regulations that protect trans students, BIPOC students and students with special needs. It proposes that the White Christian Nationalist version of religion be central to all curricula. It rejects the constitutional separation of Church and State and privileges the religious beliefs of one type of Christianity

over all other religions and over civil laws. Immigrants are demonized with false claims of inherent criminality. The public simply does not support stripping someone’s rights in the name of “freedom.”

Public education is today a critical arena for the battle for political power. Fascist forces are the gaslighters of an aggressive extractive capitalism that has the agenda of legally establishing the absolute domination of private property over every public interest. By privatizing schools, they are changing government to prioritize corporate interests over the public good. These are far more than simple “culture wars.” The end game is to abolish the public as a legal entity. This is central to establishing a full-blown corporate dictatorship.

The American people recognize these fascist MAGA attacks for what they are. All society is in motion. We have never been here before. We can only secure the power and the interests of the public by abolishing every form of corporate power over our lives. **R**

## Rally! mission statement

**Rally!** is the political paper of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

We fight alongside all who seek to abolish: poverty, ecological disaster, fascism, war, white supremacy, gender oppression and other attacks on the working class. We fight for a government that takes care of people first.

Our articles especially lift up the fight for humanity’s basic needs, which propels every other social struggle. We focus our work, along with other fighters, on developing strategic thinking that can unleash the energy of the millions of people who are driven to fight for a better world.

Together we can participate in the reconstruction of society, on a new foundation, where social wealth is owned in common and distributed according to need.

## Editorial policy

**Rally!** is a vehicle to reach out to and communicate with revolutionaries both within and outside of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

The Editorial Board is responsible for preparing the printed and website versions of **Rally!** to represent the League’s political positions and policies, the Board’s editorial and formatting guidelines, and the political points agreed on with article writers.

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## League of Revolutionaries for a New America

Today, whether through words or deeds, vast numbers of socially conscious people declare themselves revolutionaries in opposition to the degenerating social and economic conditions.

The League’s mission is to unite with other revolutionaries around the demands of the working class, especially the class of displaced workers and show that the solution is a cooperative, communist society where social wealth is owned in common and distributed according to need.

The demands of this new impoverished class for food, housing, education, healthcare and an opportunity to contribute to society are summed up as the demand for a cooperative society.

Such a society must be based on the public ownership of the socially necessary means of production and the distribution of the social product according to need.

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# Waking up and shaking up local elections in 2024

Oakland, California has become a critical battleground in the escalating war between the working people of America, including millions of people of color, and a corporate billionaire class that is aggressively dedicated to maximizing its profits. Workers demanding political and economic justice are organizing the people sidelined by decades of attacks and finding innovative ways to win in the electoral arena.

This war is a struggle for the power to determine whether everyone – or only the rich – will have good lives. The billionaires are funding attempts to overturn the choices made by voters and continue to profit by keeping people financially insecure and even homeless. Many follow the fascist Heritage Foundation Project 2025 plan to secure their corporate profits by ending American democracy altogether.

In 2024, voter turnout will be decisive. In Oakland, abolitionist class forces – working people – have demonstrated that part of the path to power is to motivate and engage people in the electoral process by mobilizing for basic needs, democracy and freedom.

The most visible attacks are the social fascist threats from groups like the Proud Boys or the Three Percenters, which promote the demonization of immigrants, LGBTQ people, “woke” teachers, Black youth, unhoused people, women and pregnant people. But the hidden power driving these visible attacks is the economic fascism that underlies them. Economic fascism is the accelerating merging of state power with corporate goals – Wall Street, big real estate, big tech and hedge funds.

The digital revolution drives today’s social polarization by eliminating living-wage jobs and forcing people into the political arena to defend their livelihoods. As production requires fewer workers, it becomes less profitable and Wall Street shifts its money into real estate and financial speculation, privatizing public services and monopolizing intellectual property in order to maximize income.

## POLITICAL WARS

This is called financialization and it is the foundation for economic fascism. It is the basis for the political wars erupting in Oakland and elsewhere:

- Real estate and high-tech billionaires undermine democratic elections by attempting to recall duly elected public officials before they have established a track record. Recalls of Oakland Mayor Sheng Thao and of District Attorney Pamela Price are financed by the same special interests that financed the recall of progressive San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin.
- The pro-Pamela Price group Protect The Win listed 24 lies being told by paid recall signature gatherers. At last report, more than \$3 million had been spent to recall Price.
- Anti-Price and anti-Thao campaign mes-



SHEILA FITZGERALD / SHUTTERSTOCK

Oakland, CA - Jan 13, 2024: Council Member Carroll Fife at Town Hall for Community Unity.

sages have been re-posted and supported by Elon Musk, X’s CEO and one of the wealthiest men on earth.

