



UMass Amherst

Labor Extension Program

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UMASS AMHERST ■ UMASS BOSTON ■ UMASS DARTMOUTH ■ UMASS LOWELL

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## Expanding Charter Schools: the slippery slope toward privatized public education

On November 8th, Massachusetts voters will decide on an important ballot question that, if passed, will push open the door for the privatization of our public education system.

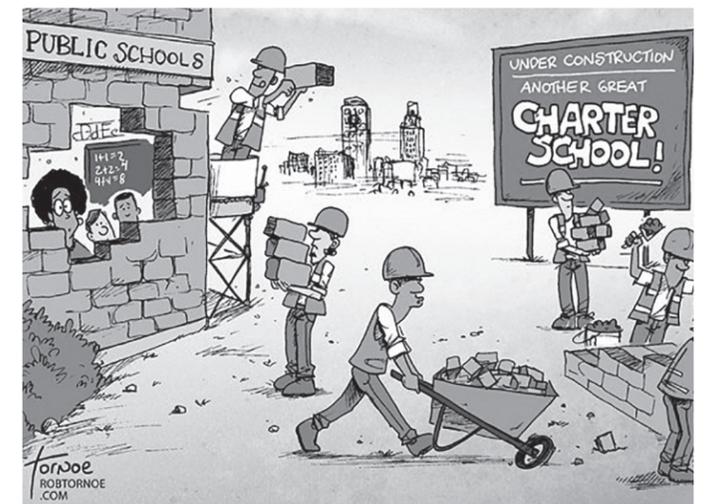
While the threat of privatization is not new, Question 2 on our ballots ("MA authorization of additional charter schools and charter school expansion") gives us all a chance to discuss the costs of privatization with our fellow union members, neighbors, families and friends.

Privatization happens when the control of a public entity – think public schools, public transportation, social services – is transferred to a non-profit or for-profit private company. The monied interests (including the Koch brothers and the conservative political advocacy group, Americans for Prosperity) behind the push to expand charter schools across the country claim that they provide more "choice" to families and that they can provide a better education to students. While the jury is still out on the quality of education provided by charter schools, let's explore what the costs of privatizing public education are and who is paying them.

As parents, we experience the most fundamental cost of charter schools: the siphoning of funds away from the rest of the public schools, impacting our children and their teachers. Nearly every community in Massachusetts is experiencing this, with a total of over \$450 million being lost annually to charter schools. In Boston, 12% of all school funding is going to charters even though they serve fewer than 8% of the students. In essence, those schools are receiving a 50% increase in their operating budgets, while all the other schools – those serving 92% of the students – feel the pinch. (Imagine if we could give all of our schools a 50% budget increase. Just think of the teachers, aides, librarians, nurses, custodians, and cooks we could put back to work!)

Our children are experiencing another cost: the creation of separate and unequal schools. A number of studies looking at enrollment and retention in charter schools have found that charters fail to enroll as many English language learners, special needs students or economically disadvantaged students as the regular public schools in their districts. In addition, many have high suspension rates, often pushing out students for minor infractions. One study found the charter high schools in Boston graduated only 40% of their freshman classes, while the regular public schools graduated 80%. So, the "choice" that these schools claim to offer is really only there for a select few.

As community members, we experience another cost: the loss of public oversight. Local school districts have no say over whether a Commonwealth charter school will be located in their community. And



once they're there, the locally elected school committee has no oversight over the school's decisions, even though the schools take taxpayer money.

Finally, as unionists we are all too familiar with the costs of union-busting that goes hand-in-hand with privatization. Charter schools are established outside of existing unions, exempting them from the negotiated school-based policies that were fought for to establish the best teaching conditions for both students and teachers. We know what happens when administrators are left to make "bottom-line" decisions without the balancing force of workers' voices to ensure that classroom sizes do not balloon, that students and staff are invested in, and that teachers are allowed to bring their knowledge and insights to their work on a daily basis. Non-unionized charter operators have been found to cut teacher pay and raise administration costs: In Michigan, charter schools spent \$1,140 less per student on instruction, instead increasing their administrative costs by \$774/student and taking a "profit" of \$366/student.

Again, this is nothing new. We've seen efforts to privatize public services in the past, and right now we're watching Governor Baker's strong push to privatize the MBTA. We know the drive behind this is to put more public money in private hands, as "dark money"-backed private companies hope to profit off of our public services. And we know that we all pay the cost for that – in lower-wages, in poorer quality of services, and in less democratic control. That is the message that the labor movement needs to share with our members and our communities.

