

# **United States – Now is the Time for Solidarity: DSA National Statement on Covid-2019**

Saturday 14 March 2020, by [DSA \(USA\)](#) (Date first published: 12 March 2020).

**From the 2008 global financial collapse to the natural disasters caused by climate change that rocked Northern California, New Orleans, New York, and Puerto Rico, capitalism is causing devastating human crises. During each of these crises, it has been poor, working-class, and already marginalized people who have suffered the most – while banks, energy companies, and the real estate industry have been bailed out.**

Now with the COVID-19 outbreak and a looming economic recession, it is hospital workers, poor and unhoused people, the elderly, incarcerated people, the immunocompromised, immigrants, and other marginalized groups who will likely bear the most impact. Millions of people have inadequate health insurance or none at all, millions are living paycheck to paycheck, and millions more are not given paid time off from work. That means that workers and poor people will be vulnerable to illness while being unable to afford treatment or even testing, endangering whole communities. Many who miss work because of the outbreak will lose pay, lose their health insurance, be unable to pay utility bills, or face eviction.

All of this is worsened by the fact that our government has been slashing budgets for services such as SNAP (food stamps) while handing bailouts to oil and natural gas companies. It is clear our irrational and expensive privatized healthcare system, organized not to protect human health but to extract profit, is unable to handle a crisis such as a sudden global pandemic.

Meanwhile, Trump and the Republicans are exploiting the crisis to blame scapegoats: immigrants, Chinese people, and the European Union are demonized, encouraging racism and xenophobia. Further, Trump's stimulus plan will decimate Social Security if passed, one of our last truly universal social programs and a line of defense for seniors who are some of the most vulnerable to COVID-19.

**As socialists, we reject austerity, privatization, racism, and xenophobia. Instead, we – the Democratic Socialists of America – stand with the working class, poor, and marginalized of our society and demand a working-class solution to this crisis.**

A pandemic like COVID-19 confirms the truth in the radical labor movement slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all." We need to rapidly reorient our society away from the principles of individualism and private profit and toward the principles of justice and solidarity.

We support the measures proposed in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act [\[1\]](#), including federal funding for free coronavirus testing for all and paid emergency leave.

However, Congress must go further.

First, Congress must pass Bernie Sanders's proposed Medicare for All legislation. Without providing comprehensive healthcare, free at the point of use, to all US residents, we cannot mitigate this crisis or its vastly disproportionate impacts on poor and working-class people. It is unacceptable that almost a hundred million people in the US are uninsured or underinsured during a massive public health crisis, while health insurance CEOs take home annual salaries in the tens of millions of dollars.

Second, Congress must pass an emergency moratorium on evictions and on utility shut-offs until the crisis abates. If workers are unable to work because of quarantines, they should not be punished for being unable to pay their rent and utility bills. Ultimately goods like housing, water, electricity, internet, and more should be provided as social rights to everyone, not hoarded for the profit of a few billionaires.

Third, instead of bailing out oil and natural gas companies during this crisis as Trump has suggested, Congress should take advantage of low oil prices to begin to phase out domestic oil production while introducing aggressive Green New Deal legislation that mandates carbon neutrality by 2030 while creating millions of good, green jobs. If we are to avoid catastrophic climate change — which will make natural disasters like hurricanes and global pandemics like coronavirus much more frequent and much more intense — we need to transition our economy off of fossil fuels starting immediately. With a looming economic crash that could put millions out of work, low interest rates and a oil price crash make this the perfect time for the Federal Government to begin this transformation.

In the face of a pandemic, we recognize we are only as safe as the people most impacted by our current systems. As a fourth demand, we call for a nationwide end to cash bail and a moratorium on deportations. The US is home to the largest detention system in the world. Given the torturous conditions, overcrowding, and unaccountable nature of our current carceral system, we call for individuals in prisons, jails, detention centers, and camps to be let go and that facilities are properly staffed with medical teams to ensure the well-being of those who cannot be temporarily released. We demand a moratorium on deportations to ensure that immigrant communities are kept safe and are not discouraged from seeking treatment.