- They attempt to shut down public schools that serve everybody, in favor of either charter schools or private schools that use vouchers, both of which put public funds under private control.
- They build luxury housing that people cannot afford and refuse to build the low-income housing that the working class desperately needs.
- They force homeless encampments to move or close when the people have nowhere else to go.
- They prey on people’s fear of crime with “doom loop” anti-Black scenarios of a city deteriorating without police, when in fact police budgets have increased and sections of the Oakland police themselves have a history of committing crimes.

Oakland’s working class is resisting by building coalitions based on putting people’s basic needs, human rights, democracy and community cooperation ahead of corporate power grabs. Some elevate the principles of cooperation established by the Oakland-based 1960s Black Panther Party. Oaklanders have a long history of standing up against tyranny. This is what drove the 2022 rebellion against school closures. Oakland’s fighters understand that their

strength comes from connecting their various campaigns and supporting each other’s efforts. They know that housing unaffordability and school closures are both fueled by real estate speculation, and pro-police narratives are designed to suppress any protest.

- In 2022, Oakland voters approved Measure U, an \$850 million bond issue to build 2,200 to 2,400 affordable housing units over the next four to six years.
- Oakland voters created a progressive bloc on the City Council with the 2020 election of Carroll Fife, one of the key leaders in the Moms4Housing takeover of a home owned and kept vacant by a hedge fund.
- Councilmember Fife has opposed measures that allow the market to dictate public policy. Her landlord registry plan passed the council unanimously in 2022. It caps annual increases on rent-controlled homes at 3% and lets the city track the compliance of landlords subject to rent control and just-cause eviction requirements.
- The November 2019 Moms4Housing takeover of a vacant Oakland home uncovered a sprawling, mostly hidden network of at least 98 differently named LLCs that are part of Southern California’s home-flipping giant Wedgewood Inc.’s Bay Area

operations.

- The Anti-Police-Terror Project raises awareness that the Oakland Police Department takes almost half of Oakland’s general fund, forcing cuts to essential city services. The project coordinates non-police responses to mental health crises.
- Care 4 Community Action (C4C) organizes weekly neighborhood information sessions to rip the mask off who holds power in Oakland. Their goal is to make housing a human right, and “to deliver a working city government that is responsive to the needs of Oakland residents, and to dramatically increase the participation of Oakland residents in our government.” Oakland Standing United Against Hate” forums are sounding the alarm against the billionaire power grab.
- Coalitions are mobilizing. They include public-sector labor unions like SEIU and AFSCME.
- The Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) is part of the Oakland Progressive Alliance to refund, restore and reimagine what Oakland could look like “if we divested from racist and harm-perpetuating institutions, and invested in the things that really make our communities safe – housing, social services, education, living-wage jobs, and transformative justice.”

## MAKE WORKERS AWARE

These movements reflect and strengthen flashes of consciousness that make workers aware of their power and open their minds to new ideas. The common conditions and common interests of low-income and displaced workers undermine the old ideologies used to divide the class.

Oakland is not alone in using elections to confront financialization and economic fascism. In Los Angeles, a progressive bloc won elections to City Council and City Controller in 2022, and is resisting corporate attempts to claw back control in 2024, with primary victories by unhoused advocate Nithya Raman and reform district attorney George Gascon. Chicago succeeded in placing the Bring Chicago Home Initiative on the Illinois primary ballot to house the unhoused, but the measure unfortunately was defeated in the low-turnout election March 19. In Georgia, despite massive state voter-suppression measures, the Atlanta Stop Cop City movement is continuing its campaign to force the city to allow them to vote on the project.

Despite some setbacks, voters motivated by the vision of an abundant and cooperative society have shown they can win critical victories on the road to making that vision a reality. Voting can be a crucial tool for overcoming isolation, divide-and-conquer tactics, and the bogus claim that America is too poor to feed and house its people. **R**



SHUTTERSTOCK-PATHDOC

The crisis of student debt represents a fundamental betrayal of the promise of higher education as a pathway to socio-economic mobility and opportunity.

