

AGAINST CUTS.ORG



Update on Against Cuts organizing activities that took place in the Fall of 2011

Against Cuts -- Who We Are

This can be one of those times when ordinary people show their extraordinary capacities.

We are a group of students, teachers, and workers from the Bay Area who are fed up with the budget cuts and attacks on our lives. We first began meeting in September 2009, in response to the huge cuts to California's educational system and social services. We have held meetings, rallies and teach-ins, developed organizing packets and tools to educate people about the budget cuts at our schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods.

We put forth a major effort to organize the March 4, 2010, 5:00 PM Civic Center rally in San Francisco, which brought together more than 12,000 people from around the Bay Area – to stand together and show one another that we do have the numbers to make a real fight.

We are all impacted by these budget cuts: students, teachers, workers, parents, children, and grandparents. Only organized together do we have the power and the possibility to stop these attacks. We are the majority in California. We do the work that makes the state run. And we need to use our power to defend our interests.

Check Out AgainstCuts.org

- *Download our organizer's packet, a tool for people to use in organizing our fight.*
- *You can download our latest flyers, this packet, newsletters, and graphics so you can make your own flyers.*
- *You can use our Power Point Slideshow to educate people about the facts of the budget cuts or our links to videos, photos or articles from the website.*
- *You'll also find a page of informational resources, upcoming events, and you can sign up to be on our mailing list.*

January 7th Organizer's Meeting

On Saturday, January 7th, at 2:00 PM, Against Cuts will have an organizer's meeting to plan for the January 28th Conference and to strategize for organizing and outreach for March 5 actions in Sacramento. If you are interested in being involved in building the conference and organizing outreach for March 5, let us know. We will contact you when we have a place for the meeting.

Upcoming Nurses Strike on December 22

A one day strike is scheduled for December 22nd at Sutter Hospitals in California, including Alta Bates Summit Medical Centers in Berkeley and Oakland.

Nurses are striking to protest proposed changes that deny RNs' their ability to effectively advocate for patients against the cost cutting and "profit" making strategies of Sutter, a not-for profit organization.

At local hospitals, Sutter wants to take away the charge nurses ability to speak on staffing problems and require them to take on additional patient assignments, effecting patient care ratios and threatening the quality of patient care, patient safety and their ability to advocate for patients. Sutter also wants to make changes that could force nurses to work when sick, dangerously exposing already ill patients to infection and reduce nurses' healthcare coverage, with huge premium increases and out-of-pocket expenses for the health care of their own nurses. These are just a few of over 75 cutbacks Sutter is proposing to the nurse's work contract.

(--Mary Dooley, CNA)

Join us as we protest changes that will affect our community.

For more information, check out:

<http://www.nationalnursesunited.org/press/entry/bay-area-sutter-rns-to-strike-december-22/>

<http://www.nationalnursesunited.org/affiliates/entry/sutter>

AgainstCuts Town Hall Teach-In

On October 29th, 140 students, staff and faculty from K-12 through universities, other public sector workers, health workers and community group members met at Berkeley City College (BCC) for an Against Cuts Town Hall Teach-In about the budget cuts and the austerity attacks of the recent period. Marc Lispi, part time English/Philosophy instructor, gave a presentation on the budget cuts and where the money is (a longer version of the power-point is at AgainstCuts.org). There was a lively discussion in which many recounted their personal stories about the cuts.

Then Lark Omura, BCC transfer student to UCB, and Joan Berezin, long time BCC faculty member, talked about the fights of the recent period and where they could go in the future. It was proposed that we begin to organize now for a mass convergence in Sacramento at the capitol on March 5, which has been already called for by the student governments of the Community Colleges, CSUs and UCs, as well as other organizations and organizing efforts in California. The two were followed by Mary Dooley, a Summit nurse, talking about the recent nurses strike, Jennifer Eagan, CFA president at CSU East Bay, discussing the then upcoming CSU strike, Caitlyn Uribe, a Chabot student, on the community response to the death of Carlitos Nava, Jevon Cochran from the Public Education Coalition on the response at the UCs and David De Leeuw, OEA member, of Tax the Rich Coalition on their upcoming conference. This was followed by a discussion.

