Unions call for end of anti-worker shutdown

written by Lev Koufax
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Photo: Sharon Black

On January 10, in spite of cold and windy conditions, hundreds of union workers and their supporters gathered outside AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, D.C., to protest the current federal government shutdown. A coalition of more than 30 labor unions sponsored the event.

The rally lasted for around 90 minutes and included speeches from union presidents, elected officials and, most importantly, federal workers who are among those feeling the brunt of this shutdown.

The workers' message was clear: three weeks of closed doors is more than enough. The federal government must end this political charade motivated by Donald Trump's demand for Congress to fund his anti-migrant, anti-refugee border wall.

Union members spoke of feeling anxious and afraid for their families in the face of financial uncertainty. Some are furloughed, but many are working without pay. These workers have mortgages, rent payments, student loans and a multitude of other expenses.

The coalition of workers then marched across Lafayette Park directly in the front of the White House, where the demonstration lasted for another hour. Some workers wore yellow vests in the spirit of the anti-government demonstrations in France.

This shutdown demonstrates the capitalist state's utter callousness towards the working class. The Democrats or the Republicans might win a political victory at the end of this saga, but one thing is sure: the federal workers are losing on all fronts. Frustrated and fed up, they made their voices heard.

Photo: Sharon Black