# Student debt crisis and the fight for public education

The CSU system, once hailed nationally for its affordability and accessibility, is now at a crossroads as nearly 400,000 students and their families confront the harsh reality of escalating costs. A new tuition increase has been imposed by the Board of Trustees. With tuition fees expected to rise by more than \$2,000 over six years, and ancillary expenses such as health services and materials also on the upward trajectory, the combined cost of attending CSU schools is projected to reach between \$8,000 and \$9,000 by 2028. For many students, particularly those from low-income families and marginalized communities, these exorbitant costs pose a formidable barrier.

This has led to multiple student protests and walkouts throughout the state. For example, students at Cal State Long Beach have created a coalition among school organizations called Students Against Tuition Hikes, organizing further protests to demand that the Board of Trustees reverse these increases. Meanwhile, faculty and staff throughout CSU campuses have joined rallies against the tuition increase. Their union, California Faculty Association, held their own protests against low pay and conditions, culminating in a January strike which won wage increases but did not fully meet their demands. Further struggle against tuition hikes and for full faculty wages will require solidarity between these two forces, and actions to draw the public's attention to the misalignment of funding priorities within CSU.

The ramifications of this crisis are profound and far-reaching. Students are forced to make very difficult choices between paying for essentials like textbooks or taking on

additional jobs to cover their expenses, all while accumulating crippling debt. The decision by the CSU system to increase tuition by 34% over five years only exacerbates this, further jeopardizing the dreams and aspirations of countless students. At its core, the crisis of student debt represents a fundamental betrayal of the promise of higher education as a pathway to socio-economic mobility and opportunity. What was once seen as a beacon of hope has now become a burden, with each loan statement serving as a painful reminder of the costs of pursuing one's dreams.

And for many graduates, today's economy is not providing the well-paid professional careers they dreamed of. New technologies are being used by corporate and government employers to cut workforces to the bone, producing insecurity and overwork instead of realizing possible improvements in job conditions. As college graduates find themselves trapped in low wage service and gig work, the old narrative of higher education as a bridge to a brighter future is becoming overshadowed by a previously unimaginable thought: is their investment truly worth its promise?

## SYSTEMIC CRISIS DEMANDS SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Moreover, the crisis of student debt is not merely a personal or individual struggle; it is a systemic issue that strikes at the heart of our society's values and priorities. As tuition costs soar and student debt reaches unprecedented levels, the very essence of public education is under threat. The CSU system, renowned for its diversity and inclusivity, risks losing its foundational principles as financial burdens eclipse the dream of higher education

for many.

This crisis is not isolated to the CSU system alone but is symptomatic of a broader trend plaguing public universities across the country. Struggles in the 1960s produced tuition-free, more diverse public universities that served as a vital lifeline for millions of Americans seeking to escape poverty and build a better future. However, the era of affordable public universities subsidized by the state may be coming to an end, as students are increasingly forced to rely on the permission of economic institutions to obtain loans.

The consequences of this crisis extend far beyond individual students and their families. They strike at the very heart of our democratic values and principles, threatening to undermine important foundations of our society. As student debt spirals out of control and public education becomes increasingly commodified, the divide between the haves and have-nots widens, perpetuating cycles of inequality and injustice.

It is critical that we confront this crisis head-on and demand systemic change. The fight for public education is not just about reducing tuition fees or alleviating student debt, it is also about reaffirming society's commitment to equity, justice, and opportunity for all. That responsibility will not be met solely by the decisions of university administrators and policymakers. It also requires collective action by educators, students, and the wider community. Together, we must challenge these entrenched interests that seek to profit from the privatization of education and advocate for a new vision of public education that is truly inclusive, equitable, and acces-

sible to all.

## THEIR CLASS PROGRAM AND OURS

Financialization of public higher education through tuition increases that produce massive student debt is the program put forward by the class that owns the banks and corporations. This capitalist program of private profit is completely opposed to the interests of the public. What then is the program of our class, the who have everything to lose and nothing to gain by the protection of corporate private property? Higher education should be free for everyone.

As the public educational system of the industrial era is being dissolved by the new possibilities of electronic technology, it also produces the resources for creating a new public education system that could go beyond what we have now. Revolutionaries grow out of struggles like the fight against tuition and for fair university wages, as they are forced to confront a system that does not guarantee their right to survive. Every issue must be used to directly challenge the capitalists' right to rule and expose the question of political power. Every action must help us to form ourselves into a political force that can achieve political power for our class.

The crisis of tuition and student debt represents a defining moment for our society—a moment that demands bold and decisive revolutionary action. As we confront the challenges ahead, it is important to not lose sight of the transformative power of education to uplift individuals, empower communities, and shape the future of our nation. The time to act is now. **R**