In the Past 6 months…

The UMass Labor Extension Program has provided trainings on these topics:
- Stewards as Organizer Training
- Western MA Area Labor Federation
- A New Stage in the Fight for Farmworker Rights
  - Central West Justice Center, Pioneer Valley Workers Center, Local 338, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 338, Migrant Justice, Vermont
- Organizing Retreat
  - SGEU staff
- Strategic Planning
  - CT Roundtable on Climate & Jobs
- Know Your Rights Train-the-Trainer
  - Jobs With Justice
- Community Based Research & Community Based Art Presentations
  - UMass Dartmouth Interns
- Strategic Planning
  - North Shore Labor Council, New Lynn Coalition, Western MA Area Labor Federation, 1199SEIU, Raise Up Massachusetts
- Workers’ Rights Train the Trainer
  - Partnered with MIA Jobs With Justice
- Just Transition Retreat
  - InterValley Project
- Health & Safety at Work
  - E-Team Machinist Training Program
- Healing Not Harming: Building a Trauma-Informed Union
  - Washington Federation of State Employees (AFSCME Council 28)
- What We Don’t Talk About at Work: Building Collective Responses to Collective Traumas
  - Keynote: Bowling Green State University
  - Workers’ and Gender Center annual conference
- Worker Health, Public Health, Economic Health:
  - The evolution of domestic workers’ self-advocacy during the pandemic
  - Carework Network Symposium (Elizabeth Pelletier and Anna Rosinska)
- An Injury to All: Labor, Time, Union Struggles, and the Future of the American Working Class
  - Jamie McCallum, Middlebury College

Helping to drive down wages. This isn’t a surprise, but we need to keep exposing this clear class warfare until all workers can recognize it.

The second theme was that labor must build itself into a political force at the workplace and beyond if we are going to build a society that serves our needs, rather than the desires of the wealthy and privileged. To do this, we must be content with small victories to our immediate needs. Instead, we must push for ever larger demands, and build a movement that includes all working people and communities.

FIGHTING THROUGH DISASTERS: What Labor Can Learn from COVID

(D) 22.327WL

Two themes emerged from all the stories shared at the conference. First, the stories reminded us that our economic and legal system is structured to undermine working class and labor power. Examples of how executive officers of police on campus (geo3550.org/2020/09/04/geos-demands-for-police-to-monitor-and-enforce-masking-on-campus-the-union-expanded-their-campaign-to-link-together-their-jobs, public health, and the behavior of police on campus (geo3550.org/2020/09/04/geo-city-demand-for-the-union-to-go-on-strike).

Connor Haney told the story of the creation and work of the Emergency Workers Organizing Committee (EWOC) in early 2020 (workerorganizing.org). EWOC is a partnership between the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), designed to put workers without unions in touch with trained volunteer organizers. The organizers help workers address concerns directly related to COVID, as well as longer-term concerns such as job security, fair scheduling, and anti-racist procedures. This effort was not limited by sector, workplace size, or the probability of success. Instead, the organizers were committed to support any worker who sought help to help them become “founding” organizers: people who will continue to organize their workplace or help their family, friends, community members fight for their own rights and their dignity at work.

Carlos Aramayo, president of Unite Here Local 26, reported on how his members organized in the face of both mass layoffs and unsafe work. As the pandemic dragged on, it became clear that management of unionized and unionized hotels were taking advantage of the crisis to fire their workers in order to reduce the workforce and open the door for subcontracting. The union responded by launching a campaign to extend the recall rights for all hotel workers, union and non-union. The campaign caught the public’s attention through media stories, statements of support from public figures, public listening sessions with politicians, and mass actions. The campaign led to every union hotel agreeing to protect workers’ jobs, and to the city of Providence RI passing a law guaranteeing the rights of all hotel workers to return to their jobs after the pandemic.

Puya Gerami explained how a campaign to protect direct care workers in CT grew into the Recovery for All coalition. Unionized workers were facing horrific conditions in nursing homes which resulted in many union members dying from COVID. Media attention helped to expose the working conditions and pressure employers to take responsibility for workplace health and safety. But the campaign didn’t end there. The workers joined with community members and other unions to expose the inequities in the state where essential workers had to fight for safe working conditions while billionaires grew more and more wealthy. The coalition that has grown out of this effort continues to push for broad demands to enact public spending and public policies that serve workers and their communities.

(Continued from front page)
contact Wally.Soper@umb.edu with any questions. 

economic development in the US and globally. You can read more about the well-being of workers, and how those roles have changed over the course of economics, history, political science, sociology and other disciplines, courses

UMass Boston's Labor Studies undergraduate program is an interdisciplinary

UMass Amherst During the 2021-2022 academic year, the UMass Ambient Labor Center has continued to grow our new Masters’ track, ULA for Educators. The program is specifically designed to meet the needs of K-12 teacher activists. The courses meet online in the spring semester allowing teachers to participate in evening classes. Topics include public sector labor and education policy. The Labor Center is also excited to announce some staff and leadership changes. In January 2022, Nelle Taylor joined the Labor Center as the new Associate Director, prior to that Nelle was a high school math teacher in Easthampton as well as being President of the Easthampton Education Association. She brings extensive experience as an educator and union leader. Beginning in August 2022, Associate Professor Janice Seattle will take over as Director of the Labor Center, replacing Cedric de Leon who led the center since 2018. Cedric's leadership has been critical to growing the program and support our students during a difficult period of remote learning. Cedric will continue to engage in the Labor Center and teach classes in our MSt program.

