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“No African Americans take to the streets in protest to demand Whites to love us more. We demand a behavior change!” Rev. George C. Gilbert, Jr.

September 2022 Newsletter

The Center for Racial Equity and Justice Representing DC Metropolitan Police Union Workers



Greetings Mr. Johnson,

On April 8, 2022, members of AFGE Local 1975 (specifically the Metropolitan Police Department Crane Operators – “The Workers”) met with The Center for Racial Equity and Justice asking for representation concerning misrepresentation, grievances and issues happening at the local. The following are the issues of concern:

1. “The Workers” are not receiving their “dirty pay” (fringe benefit for environment, hazardous, and cleaning uniforms) which was legislation drafted in 1989 under the Fenty administration. This legislation focused on Department of Motor Vehicles (DPW) tow truck drivers and have ignored MPD’s Motor Vehicle Operators, when in fact, “The Workers” are assigned more strenuous duties. They are first responders to crime scenes, Presidential Assignments, Dignitary Assignment, Special Operations Division and Hazardous Conditions Assignments.

2. They started in one union (Union 3444) and did not have any representation there, then they were fitted with union 1975 after a long process of no representation. They were never given the Labor Agreement nor were they contacted about meetings. Therefore, what they are receiving currently under the Project Labor Agreement, they never had a voice or a vote. In fact, the union was not collecting their dues properly. When inquiring, there was not a sufficient answer. It is a concern that monies may have been mishandled, misappropriated or not recorded correctly. They have not received a union card.

3. “The Workers” are considered essential employees; therefore, they cannot strike under their current agreement. As they have taken these issues to their union and to their supervisors, yet they have been told that “the issue is on the desk of the Deputy Mayor”. As of today, there has not been any attention given to this matter. What leverage do they have to receive justice? None. The Union has not represented their concerns, the government has not represented their concerns, now they have come to the community.

4. Due to both union’s 3444 and 1975 lack of communication with “The Workers”, they were not involved in the Project Labor Agreement negotiations or voting and now are being paid a lesser amount than the standard for their job positions. It is believed that when they were switched from local 3444 to 1975 that the proper adjustments were not

completed. “The Workers” are demanding attention to their needs. For example, Department of Public Works Operators (who are a part of 1975) receives a substantial amount more, receives better benefits, and receives their “dirty pay,” while we argue that “The Workers” have much more responsibility and mental stress. They don’t even know what the Project Labor Agreement details, because it was never explained nor offered to them.

5. Lastly, “The Workers” have experienced a psychological impact in this matter. “The Workers” are providing professional services, paying dues, having grievances and concerns that are being ignored, under-represented and even afraid to speak up because of fear of losing their jobs or being further mistreated. They have no authority figure to report to for their concerns/issues that will bring back answers and change help change their problems. The person that has been named vice president, has not been trained regularly to handle matters. The current vice president was voted upon, without other workers receiving ballots to vote.

“The Center” for Racial Equity and Justice has agreed to represent “The Workers” with the hope and understanding that “The Center” and AFGE will agree to a third-party contractual agreement to mediate between the two parties due to their feelings of being under-represented by the union. We look forward to hearing

back from you to discuss these matters further.

Sincerely,

Rev. George C. Gilbert, Jr

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

ZELLE:

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NOTHING IS TOO SMALL!!!

Is Water Crisis Leading To Water Privatization?



Mississippi declares water emergency for Jackson. With years of water system issues

have resulted in a crisis in Jackson, Mississippi, where the city doesn't have enough water to fight fires, flush toilets or even hand out to residents in need. Jackson's main water treatment facility began failing Monday, according to Gov. Tate Reeves. The National Guard was called up to help distribute bottled water as crews work to get the water treatment plant back online, state officials said. But the distribution itself proved unsustainable. Residents of all ages were seen waiting in lines more than a mile long at Hawkins Field Airport for at least two hours Tuesday for just one case of bottled water. The event was supposed to span three hours, but barely ran two as people were eventually turned away when the 700 cases of water ran out.

In California, during the last drought, in 2015, Californians were ordered to cut their water use by an average of 25% statewide. This time, there is no statewide emergency, no universal mandate and no standardized water waste rules.

Instead, residents are facing a patchwork of restrictions. Bracing for a crisis, towns relying on the hard-hit Russian River have imposed stringent mandates on residents and coastal communities may have to truck in water to make it through the year. At the same time, most of California's urban hubs are prepared to weather the summer with only voluntary cuts and limited restrictions that in many cases are holdovers from previous droughts.

Water Privatization is closer than we think and should be addressed soon.