We echo the demands laid out by Bernie Sanders earlier today, as he calls for state and national hotlines for residents to use for resources, information, and updates. We agree that this level of transparency must be relayed by scientists and health experts and not politicians. A vaccine, when developed, must be free, and that any medicine developed to help with the crisis must be sold at cost. The ICU and ventilator shortage must be addressed, and medical residents, retired medical staff, and other medical personnel should be mobilized, staffed with proper instruction and personal protective equipment, to ensure adequate staffing. We also agree with his call for emergency unemployment assistance at 100% of a worker's income for ALL people, including those who work off tips, gig workers, domestic workers, and independent contractors. There must be emergency shelters erected, complete with healthcare and food, for the unhoused, domestic violence survivors, and college students.

Finally, all of this social spending should be paid for by taxing the rich. The American working class has repeatedly bailed out the same massive corporations and billionaires that cause and exacerbate crises. The Trump administration's proposed solution, a payroll tax cut, would not provide any relief for the working class and, in fact, would exacerbate the issue by providing an incentive to continue working, even if sick, particularly for those without remote work settings or paid sick leave. The proposal would also endanger some of our most vulnerable populations by gutting funding to Social Security and Medicare. Time and again, the ruling class uses crisis to pit us against each other. This time, the rich — whose wealth is produced by workers — should foot the bill.

As a practical measure and show of solidarity for all working class people, especially the elderly, unhoused, chronically ill, and immunosuppressed who are most vulnerable to COVID-19, we recommend that all chapters immediately begin implementing social distancing measures, including:

- Cancel, postpone, or move online any meetings scheduled for more than a small group of people;
- Practice the CDC's recommended preventative actions [2] as precautionary measures, especially maintaining a distance of 6 feet or more from others;
- Establish a chapter-wide COVID-19 policy describing symptoms members should watch for [3] and to encourage members who are sick to stay home or attend meetings through phone or video conferencing software like Zoom [4];
- Setup infrastructure for members to text-bank and phone-bank from home instead of canvassing whenever possible;
- Create a plan to check-in on local membership and make sure everyone has the resources needed to navigate this crisis, especially elderly members and members who are immunocompromised;
- Develop scenario plans to adapt meetings & actions based on the rate of infection in your area, see this template [5] for sample scenarios and alternatives to traditional mass mobilizations;
- Perform routine cleaning of surfaces such as, tables, electronics, door handles, etc. before and after all in person meetings using products such as sanitizing wipes or antibacterial spray;
- Supply hand sanitizer at all meetings and encourage its use (see the CDC's guide for producing hand sanitizer [6]);
- Place posters that encourage good coughing and sneezing etiquette and hand washing in meeting areas.

Our current system is unequal, unjust, and careening towards disaster. It is as clear now as ever that our society faces a choice: we will have socialism, or we will have barbarism. We call on chapters to use the aforementioned recommendations to practice solidarity with your local membership and keep each other safe. We also implore chapters to review this COVID-19 Resources Guide for Organizers [7] to form demands and identify resources that can inform our organizing in this crucial moment.

## **Democratic Socialist of America (DSA)**

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### **P.S.**

- DSA. MARCH 12, 2020:  
<https://www.dsausa.org/statements/now-is-the-time-for-solidarity-dsa-national-statement-on-covid-2019/>

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## **Footnotes**

- [1] <https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/Families%20First%20summary.pdf>
- [2] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>
- [3] [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fsymptoms.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fsymptoms.html)
- [4] <http://www.zoom.us>
- [5] <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C6c0Rz8b4c-NW2gIP23xtL-JiSWUKtnqJt7jj9zhXOg/edit>
- [6] <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C6c0Rz8b4c-NW2gIP23xtL-JiSWUKtnqJt7jj9zhXOg/edit>
- [7] [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1\\_ixaQIefjWYSymrqXBVAoe3zd--k97hUzGYG8f6harU/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_ixaQIefjWYSymrqXBVAoe3zd--k97hUzGYG8f6harU/edit)