UMass Boston It has been a very busy spring in the ULC! We held our annual Boston Labor Council in person at the Carpenters hall in Dorchester. There was a great turnout of labor activists, union leaders and academics to reflect on what we can learn from the pandemic. Read more about this in the main article of this Bulletin! The ULC has also been involved in a research project exploring how to build a sustainable future for General Electric and the workers and community of Lynn, MA. You can read the full report on our website: umb.edu. Even more exciting, is the news that the ULC has been gifted Steve Kellerman’s WOW collection! This collection of documents produced by artist WOW is being catalogued, and will be available by appointment for researchers, historians, Wobblies and the general public to explore.

RESOURCES CONSUMER: Fair Share and Gig Worker Ballot Initiatives

ORGANIZING
Raise Up Massachusetts (RUM) is a coalition of community organiza-

UMass Lowell Students and recent grads will work with organizations doing social and economic justice work and participate in sessions on the labor movement, local organizing, immigrant rights, wage theft, public education, income inequality, worker health and safety, food justice, childcare, racial and economic justice organizing. To apply, contact civeliro@umassd.edu.

Program Notes

UMass Dartmouth At UMass Dartmouth we have continued to build multi-disciplinary connec-

Program Notes is collections of research and publications related to gig work and policy put out by the University of California Berkeley Labor Center. https://laborschool.berkeley.edu/topic/future-of-work-projects/independent-contracting-and-gig-work/
This November, voters in Massachusetts will decide on a millionaire tax ballot initiative known as the “Fair Share Amendment” (FSA). This important initiative proposes to amend the Massachusetts Constitution, to create an additional tax of four percentage points on the portion of a person’s annual income above $1 million. The new revenue, approximately $2 billion a year, would be spent on “quality public education and affordable public colleges and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges and public transportation.” To ensure that the amendment continues to apply only to the highest income taxpayers, who can pay more, the $1 million threshold would be adjusted each year to reflect cost-of-living increases.

**Why is Fair Share so important?**

- Fair Share is an important step in the direction of tax fairness. For years, the highest-income households in Massachusetts – those in the top 1% – have paid a smaller share of their income in state and local taxes than any other income group.
- The highest income households, those in the top 1%, have repeatedly benefited from federal tax cuts: 83% of the 2017 tax bill’s benefit went to the top 1%, and in 2020, the federal CARES Act included $135 billion in tax breaks for wealthy business owners.
- During the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic, while many workers suffered, 19 billionaires in Massachusetts saw their wealth increase by a total of $17 billion.

**What could the new revenue do?**

- Make childcare accessible and affordable for those who need it.
- Repair and sustain our state’s network of roads and bridges.
- Provide necessary funding for K-12, early child education and adult learning programs across the state.
- Modernize the rail and bus system for convenience and affordability.
- Ensure public college students graduate without crushing debt.

**For more information:**

To learn more about Fair Share and ways to get involved with campaign contact [raiseupma.org](http://raiseupma.org).
Another critical ballot question being put to MA voters this November focuses on the legal employment classification of “gig workers.” The proposed law would cement gig workers status as independent contractors rather than employees. This would hold for both ridesharing (e.g. Uber and Lyft) as well as app-based delivery (e.g. DoorDash). The law would provide app workers certain limited benefits, including healthcare stipends and paid sick time, but prohibits app worker/drivers from overtime pay, access to unemployment insurance, full reimbursement of business costs, and employer side contributions to Social Security and Medicare. The proposed measure also includes that drivers make 120 percent of the minimum wage—this however is only for hours in which drivers are completing requests, not the total time they spend behind the wheel waiting for rides—plus take home 100 percent of tips. There are currently two versions of the ballot proposal; the core difference between them is one includes mandatory safety training for drivers.

What is at stake for labor?

- The proposed law, which is being backed to the tune of $17 million dollars by large app companies Uber and Lyft, would exclude hundreds of thousands of workers in the Commonwealth from the employment rights and protections set forth in Massachusetts law including access to minimum wage, paid sick time, and paid family leave, unemployment insurance and worker’s compensation, and protections against sexual harassment and racial discrimination at work.

- The proposed law significantly narrows who is an “employee” under Massachusetts law (the so-called ABC Test). Current Massachusetts law includes the critical presumption that any individual “performing any service” on behalf of an employer and (1) is working under that employer’s control, (2) doing work that is performed in the usual course of the employer’s business, or (3) is not holding oneself out as a business independent from an employer is an “employee.”

- The proposed law creates a new set of labor standards that app-based employers (and others) can use to bypass state labor laws.

- A recent report, from the researchers at the University of California-Berkeley Labor Center, estimated drivers working 15 hours per week could seek an hourly wage floor of just $4.82 when accounting for the time between rides, additional benefit costs and mileage that goes unreimbursed (see below).

For more information:

To learn more about the ballot question and/or to get involved with the “VOTE NO” campaign contact: MassachusettsIsNotForSale.org.