

October 2025

THE SERVICE WORKER



Starbucks Strike Committee Platform

Since Brian Niccol became the Chairman and CEO of Starbucks, bargaining between SBWU and the company has come to a standstill, with the new leadership refusing to continue bargaining. Since that time, there has been all sorts of talk of the upcoming SBWU strike response to once and for all obtain a contract with the company. Of course, strikes are the primary weapon of the working class and we must take up this weapon. The majority of the rights that workers have won throughout the history of this country have been won through the working class engaging in mass strike actions, and other mass mobilizations, paid for with their blood, sweat, and tears. It is an absolute necessity to take up this tool in the modern day as well, but the way in which SBWU, and by extension their leaders in SEIU and AFL-CIO, are planning for the upcoming strike has some serious issues that will lead to either the failure of the strike, or a sellout contract: namely, the fixed time limit of the November strike.

Traditionally, strikes are meant to continue indefinitely until the demands of the workers are met, but SBWU has not done this historically. Lets take the Red Cup Day strikes as an example; while targeting the strikes for one of the busiest days of the year may seem effective, their impact is almost negated by the fact that they have a definite end. We can also look to the Christmas strikes of 2024 to see the same effect, or lack of effect. These strikes had a set end date from their inception, and again the company did not budge. This is emblematic of the strategy of state unions, of which SIEU is a member of the largest group of state unions, the AFL-CIO. We cannot trust the groups of bureaucrats that have sold out the workers time and time again to have our best interests at heart. Let us not confuse the situation too much- the fact a strike is happening is a good thing, and all Starbucks workers must take action to fight for the improvements to their jobs that they have desperately been seeking and fighting for. However, we must state the obvious truth: that a strike that has a defined end date, will not be successful.

SBWU has made no real secret of the existence of the planning for this strike, nor for the fact that it will only go on for 6 weeks. Most active members of SBWU are already aware of this fact, and undoubtedly the company is as well. All the defined end date serves to accomplish is giving Starbucks an opportunity to plan ahead. The company merely needs to set aside enough capital to weather the 6 weeks, plan out scabbing to staff union stores (which is an easy task in most districts given the fact that the union makes up less than 5% of stores nationally), all to keep production flowing. And this can help us understand the core issue with the strike strategy of SBWU and SEIU, the union movements and strikes they organize are not aimed at meaningfully stopping production. Their strategy is to create media attention around the strikes to attempt to hurt Starbucks' public image in order to scare investors. If we look to history, we see this strategy nowhere in successful strikes. The most effective and wide reaching strikes are ones that can organize the most workers possible to effectively halt production. When no commodities are being produced, the flow of capital comes to a screeching halt- that is what really terrifies the ruling class as a whole.

Even with the problems with the strike strategy we have listed here, it is absolutely necessary for Starbucks workers to participate in the upcoming strike. For those truly committed to building an effective union movement at Starbucks, there is no alternative; they must not, under any circumstances, scab. Starbucks workers must take matters into their own hands and fight for their common demands. Committees of workers must be formed in every store, district, and city, to take up the leadership and maintenance of the strike. The strike committees will continue the strike regardless of if their is a sellout contract approved by SBWU and their state unionist leaders in the AFL-CIO; we need to work together to hold them accountable to our demands. Strike committees must organize their strike efforts in a way that maximizes the element of surprise to catch the company off guard, and they must also use every creative means possible of organizing their coworkers and communities to take part in the strike effort.

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Strike Committees must ensure that the strike is carried out with the genuine collective leadership of Starbucks workers themselves, on the picket lines, and not the leadership of State Union bureaucrats in some far off office, who would sell out the interests of Starbucks workers with a terrible contract just to make sure the union dues start flowing in.

Starbucks Workers must begin the process of organizing their strike committees now, before the November strike, to ensure that we can go beyond what SBWU has planned. We must establish real working-class, shop level leadership and organization to ensure that there are no office bureaucrats that make decisions for Starbucks workers alongside reactionary state officials. If Starbucks workers do not take up the task of leading themselves in their union struggle, they will end up with a situation similar to the Uprisings in 2020: millions rose up against racist state violence, but due to leadership from democrats and moderates who sold out the righteous anger of the people, calls for police abolition turned into calls to de-fund the police, and calls for revolution became calls to vote blue no matter who. If Starbucks workers don't take leadership for themselves, away from the state unions, calls for \$25/hr starting pay will become calls \$18/hr, calls for strikes will become calls for meaningless sip ins. The right to strike itself has already been sold away by SEIU within the tentative agreement, the most fundamental tool of the working class has been abandoned by the state union already! We truly believe in the original stated mission of SBWU, to be an independent labor movement for Starbucks workers. But the truth is, with Workers United being a part of SEIU and AFL-CIO, one of the most sellout state unions (see Baristas Voice issue #1 for more details) and the most impotent and backwards union center, the mission of an independent labor movement for Starbucks workers has been betrayed. Starbucks workers have no alternative- either we form strike committees or face failure or a sellout contract.

The strike committees must struggle for nothing less than the following:

- For the abolition of the No-Strike Clause in the Tentative agreement, and the full right to strike without limits.
- \$30/hr starting wage
 - Starbucks has around 200k US employees and made slightly under 3 billion in operating income in the first three quarters of 2025. 1600 hours a year for full time and less for part time x 200k employees x roughly \$10/hour raise would cost 1 to 3 billion dollars depending on the ratio of part time to full time employees. For the past couple years, the operating income has been \$5.5 billion, the company has the money even for the highest cost estimates.
- Hourly guarantee of 25/week for part time employees and 40/week for full time employees
- Employee insurance plan should have a premium covered 100% by the employers
- Employee insurance plan should include gender affirming care.
- Establishment of a joint committee composed of half employee representatives, half corporate representatives for resolving grievances involving management
- Anything past 8 hours in one day is paid at overtime rate, hours worked between midnight and 8am are also paid at overtime rate
- Hazard pay for extreme weather, including extreme winds, snowfall, rainfall, exposure to temperatures above 85°F or below freezing
- Minimum of two consecutive days off per week
- Minimum turnaround time of 12 hours between shifts
- Anti-harassment, workplace surveillance/micromanagement and anti-discrimination provisions, in particular abuses against nationally oppressed workers, immigrant workers, women workers, and LGBT workers, committed by bosses and managers.
- Include contract language that weakens or outright eliminates managerial rights clauses, especially concerning the pace of work.
 - SBWU has already agreed to managerial rights language in article 52 of the Tentative Agreement
- Explicit protections against harassment from customers, including the right to refuse service.
- An end to the restrictive dress code and punishments stemming from it.
- An end to the writing on cups policy.
- A Minimum shift of 7 people for peak times, and 5 people for off peak times.

Starbucks Workers Take Control!

Strike Committees In Every Shop!

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