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Struggle □ La Lucha PDF - August 1, 2022

written by Struggle - La Lucha

August 1, 2022

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Struggle-La-Lucha.org
Vol. 5, No. 15 • August 1, 2022
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Protest high cost of housing, food, fuel Inflation = wage theft!

By Sharon Black

Today the federal minimum wage is \$7.25! Let that sad fact sink in. Right now you can barely buy a gallon of gas in some parts of the country with that little cash.

July 24 will mark the anniversary of the last increase that took place in 2009. In 13 years the capitalist government in the United States has not raised the minimum wage even a nickel. And this is in the wealthiest

country in the world. Well, wealthiest for the wealthy!

Labor Department data for 2021 shows that approximately 250,000 people still earned \$7.25 and, to add insult to injury, domestic, farm, student, disabled, and restaurant workers can be paid less than \$7.25 an hour. It's called a "subminimum wage" — it's legal and it implies that these workers are considered subhuman by their bosses.

The majority of low wage workers

are Black, Brown, immigrant, women and young.

It is such a disgrace that some states and local municipalities have been forced to pass minimum wage increases on their own — but only as a result of concerted struggle by groups like "Fight for \$15," labor unions and community groups.

But still close to 52 million workers — 32% of the workforce — earn less than \$15. And when you factor in the large number of workers who can

only find part-time work, or do gig work, the situation is even more dire.

Of course, any worker can tell you that \$15 is a barely, barely, barely enough to get by wage.

A September 2021 broadcast on CBS Money Watch reports that the "minimum wage would be \$26 an hour if it had grown in line with productivity."

What the broadcast says in plain language is that workers are work-

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Behind the escalating attacks on trans people

By Melinda Butterfield

Thirty-one members of the white supremacist Patriot Front from across the U.S. were detained after preparing an assault on a Pride festival in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, June 12.

On the July 4 weekend in Camden, Ohio, Noah Ruiz, a trans man, was beaten by four men after being forced to use a women's restroom at a campsite. The victim was arrested by the police and spent the night in jail. It took legal action by Ruiz to force the cops to arrest one of his attackers on July 18; the other three have not been charged.

In Pensacola, Florida, July 18, Alisabeth Lancaster, a candidate for the Santa Rosa County School Board declared that doctors who provide gender-affirming care to trans youth "should be hanging from the nearest tree," to applause from the audience. The video of Lancaster's lynching threat went viral on social media.

Lancaster was echoing Florida's state government, headed by notorious homophobe Ron DeSantis, which is preparing to ban gender-affirming care for minors and deinstitution adult Medicaid recipients while laying the groundwork for a complete ban on trans health care. Activists around the state are organizing to intervene at a hearing on the proposed ban Aug. 5.

During Pride month in Baltimore, four houses burned and three people were hospitalized after bigots set fire to a rainbow flag on a resident's porch. In Boston, the construction site of an LGBTQ2S-friendly affordable housing project was vandalized with hate speech and threats on the weekend of July 9.



LGBTQ2S activists and anti-fascists defend a drag brunch from neo-nazis, July 10.

In Texas, where the governor has ordered child protective services to investigate parents and health-care providers for "abuse" if they support trans children, families are uprooting their lives and fleeing to other states. That includes Kai Shappley, an 11-year-old trans girl who in 2021 testified about the importance of gender-affirming care at the state capitol in Austin.

From the San Francisco Bay area to Chicago, drag queen story hours and drag shows have been threatened and attacked by Proud Boys and other neo-nazis, often aided and abetted by local cops. Increasingly, communities are organizing to resist these attacks, as they did in Houston July 10, where defenders shouted down the bigots.

(Drag performers and trans peo-

ple are not the same, though the ultra-right conflates the two groups and smears both with false claims of being "groomers" and "pedophiles.")

These are just a few examples of what are now daily attacks on queer communities from coast to coast, especially targeting and scapegoating trans people.

SCOTUS, gov't, cops & nazis

These vicious assaults — some spontaneous, but often planned and organized — cannot be separated from the nationwide political attack on trans rights and abortion rights.

From the dozens of state legislatures that have enacted or plan to enact restrictions on trans lives and women's lives, to the highest court in the land, the right to control one's

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Tent City, Maricopa County, Arizona in 1997 stood 10 minutes south of downtown Phoenix.



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