Then lunch was provided with food donated from local cafés, restaurants, and bakeries, collected by members of the BCC Global Studies Club. Talk continued in groups of 6-8 at multiple tables in the BCC atrium. The teach-in closed with a workshop on the nuts and bolts of organizing. The Peralta Federation of Teachers executive council supported the effort with a \$100 donation and the Associated Students of Berkeley City College gave \$200 to provide free packets to attendees.

(--Joan Berezin and Mariya Kopynets, BCC Faculty and Student)

Oakland Streets United

On August 8th, three year-old Carlitos Nava was shot and killed in a drive-by shooting in broad daylight on International Blvd in Oakland. He was riding in his toy car next to his mother when he was murdered. Two days later, family, friends, and the City of Oakland held a candlelight vigil in memory of Carlitos. It was there that members of the community discussed what they could do to help the family. They decided to hold a carwash to raise funds on the Saturday and Sunday of that weekend.

In just a few short days, the carwash was organized with all food and supplies donated by local businesses. Volunteers showed up to help wash the 700 cars that turned out. International Blvd, one of the busiest streets in Oakland, turned into a parking lot near 65th Ave. People driving slowed down to drop money in donation boxes, pulled in to get their cars washed, and jumped out and helped wash.

The outpouring of generosity from the community showed what's possible from a neighborhood that has been neglected by this system. People active in Against Cuts and the newly formed Oakland Streets United wanted to build on this unity and began organizing a community block party. Three months later, on November 5, more than 350 community members turned out for a day of music, speeches, food and information provided by various community organizations in the neighborhood. A mural at the site of the killing was unveiled, dedicated to "Healing the Community to Build Unity". (--Caitlyn Uribe, Chabot College student)

Stockton Activists Organize a Teach-In

Stockton is no stranger to public services cuts. Stockton is the foreclosure capitol of the country, and like many other California cities, more money is spent developing jails in Stockton than in funding schools. On November 16th, Stockton locals came together at Delta College for an Against Cuts teach-in on the overall attacks in the state and throughout the country. Participants included teachers, students, and public school staff, union members, other public services workers, and activists involved in the Stockton occupation.

(--Kristy Morrison, Galileo High School Teacher)

Organizing at UC Berkeley

This year at UC Berkeley, we've seen massive cuts, but also the beginnings of resistance. From the start of the semester, different groups organized events aimed at fighting the budget cuts, from forums to small rallies on Sproul Plaza. Against Cuts did outreach and flyering on campus, building for the October 29th Townhall & Teach-In at BCC.

On November 9, the campus had a Day of Action with a noon rally, at which Against Cuts had a booth and was distributing information, and an undergraduate and organizer with Against Cuts spoke. A student march, and an attempt to set up an Occupy encampment resulted in police brutality towards protesters. Hundreds gathered that evening and a major demonstration was called for the following Tuesday.

That day, November 15, an "Open University" took place with teach-outs on Sproul Plaza, and Against Cuts organizers did one on "How to Organize the 99%." That evening thousands gathered to hear Robert Reich speak on class warfare. In the weeks after, general assemblies of different sizes continued to take place, and small teach-outs continued, with more planned for the Spring.

Heading towards final exams and the holidays, the campus is regrouping and prepared for more activity to come when Spring semester begins, as the likelihood of more budget cuts, and with them more fee hikes, attacks on workers, and eliminated resources, seems great.

(--Lark Omura, UC Berkeley Student)

Against Cuts Teach-In at Chabot College, Hayward

On November 15th, about 65 students, staff and faculty members gathered at Chabot College for an Against Cuts teach-in to learn about and discuss the attacks on education and other social services. The event was co-sponsored by Chabot's Students for Social Justice, Cultural Community Connection, and the Political Science Club.

The event started with a brief introduction to Against Cuts, followed by a presentation on the budget cuts given by Kip Waldo, anthropology instructor. Mily Nguyen started off the discussion with an inspirational speech on the Arab Spring and the Occupy Movement, and what we can do to fight these attacks against our lives and our future.

Many shared their experiences with the budget cuts, and how they have been affected – at schools, lack of access to healthcare and home foreclosures. Some offered possible solutions and discussed future actions, like the March 5th rally in Sacramento planned for the spring. We left with plans to organize for an Occupy Chabot week, with events centered around the current crisis we are living in and what is possible for the future. (–Caitlyn Uribe, Chabot College student)

Organizing Workshops at the Making Cents and Tax the Rich Conferences

On November 19th, activists and workers affected by the cuts to public services came together in Oakland for a "Tax the Rich Conference." Guest speakers expressed their concerns about the cuts to public services and proposed ideas for resisting the attacks on schools, jobs, health care, and the overall livelihoods of the public. In the afternoon, Against Cuts offered a workshop to visitors, offering them the tools, resources, and organizing methods to build the movement against the cuts.