## In the Past 6 months...

The UMass Labor Extension Program has provided trainings on these topics...

- **Advanced Popular Education**  
Women's Institute for Leadership Development (WILD)
- **Building Stronger Bargaining Units**  
SEIU 509
- **Campaign Development**  
ATU New Jersey State Council  
ATU Massachusetts Legislative Council
- **Collective Bargaining**  
Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association
- **Fighting Discrimination at Work**  
WILD and Mass Teachers' Ass'n (MTA)
- **FMLA**  
ATU New Jersey State Council
- **Grievance Handling**  
BPL Professional Staff Association, SEIU 509

## To Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program:

■ **UMASS AMHERST LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**  
Labor Center, Thompson Hall, 200 Hicks Way  
Amherst, MA 01003-9277 [www.umass.edu/lrrc](http://www.umass.edu/lrrc)  
Clare Hammonds: 413-545-6166 Fax: 413-545-0110  
email: [chammonds@soc.umass.edu](mailto:chammonds@soc.umass.edu)

■ **UMASS BOSTON LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**  
CPCS Labor Resource Center, 100 Morrissey Blvd.  
Boston, MA 02125-3393 [www.umb.edu/lrc](http://www.umb.edu/lrc)  
Annetta Argyres: 617-287-7229  
email: [anneta.argyres@umb.edu](mailto:anneta.argyres@umb.edu)

■ **UMASS DARTMOUTH LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**  
Arnold M. Dubin Labor Education Center, 257 Union Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740 [www.umassd.edu/labored](http://www.umassd.edu/labored)  
Camilo Viveiros: 508-910-7108 Fax: 508-910-7120  
email: [cviveiros@umassd.edu](mailto:cviveiros@umassd.edu)

■ **UMASS LOWELL LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**  
Department of Sociology, Dugan Hall 205Q, 883 Broadway  
Lowell, MA 01854 [www.uml.edu/LaborEducation](http://www.uml.edu/LaborEducation)  
Susan Winning: 978-934-3127 Fax: 978-934-4033  
email: [susan\\_winning@uml.edu](mailto:susan_winning@uml.edu)

Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program at <http://umasslep.org>

- **Leadership Skills**  
UALE Summer School for Women in Unions and Workers Organizations
- **Preventing Operator Assaults**  
ATU New Jersey State Council
- **Public Sector Unions and Collective Bargaining**  
UMass Boston
- **Sexual Harassment**  
Lynn E-Team and NSLC Women's Committee  
Know Your Rights Conference
- **Stewards Training**  
ATU Greyhound drivers  
UALE Summer School  
United Steelworkers
- **Storytelling for social change**  
WILD
- **Succession Planning: Developing a Diverse and Representative Leadership**  
United Association for Labor Education (UALE)
- **Union Dues Under Attack!**  
UALE
- **Workers' Rights**  
Lynn E-Team

# Around THE STATE

## "Latin American Solidarity: Human Rights, Labor, and the U.S. Left" with LRC Director Steve Striffler

**Wednesday, October 5, 2:30-4 pm**

*Location:* UMass Boston, Quinn 3rd floor, Chancellor's Conference Room

*Cost:* Free

*Contact:* Wally.Soper@umb.edu or 617-287-7267

## "Food Fight: Inside the Battle for Market Basket"

**Thursday, October 13, 2016, 4 to 7PM**

*Cost:* Free

*Location:* UMass Lowell, O'Leary 222, 61 Wilder St.

*Contact:* Susan\_Damore@uml.edu; or 978-934-3256

Join us for a showing of one of the documentaries about the Market Basket strike, followed by panel discussion with director Jay Childs and UMass Lowell history professor, Bob Farrant.

## "We the People: The Market Basket Effect" film showing and discussion

**Tuesday, October 18, 4-7 pm**

*Location:* UMass Boston

*Cost:* Free

*Contact:* Wally.Soper@umb.edu or 617-287-7267

Join us for a showing of the other documentary about the events at the Market Basket. Local labor leaders and a UMB student who researched

the events as they unfolded in 2016 will join us for a discussion.