Atlanta

In January 1999, the city of Atlanta, Georgia, entered into a 20-year contract with United Water Resources Inc. to run its drinking water system. On January 24, 2003, because hundreds of residents had complained of brown water and poor service since the city agreed to the privatization contract, Atlanta terminated its contract with United Water. At the time, this was the nation's largest public-private partnership contract. But Mayor Shirley Franklin, who took office after the deal was signed, canceled the contract. The water problems of Atlanta and Georgia have extended far beyond how to run municipal systems to problems of water scarcity and conflict with neighboring towns and states.(see Tri-state water dispute)

Atlanta Georgia has found itself in a water crisis due to legal and political institutions' accommodation of consumer demand for both water and energy produced by water: a growing population particularly in the sprawling Atlanta metropolitan area, recreational users of water, agricultural irrigators, power generators, and industries like pulp and paper mills, textiles, chemical manufacturing facilities, and the mining industry.

Detroit

The experiences in Detroit provide some perspective on what happens with corrupt government related to public or private participation. Public officials were indicted for illegally steering public contracts to specific private companies. These companies also were accused of questionable billing

practices. According to the Detroit Free Press, The sprawling water system (Detroit's), with more than 4 million customers and annual revenues of more than \$800 million, stretches from Lake Huron in north eastern Michigan to the town of Ypsilanti Michigan, a Detroit suburb to the south west of Detroit. This sprawling water system has provided a "flash point between the city and the suburbs because Detroit owns the system although about three-quarters of the customers now live in the suburbs." Also according to the Detroit Free Press, suburban leaders have long criticized the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department for its annual rate increases and what many considered questionable contracting practices. Due to the horse trading, shoddy contracting practices, and other forms of corruption this Detroit case may be a good example of government failure in the water system arena.



As of 24 June 2014, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department is "an estimated \$5 billion in debt and has been the subject of privatization talks ... [it] says half of its 323,000 accounts are delinquent and has begun turning off the taps of those who do not pay bills that total above \$150 or that are 60 days late. Since March, up to 3,000 account holders have had their water cut off every week."

Activists have criticized these actions, saying "Detroit is trying to push through a private takeover of its water system at the expense of basic rights." The Blue Planet Project has filed a "submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation regarding cutting off water to Detroit residents.

Emmaus, Pennsylvania

On July 6, 2005, the Emmaus Borough Council voted in a 3-2 vote to authorize its Water Committee to work with the borough's consultant to draft an agreement of sale for its water system. Citizens had been especially concerned that if the borough chose to follow the consultant's advice to "monetize the system," that the system would be sold to a multinational corporation, as was an increasing trend throughout the region. Many Emmaus residents organized themselves under the group EFLOW ("Emmaus for Locally Owned Water"), and through a combination of letter-writing, petitioning and public comment at council meetings, in early September 2005 the council voted to take water privatization off the table of options. This controversy garnered regional and national attention, with anti-privatization non-profits such as Public Citizen noting the debate and outcome.

Indianapolis

On August 26, 2011, the city of Indianapolis transferred its water and waste water systems to a non-profit charitable trust known as Citizens Energy Group, for more than \$1.9 billion. Under the terms of the transfer, the

City transferred all of the debt of those two systems to Citizens and received more than \$500 million, which the city has used to fund upgrades to transportation infrastructure, improvements to city parks, and removal of abandoned homes.

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Several Dates Are Available

Dr. W. FRANKLIN RICHARDSON, Chairman, CNBC
Dr. EL SHAFIQ, Founder and President of the National Action Network
Dr. CAMILLA OWENS, Senior Fellow and Adjunct Associate Professor, Morehouse School of Medicine

Confronting the Impacts of COVID-19: A Social Justice Imperative | The Reality of COVID-19: From the Frontlines | Confronting Racism Denial: Naming Racism and Moving to Action

Bridging the Gap Between the Black Church and Workers Rights



Leadership from The Progressive National Baptist Convention and the AFL-CIO met at the Annual session of the denomination to discuss developing a partnership centered around voting registration and workers

rights. The two groups discussed focusing attention on 8 states that would be impactful in the next Presidential Race.

Rev. Gilbert spoke to the concern that the idea of Worker's Rights, Worker's Protection and how union's have been a trusted stability for many in our community. He suggests that working with AFL-CIO affects not just politics, but hopefully will impact the lives families in a real sense.

Both parties announced at a press conference that a plan shall be forthcoming, and this rekindling of relationship is long overdue.

Christian Nationalism Fuels Trump's Big Lie



by Don Byrd | Jun 24, 2022

Former President Donald Trump revisited dangerous themes of Christian nationalism in a speech to the Faith and Freedom Coalition Conference, attacking the Select Committee investigating January 6. Baptist Joint

Committee for Religious Liberty Executive Director Amanda Tyler spoke to CBS News about the ways Christian nationalism “absolutely was on display” during the former president’s remarks and the insurrection itself.

