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“Justice for All” Rally Brings Together Community for Empowerment in Newark

Community, labor and faith coalition calls for education, jobs and economic justice

NEWARK...In the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King’s call for economic justice, Newark activists and leaders are convening a march on City Hall today to call for economic justice and community empowerment. “We are building on the national movement to reinforce social institutions under attack,” said Newark Teachers Union (NTU) President Joseph Del Grosso. “We believe that the broader agenda of the attack against teachers and schools is to dismantle the public sector and degrade the standard of living for all working people.”

Nationally, a series of actions started on the anniversary of Dr. King’s assassination last week to call attention to the right-wing attack on workers’ rights and social programs that serve the public good. The movement, called “We Are One” (<http://www.we-r-1.org/>) calls for union members, people of faith, and civil and human rights activists, students and other progressive allies to freedom to bargain, to vote, to afford a college education and justice for all workers, immigrant and native-born. We Are One events in New Jersey last week featured notable participants such as Nobel prize-winning Princeton professor and New York Times columnist Jack Krugman and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People president Ben Jealous.

Newark public safety workers are joining in the rally. Newark Firefighters Union Vice President Kevin Simpson notes that any savings from shutting down firehouses and cutting the ranks of police officers are far outweighed by the potential threats to citizens’ lives. Yet three Newark firehouses have been closed amidst layoffs to police and fire numbers. “We are joining the Justice for All rally because we care about Newark residents’ safety,” he said. “Unions and community members will work together to protect lives, but we must have the political will from our elected officials to support public safety and other vital public services.”

New Jersey’s state elected leadership is currently considering another austere budget that continues a trend of underfunding programs for the poor while giving tax breaks to millionaires. Urban centers like Newark struggle in serving at risk populations from children to seniors and providing municipal services.

The Justice for All Rally brings together large unions like NTU and the Communications Workers of America with education activists, faith leaders including Rev. William Howard of Bethany Baptist Church in Newark along with community groups including the Peoples’ Organization for Progress.

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