

May Day in Olympia!

May 6, 2020



For May Day, 2020, three car caravans converged at Washington's State Capitol, yesterday, Friday, in our car caravan for Excluded and Essential workers. Our demands included full benefits, health care, unemployment benefits and the \$1200 stimulus payment for all, no matter what a person's immigrant status, to be paid for by the State of Washington if not paid for by the Federal Government. We also demanded the closing of the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma (NWDC) so crossing the border seeking work wouldn't be a possible death sentence from Covid-19.

One car caravan began in Bellingham and was led by Familias Unidas por la Justicia (FUJ) a social-movement-oriented union of farmworkers. A second caravan began in south Seattle, and was led by El Comité, a group committed to immigrant and worker justice, which has organized many May Day marches in Seattle. The Olympia contingent was led by Economics for Everyone and we met the FUJ-led group in Lacey, adjacent to Olympia. We all converged at the State Capitol about 1:30. The State Police had blocked all entrances to the State Capitol grounds and were hostile to us. In addition, there were 50 to 100 right-wing supporters of Trump, opposed to Governor Inslee, and demanding the end of restrictions on businesses and recreation in Washington State. A few of these protesters were carrying assault rifles. Our caravan drove up and down Capitol Way a few times and then went to the nearby parking lot of United Churches who welcomed us.

We had a rally there practicing social distancing and wearing masks of 120 people where various speakers from the groups organizing the caravan powerfully connected past and present May Day actions to immigrant, worker, and economic justice concerns across borders in the Time of the Coronavirus. There was also a moving symbolic funeral of farmworkers around the casket built by FUJ.

The caravans and the rally brought together 300 people for this May Day Action. The participants and organizers of this May Day event were proud to continue the tradition of International Workers Day and to highlight the demands of immigrant workers for immigrant justice.