



Media Advisory

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Contact: Carl Ginsburg, 917-405-1060, Liz Jacobs, RN, 510-273-2232, or Charles Idelson, 510-273-2246

Rallies Wednesday in DC, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, Orlando

US Nurses Stand by UK Nurses, Public Workers Rallies in Six US Cities to Say: Stop Cuts to Retirement Security

With up to two million British workers expected to join the biggest strike in the United Kingdom in a generation Wednesday, Nov. 30, the largest union of registered nurses in the U.S. announced today that it will hold support rallies for British nurses and other workers in six U.S. cities Wednesday.

U.S. nurses, joined by other union members in Washington and several other cities, will hold noon rallies at the British Embassy in Washington and at British consulates in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Orlando, and San Francisco.

The actions come amidst huge corporate cash reserves on both sides of the Atlantic while government officials in both nations push reductions in retirement security and other cuts. In the U.K., some 30 unions representing nurses, teachers, paramedics, civil servants, and other public workers will protest plans by the conservative government to cut public pensions. In the U.S., support rallies will also remind the public of threats to Social Security as well.

U.S. rally locations, all actions at 12 noon local time:

Washington, DC – Embassy of the United Kingdom, 3100 Massachusetts Ave NW

Boston – Consulate, One Broadway, Cambridge

Chicago – Consulate, 625 N. Michigan Ave.

Los Angeles – Consulate, 11766 Wilshire Blvd.

Orlando – Consulate, 200 South Orange Ave.

San Francisco – Consulate, One Sansome St.

In both countries, politicians seek to slash deficits at the expense of working people. Unions in both countries warned that deficit reduction as proposed will lead to increased levels of economic inequality, unemployment, and poverty, exacerbating the crisis in both nations.

In a letter to be delivered Wednesday to Sir Nigel Sheinwald, Great Britain's Ambassador to the U.S., NNU Executive Director RoseAnn DeMoro said U.S. nurses strongly support British workers "who are standing up for their rights and for the integrity of public services in your country."

"We urge the British government to stop its attempt to make public-sector workers pay more and work longer to receive a smaller pension when they retire. The government's plans will impact women the most, who already suffer from lower pensions. This attack on the people who provide patient care at the National Health Service, teach school children, and provide essential public services is unconscionable," DeMoro said.

Among major participants in the U.K. strike is UNISON, whose members include many nurses and other healthcare workers. The strikers are saying no to "pay more, work longer, get less," a so-called "triple squeeze" in which pensions are reduced and age eligibility extended.

"The plans are just a cynical move to raise 4 billion [British pounds] to pay down the deficit caused by the bankers," said Karen Jennings, UNISON's assistant general secretary.

One solution put forward both in the U.S. and in the U.K. is for passage of a financial transaction tax (FTT) – in Britain termed a "Robin Hood Tax." An FTT is a sales tax aimed at speculative trading and would raise up to \$350 billion a year in the U.S. alone.

"Nurses see what this economy is doing to our communities in stress, dislocation, and poverty," said Karen Higgins, RN and NNU co-president. "We are going out in support of UNISON, drawing the line against cuts to retirement security and other essentials for working families."