A similar workshop took place at the Making Cents conference at the Berkeley School of Law building on November 6th. Many different people attend these events, which makes it a great opportunity to build on the movement and network with other areas affected by the budget cuts.

(–Kristy Morrison, Galileo High School Teacher)

California Alliance for Retired Americans

CARA has been watching what the Super Committee of Congress would do to overcome the so-called "deficit" threatening our Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Thanks to Occupy Wall Street movement, the word "deficit" has disappeared from the conversation and has been replaced by the 99% vs. the 1%, a more accurate description of what has transpired. We held rallies, lobbied our congressional representatives, delivered hand-written stories to Senator Feinstein, who finally wrote to us in September, stating that Social Security had never added to any deficit. As a result of millions of us speaking out and the added power of the Occupy movement, the Super Committee was unable to come up with any recommendations to Congress. Stay tuned for the next round.

On the state level, CARA's legislative committee in Sacramento has kept us alert in order to respond quickly to the threat of any future cuts. A rally was called on November 15th in front of the State Office Building in Oakland to protest the horrific cuts previously made and to prevent the "Trigger Cuts" agreed to by the legislature earlier this year. These cuts will take effect on December 15th if California has not received enough revenue to cover its budget. Many seniors, students, people with disabilities and other community members were present and voiced their support for progressive tax measures and revenues instead of these "Trigger Cuts." In addition, a large rally and march was held on Friday, December 2nd in San Francisco to speak out for protecting our social networks and Taxing the 1%. It was well attended by students, seniors, workers, and community folk. We had a grand old time marching down Market Street to the tunes of two bands. In January, we are going up to Sacramento to continue our battle for a Single Payer, Medicare-for-All healthcare system in California. Come join us on Jan. 9th – to reserve a seat on the bus call -1-877-223-6107.

(--Sheila Goldmacher, CARA member)

Faculty Strike at the CSU!

The California Faculty Association, the union of the CSU faculty, held a strike on two campuses on November 17th. CSU East Bay in the North

and CSU Dominguez Hills in the South both effectively shut down business as usual on their campuses with the help of hundreds of CSU faculty members from across the state. At East Bay, we were joined by friends and supporters, including CSU students and members of sister unions including CTA, CFT, CSUEU, APC, IBEW 595, AFSCME, Oakland Education Association, United Educators of San Francisco, UFCW Local 5, and the Castro Valley Teacher Association. Kip Waldo and his crew from Against Cuts joined us on the picket line. Assemblyman Bob Wieckowski, Assemblyman Dr. Richard Pan, Senator Ellen Corbett, and Senator Lonnie Hancock all spoke and shared their support. Dr. Cornel West joined us on the picket line as well.

The central issue at stake is unpaid faculty raises from the previous contract, despite the opinion of two independent fact finders that the CSU should pay faculty at least part of these salary increases. But, the CSU faculty is mad about not only being denied a (very) modest pay raise, but also the overall mismanagement of the CSU on the part of CSU Chancellor Reed. Student fees are up; faculty workload is increasing without compensation; the CSU is being privatized, and a pervasive culture of disrespect for faculty, students, and staff prevails.

To paint the picture of what's going on in the CSU, two days prior, students and faculty protesting fee hikes being decided in a closed door session of the CSU Board of Trustees were treated to pepper spray and harsh treatment by law enforcement. On East Bay's campus, the University President issued an Executive Order banning the erection of tents or canopies on campus without prior administrative permission in response to a student organized teach-in and overnight protest deemed "Occupy CSUEB" planned for November 16th. Students and faculty participating in the teach-in were subjected to an excessive police presence that dismantled tents and canopies; the police even took a canopy while it was being used by Ethnic Studies faculty. These hearty students held their event anyway in sleeping bags with no tents, joining faculty on the picket line the next morning. Dr. Cornel West lauded these student activists for their persistence and dedication at his talk later that evening

(--Jennifer Eagan, CSU East Bay Faculty)