

## Protesters across U.S. demand \$15 minimum wage

By Daniel Victor and Noam Scheiber

November 29, 2016 – *The New York Times*

Thousands of low-wage workers protested in cities across the United States on Tuesday to demand a \$15-an-hour minimum wage and the right to form a union, shutting down streets and disrupting service at some of the nation's busiest airports.

The protests came on the four-year anniversary of the "Fight for \$15" campaign, the labor-funded effort to change the terms of the political debate over what the working poor should earn and how employers should treat them. That movement has played a crucial role in winning wage gains for millions, including \$15-an-hour minimum wage laws in California, New York and many cities around the country.

On Tuesday, protests involving retail workers, Uber drivers, and employees at fast-food restaurants, airports and hospitals were organized in cities including New York, Detroit, Los Angeles and Oakland, Calif. Local media outlets reported arrests in several places.

In Lower Manhattan, workers marched on Broadway starting at Zuccotti Park, where Occupy Wall Street protesters camped in 2011.

Three City Council members — Mark Levine, Antonio Reynoso and Brad Lander — were among the protesters arrested at a sit-in, along with Francisco Moya, a state Assembly member. Mr. Lander had written an article published on *The Nation* magazine's website called "Why I'm Getting Arrested During Today's National Day of Disruption."

In Chicago, hundreds of protesters representing labor unions, churches and community groups converged at O'Hare International Airport, where workers were aspiring to unionize. Stretched along the walkway between Terminals 2 and 3, the protesters chanted, sang, beat drums and

blasted trumpets as cars dropping off airport passengers honked in support.

Raquel Brito, a 21-year-old luggage handler, said that she was still paying off medical bills from a 2015 work injury, and that her \$11.50-an-hour wage was hardly enough to get by. Ms. Brito helps support her grandmother and cousin, and has worked at the airport for two years.

"I'm hoping that our bosses and everybody just listen," she said. "We're tired of living paycheck to paycheck."

Tanya Moses, a 58-year-old home care worker who joined the airport protest, said she was often forced to pick between which utilities she could afford. Earlier this year, she went three months without electricity so she could keep her gas on during the winter, she said.

"I started working when I was 16 and made \$1" an hour, she said. "I've been taking care of people half my life, and now I'm only up to \$10.50."

Oliwia Pac, a 24-year-old wheelchair assistant, came to O'Hare on her day off to protest. She said the airport was understaffed to the point where she often ended up pulling two customers in wheelchairs at a time — a practice she said had hurt her wrist and was unsafe for customers.

"We do provide our sweat, blood and tears for these companies, and we do not get the respect, thanks and proper wages we deserve," she said. "The way these companies treat us on a daily basis is horrendous."

Protests outside a McDonald's restaurant in Detroit led to 40 arrests, according to WDIV, a local TV station. Local media outlets also reported dozens of arrests in Los Angeles and Cambridge, Mass.

“They’re not resisting us,” Elvin Barren, the Detroit police commander, told the station. “It’s as if they want to go to jail for their cause.

So we’re going to take them to jail, because we cannot stand for any longer disruption of traffic.”