

Milwaukee McDonald's Workers: To join nationwide strike for union rights, backed by 2020 candidates

Posted on Monday, May 20, 2019

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Booker, Castro, Inslee, Sanders Among Presidential Hopefuls to Walk Thursday Strike Lines with Cooks, Cashiers; Make Bold Demand To Put More Workers in Unions

Workers to Launch 'Fight for \$15 2020' to Turn Out Voters, Push Candidates to Embrace Unions as the Best Way to Tackle Inequality, Combat Racism

Milwaukee - Milwaukee McDonald's workers will strike Thursday-the day of the company's shareholder meeting- demanding the right to a union, part of a series of walkouts in more than a dozen cities that will attract the support of leading 2020 presidential candidates.

Across the country, presidential candidates including Bernie Sanders, Cory Booker, Julián Castro and Jay Inslee will join McDonald's workers on strike Thursday, making

a bold statement calling on the company to respect workers' right to a union. Some Milwaukee workers will travel to Dallas, the site of McDonald's shareholder meeting, to participate in a video town hall with Sanders.

"Our nation is at its best when everyone has an equal chance at pursuing the American dream" said Corey Booker, U.S. Senator and 2020 presidential hopeful. Unfortunately, these principles are slowly eroding as big corporations like McDonald's make it harder for people to get ahead by driving down workers' wages and undermining their ability to organize. I'm proud to stand in solidarity with my brothers and sisters in their pursuit of a fair wage, their right to unionize, and access to a safe work environment."

In addition to Milwaukee, McDonald's workers will strike demanding union rights Thursday in Cedar Rapids, Chicago (with Jay Inslee), Des Moines (with Cory Booker), Detroit, Durham (with Julián Castro), Houston, Kansas City (MO), Los Angeles, Miami, Orlando, St. Louis and Tampa

"We know that politicians have the power to help make our jobs better," said Aleik Rhodes, a Milwaukee McDonald's worker in the Fight for \$15 and a Union. "So we're calling on them and the 2020 candidates to support us and our rights to a union. Me and my coworkers deserve a fair shot and our families do too. We're going to keep organizing, defending our rights, and using our voting power to win!"

FIGHT FOR \$15 2020

When presidential candidates join workers on strike lines Thursday, it will also mark the launch of Fight for \$15 2020, a worker-led effort to push candidates to embrace unions as the best way to tackle inequality and fight racism. The initiative will seek to make the need to put more workers in unions a defining issue of the 2020 campaign, in much the same way workers in the Fight for \$15 and a Union made a \$15 minimum wage a flashpoint in the 2016 race for the White House. The program will include:

A flood of Fight for \$15 and a Union organizers in the early primary states of Iowa, South Carolina, Nevada and New Hampshire to help McDonald's and other fast-food workers join together and take action demanding union rights

Fight for \$15 and a Union town halls in early primary states

Worker walk-a-days, in which candidates will experience a day in the life of McDonald's workers fighting for \$15 and union rights

A voter engagement effort targeting infrequent voters in key battleground states like Michigan and Wisconsin

Protests at the first two Democratic debates in Miami and Detroit

"When giant corporations like McDonald's rig the system to hold down wages and keep workers from joining together in a union, it holds back millions of Black, brown, and white working people around the country," said Mary Kay Henry, president of the Service Employees International Union. "It's time to embrace a new future in which anyone who wants to join a union in their workplace can, no exceptions. And it's time for those who have been elected—or want to be elected—by working people to fight alongside us, no exceptions."

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION AND GETTING RESULTS AT THE BALLOT BOX

In 2016, workers in the Fight for \$15 and a Union went on strike ahead of both Republican and Democratic presidential debates, pushing candidates to "come get their votes" by supporting a \$15 minimum wage. A strike before the first Republican debate in Milwaukee led Fox News moderators to make support for \$15 the first question to candidates. And continued protests by workers throughout the race led to a memorable exchange between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders over who was a bigger supporter of the Fight for \$15, which was memorialized on Saturday Night Live.

In the 2018 midterms, workers in the Fight for \$15 and a Union participated in an aggressive effort to engage infrequent voters, helping to defeat anti-worker candidates for governor in Michigan and Wisconsin. The movement's 2020 program will aim for a similar effect in driving both the conversation on the campaign trail and results at the ballot box.