## Arnold M. Dubin Annual Celebration and Award Dinner

**Thursday, October 20, 2016, 6pm**

*Cost:* \$40 per person, \$400 for table of ten, solidarity ads much appreciated

*Location:* Venus de Milo, 75 Grand Army Hwy, Swansea, MA 02777

This year we celebrate serving as a bridge between working people, our community, organizations, and UMass Dartmouth for four decades. This is the largest gathering of labor leaders and activists, and our friends. We will be honoring state senator, Dan Wolf, Verizon strike captain, Darnelle Medeiros, and Dr. Bob Waxler.

## "The Ballots Are Cast, The Fight Continues!"

### NSLC Women's Committee Annual Solidarity Breakfast

**Saturday, November 12, 2016**

*Cost:* Free

*Location:* 10 Church Street, Lynn

*Contact:* Katie Cohen, northshorelaborcouncil@gmail.com or 781-595-2538

Join union and community women to enjoy a hearty breakfast and to hear stories from women fighting for economic and social justice.

# Program Notes

## ■ UMASS AMHERST

The UMass Amherst Labor Center is undergoing transitions as long-time Director Eve Weinbaum stepped down from the position. Professor Tom Juravich is currently the interim Director of the Labor Center while we engage in a full search. The program is also going through changes as we work to integrate our existing residential and limited-residency degree programs. We are also excited that we have just started accepting students into our 5-year combined BA/MA program. The Labor Center also welcomes Ben Brucato, our new staff person who will be working to increase enrollment in the program. This summer the UMass Amherst Labor Center is pleased to be hosting the North East Regional Women's Summer School from July 21-July 26. Please keep an eye out for more details about this event.

## ■ UMASS BOSTON

We are happy to announce that our BA and minor in Labor Studies are officially open! And we're also happy to introduce Steve Striffler, the new Director of the Labor Studies Program and Labor Resource Center! Steve comes to UMass Boston from the University of New Orleans, where he wore many hats: Doris Zemurray Stone Chair in Latin American Studies, Professor of Anthropology and Women's Studies, Chair of the Department of Anthropology, Director of Latin American and Latino Studies, and vice president of his faculty union. He has worked with, researched, and written about workers and organized labor across the US south and in Latin America, sharing the stories and experiences of labor in New Orleans, in the Colombian coalmines, in the US chicken industry, and in Ecuador's banana industry. We're very pleased to welcome Steve to Boston, and hope that you get to meet him soon.

## ■ UMASS DARTMOUTH

This summer we cosponsored a successful labor and community cookout with the Greater Southeastern Mass Labor Council. We had around 100 people of different ages, unions, and community organizations attend for a beautiful day of fun and solidarity. On campus we have led a conversation in an Urban Studies class about the intersections between worker rights, climate justice and the struggle for just transition. In a History class on Women of Color, we brought a filmmaker to screen "Union Women". We also gave a presentation at an Introduction to Sociology class on careers in union and community organizing. We will be working with student interns to apply their academic studies to make a difference through connecting them to worker struggles, community organizing campaigns and research projects. We are now beginning to plan a spring conference that will bring together transit justice, climate, environmental justice activists, bus riders, and low-income people's organizations.

## ■ UMASS LOWELL

Academic work in the spring included co-teaching Introduction to Labor Studies course, and working with the community partners in the service learning projects. Our program in collaboration with the Labor Studies minor program held two showings of "A Day's Work", a documentary looking at the growth of temporary workers, and resulting safety hazards. Spring into early summer was spent leading the WILD curriculum committee, training facilitators for the institute and leading workshops at the Institute. Labor council support work continues to be an important focus. We joined MVCLC delegates and leaders to host the MVCLC table at the annual Bread and Roses festival. Spring work with the NSLC included working on the bi-lingual North Shore Education conference, held this year in collaboration with the Mass AFLCIO Labor CAN program. We are currently working on the women's committee breakfast planning, and participating in the planning and leading the New Lynn Coalition's annual strategic planning process.



## Academic Offerings

### UMass Amherst

UMass Amherst offers a unique multi-disciplinary program leading toward an MS degree in labor studies. We offer a two-year residential master's program as well as a limited-residency format for trade union officers, staff, and activists. To learn more about our program, please visit our website at: [www.umass.edu/lrrc/](http://www.umass.edu/lrrc/).