[W]e’ve seen how Christian nationalism shows up... appeals to God, or equating God and Trump, or ... that somehow Trump’s reelection was preordained or part of God’s bigger plan – how these helped feed and sustain the Big Lie and how former President Trump continued along those lines [at the Faith and Freedom Coalition Conference] as he was appealing to familiar incantations of Christian nationalism, saying that our founding documents were divinely inspired or that our civil rights and liberties came directly from God, or – in one of the biggest applause lines of the day – when he said, “in America we don’t worship government, we worship God.”

Of course, the problem is that no single religion has ever united Americans. Instead, what unites Americans is our commitment to religious freedom for all, and former President Trump’s continuing appeals to Christian nationalism threaten that value. Unfortunately, even the hearings of the Select Committee to Investigate the

January 6 Attack on the United States Capitol have not been immune to similar expressions of Christian nationalism. As Tyler tweeted, “So far ... Greg Jacob, Rusty Bowers & Liz Cheney have talked about the Constitution as ‘divinely inspired.’ Let’s hope for less of this rhetoric in upcoming hearings, especially when #ChristianNationalism helped drive and intensify the January 6th attack.”

For more on how Christian nationalism played a role leading up to and during the January 6 attack on the Capitol, see the report issued earlier this year by Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty and the Freedom From Religion Foundation. To make your voice heard on this critical issue, join the tens of thousands of Christians who have signed on to the Christians Against Christian Nationalism statement and access resources there.

Fla. teacher resigns after school district employee removes his 'age inappropriate' images of historic Black Americans

A teacher in Florida has resigned after he says a school district employee removed photos of historic Black American

figures from a bulletin board in his classroom. Michael James, the teacher, reported the incident that occurred at the O.J. Semmes Elementary School to both Escambia County Superintendent Tim Smith and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in an email, *The Pensacola Journal* reported.

James told the paper that he chose the theme for the bulletin board because the majority of the students in his class are Black and he wanted to showcase leaders that his students could look up to and see themselves in. James said the images removed from the board included Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, Colin Powell and George Washington Carver — and that an image of former President Barack Obama on his desk was also removed. "It really floored me," James told the paper. "I've been teaching special education for 15 years, and it just really floored me when she did that."



Fifth-graders decorate a bulletin board outside their classroom. (Marshfield News-Herald/Casey Riffe/AP)

After sending the letter to the governor Monday night, James, 61, officially resigned from his post as an exceptional student education (ESE) teacher, teaching students ranging from kindergarten to fifth-grade, Tuesday. It was going to be his first year teaching in Florida, the paper said. According to the paper, Smith said that teachers are allowed to decorate their classrooms with educational materials and is not aware of any policies in place that would call for the employee's decision to take down the images.

Smith said that the incident, which he called an "anomaly," is being investigated. James described the person who took down his images as board-certified behavior analyst for the school district. He explained that ahead of the new school year, he had spent \$58 of his own money on supplies to decorate the board that would hang behind his desk. James said the behavior analyst and another behavior coach came into his classroom to help set up on Monday. "That is kind of unusual, but that's OK," James told the paper. "They came in, and we started moving tables around and swapping some out, and I had made the bulletin board a couple of days earlier."

He said as he was tending to another task he looked up to see the woman taking something down off the bulletin

board, which was also decorated with a copy of the Pledge of Allegiance. When he asked her what she was doing, "she said something along the lines of it wasn't age appropriate. Something like that," James remembered.



He told the paper that while he does not remember her mentioning race at the time, he noted that she also grabbed the photo of Obama that was on his desk as it did not fit up on the board. "She picked it up and said, 'You don't need to put this up either,'" he recalled to the paper. "She said — I can't remember exactly what she said — but she said, 'the kids are too young' or something like that. It floored me. I thought, 'This is the first Black president.'"

He said at first, he let it go and was not sure how to proceed though after giving it more thought he got more upset. "I could have just sent it to the principal," he said. "But things need to get done. A lot of times people can just sweep things under the rug."

In a statement provided to the paper, Escambia County Public Schools spokesperson Cody Strother said in a statement on behalf of the school said they were made aware of Smith's resignation Tuesday and are investigating the incident. "Our office was made aware of this employee's resignation and his stated reasons for resigning very early this morning, Tuesday, Aug. 9, 2022," the statement read. "Around the same time, we were copied on an email written by this individual and released to the Governor's Office and various media outlets before we had any opportunity to investigate. We are now in the process of conducting a full investigation. If these allegations are deemed factual, we will certainly take corrective action, as it is our aim that all of our teachers feel valued and supported."

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CALEDARS**

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ALWAYS WORKING WITH AND
RELATING TO OUR YOUNG MEN