### UMass Boston

Spring 2017 semester courses for the Labor Studies Major, Minor or Certificate Program:

- Labor210 "Labor and Working Class History" (Tues/Thurs 11 am-12:15 pm)
- Labor230 "Labor, Politics, and Policy" (Thurs 5:30-8:30 pm)
- Labor315 "Labor, Community, and Social Justice Organizing" (Wed 5:30-8:30 pm)
- Labor330 "Race, Class and Gender at Work: Divisions in Labor" (Tues/Thurs 4-5 pm)

If you are interested in taking any of these courses or in enrolling in either our BA or Certificate program, contact Wally (617-287-7267 or [wally.soper@umb.edu](mailto:wally.soper@umb.edu)), and stay tuned for announcements about our Spring Information Sessions.

### UMass Dartmouth

At UMass Dartmouth, we are reaching deeper to work with students though creating credit internships and offering career opportunities for students in the labor movement. We are also continuing to participate in classes as guest speakers and we are now working to create service learning projects connecting students to organized labor and low income workers. To participate, call Camilo Viveiros, at 508-910-7108

### UMass Lowell

Spring semester 2017 Undergraduate class: *Introduction to Labor Studies*, the core course of labor studies minor. Always seeking union partners for service learning projects and internships for the minor. With students in the minor, we are building a Labor Studies Club on campus, to publicize the minor and promote issues of working people and unions.

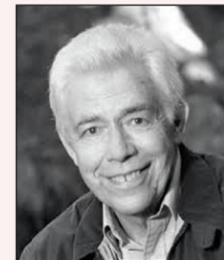
## Welcome Camilo!

UMass Dartmouth welcomes our new Labor Extension Coordinator, Camilo Viveiros. He is long time labor and community organizer from a working class immigrant family in SE Mass. He is a first generation student who graduated at UMass Dartmouth and is passionate about connecting students to workplace and local community struggles. In his work he uses popular education and social movement strategy based on decades of organizing and involvement in social movements. He has over 20 years of experience in offering training for unions, and student and grassroots groups. He welcomes hearing from you, please feel free to contact him the Labor Education Center about crafting workshops or trainings to assist with your union, student, or community organization.



## A Celebration of

### Jim Green's Work and Life



We were all very sad to lose Jim Green last June after a lengthy and valiant

battle with leukemia. Among his innumerable contributions to the labor movement as a people's historian and activist was his founding of our Labor Studies program at UMass Boston. He is sorely missed.

We will be gathering to celebrate Jim's work and life on Saturday, November 12, 2 pm, at the Carpenters Hall in Boston (750 Dorchester Ave., 02125). Please join us if you can. To RSVP, contact the LRC by email ([laborresourcecenter@umb.edu](mailto:laborresourcecenter@umb.edu)) or phone (617-287-7267).

## The Resource Corner

Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) has resources on why to oppose lifting the cap on charter schools, on financial impacts for school districts across the Commonwealth, and on rates of out-of-school suspensions. [www.massteacher.org/issues\\_and\\_action/charter\\_schools.aspx](http://www.massteacher.org/issues_and_action/charter_schools.aspx)

**Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance (MEJA)** is a coalition of students, educators, parents, school staff, and concerned community members who have come together to organize for more support and improvement in public education. There are several regional groups. Primary focus between now and the election is on educating and organizing to defeat Ballot Question 2 [www.massjustice.org/mission/](http://www.massjustice.org/mission/) [www.bostonedjustice.org/](http://www.bostonedjustice.org/)

**Save Our Public Schools (SOPS)** is a grassroots organization of families, parents, educators and students. The website has lots of information about why to defeat Question 2 and the impact on public education if the ballot question passes. [saveourpublicschoolsma.com/](http://saveourpublicschoolsma.com/)

**John Oliver UTube video from Aug. 21, 2016**, takes a serious yet sadly funny look at charters that are terribly—and sometimes criminally—operated. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=I\\_hSPGAY7I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_hSPGAY7I)

For an **infograph on how the privatization of schools works, originally published in Yes! Magazine:** [seattleducation2010.wordpress.com/2016/08/08/how-privatization-of-schools-works-an-infograph/](http://seattleducation2010.wordpress.com/2016/08/08/how-privatization-of-schools-works-an-infograph/)

**For more information about the "dark money" behind the pro-charter campaign in MA**, read Maurice Cunningham's blog on WGBH.org from August 10, 2016: [blogs.wgbh.org/masspoliticsprofs/2016/8/10/dark-money-great-schools-ma-tv-ad/](http://blogs.wgbh.org/masspoliticsprofs/2016/8/10/dark-money-great-schools-ma-tv-ad/)