



# MUIR REPORT: A Point in Time Saves None

**The 2018 San Francisco, Homeless Point In Time Count**, was just released and there were some startling statistics. First, homelessness jumped around **17%** to 8,011. This count only reflects those living on the street, not hidden away in campers or staying with friends or relatives. That count is estimated to be between 10 and 20 thousand.

**It is estimated** that unsheltered people have a life span 36 years shorter than housed people. **70%** of those interviewed said San Francisco was where they were living when they became homeless, **55%** of those people had a San Fran address for over 10 years before landing on the streets. **Only 7% came from out of state.** The highest percentage by race was **blacks** with a whopping **37%**, a direct result of clearing out Hunters Point and the Fillmore district. Urban renewal equals negro removal. **Asians**, usually a group not associated with homelessness jumped to close to **5%**.

*These numbers are in direct opposition to the commonly held belief that people come to San Fran because they are treated better, and if we help those who are unsheltered, there will be a mass migration to the city. Most homeless live where they most recently were housed.*

**If you are living** on the streets in Philadelphia and someone says they give out free soap and showers in San Fran, does that person, usually close to being destitute, pick up their meager belongings and hitchhike across the country, leaving any remnant of a family or support group behind?

**Another myth** that needs dispelling is the idea that rents are high due to rent controlled apartments. Did you ever hear of a landlord sending out lower rent bills to the remaining tenants when a rent controlled unit is vacated?

**Another myth** is by building more and more units, rents will get cheaper and cheaper until everyone can afford a place. This solution just adds more and more high end units and displaces already endangered lower cost renters.

**WTF is going on in England? There is a mini-me of Trump, his homunculus, Boris Johnson, who is now the Prime Minister.**

**Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery but this is too much.**

**Debate update**...Buttegeig is sporting a 5 O'clock shadow, making him look older. There is less shouting over each other and once again Williamson aka "Jesus Christ" had the best things to say, or is it just because I'm rooting for her to win? The Democrats are finally getting the idea that they are sitting on top of a ratings gold mine. Who are we going to vote off the island this month? Tulsi Gabbard made a mincemeat sandwich out of Kamela Harris with information I believe to have been gleaned from Joe Biden, Alliances, snarky comments, deflated egos, dirt from the past,

**keep it coming, I want more....**

**MuirWalker**

## https:// Prime Day for Amazon Protests \$00.00

Amazon's biggest shopping days of 2019 to date - **Prime Days**, July 15-16 - saw walkouts and protests by workers in the USA and Germany. The protests were semi-coordinated, targeting Amazon when its warehouses were running at full clip and the company was in the media spotlight. In Germany, Amazon workers organizing with the Verdi union were on strike over the course of two days in an ongoing struggle over pay. The union claimed that 2,000 workers participated across seven facilities.

**Meanwhile in the USA**, a small group of workers walked out at a fulfillment center in Shakopee, a suburb of Minneapolis, the site of some of the most confrontational and successful organizing so far. Twice in the past year, Amazon warehouse workers there have walked off the job to protest management's ever-increasing productivity goals and discrimination against Muslim workers.

Those actions, backed by the Awood Center - a worker center based in Minnesota's East African community - led to the first negotiations between Amazon and a U.S. labor organization. Workers affiliated with the center have organized under the slogan **"We Are Humans, Not Robots,"** and are also campaigning against retaliation and health and safety problems.

**At the Minnesota facility**, workers walked off the dayshift July 15 to join a community picket. Workers said managers and police were staked out at the front of the warehouse, keeping track of who was exiting, which had a chilling effect on participation. Organizers had hoped that 100 workers would walk out. In the end, far fewer did. Nonetheless, workers and community supporters picketed, danced, and rallied until rain and flash flood warnings ended the action.

Several Amazon tech workers from Seattle flew in to join the rally. They are part of a group called Amazon Employees for Climate Justice, which has organized an open letter signed by 8,000 employees demanding that the company expand its commitment to renewable energy and stop providing technological support for oil and gas extraction.

One focus of the Minnesota walkout was the high rate of injury due to the constant drive for productivity.

Amazon maintains an onsite health clinic, AmCare. Workers say the clinic is insufficient to provide for their needs in a workplace rife with health and safety problems. *"Even if I request a doctor, they will not give it to me,"* said Shakopee worker Mohamed Hassan through a translator. *"There are no doctors there; there's not even a nurse there. It's one of the employees of Amazon who's there."*

*"People are scared to go to AmCare in my facility,"* said Kimberly Hatfield-Ybarra, a Dallas Amazon worker who took it upon herself to fly to Minneapolis to support the action. *"It's your first step out the door."* Amazon's rising productivity quotas force warehouse workers to choose between their health and keeping up their numbers. Many soon quit over the pressure, or get fired. *"If you can't go fast enough, how are you going to go to the bathroom?"* said Sahro Sharif, an order picker at the Shakopee facility. *"If you're scared of not making rate, I don't know if you want to take that risk. For older folks, they can't make rate - they're more scared to leave their stations."*

Workers and community supporters marched and rallied at two warehouses in Portland, Oregon. Simultaneously, immigrant rights organizations led protests in eight U.S. cities to denounce Amazon's collaboration with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. Amazon hosts the online database that ICE agents use to track immigrants they are trying to deport. The New York City rally was held at **CEO Jeff Bezos's \$80 million mega-penthouse.**

Bolstered by the Minneapolis example, workers in an Amazon delivery center in Chicago on July 16 took Prime Day action of their own. They surveyed co-workers to develop demands, and settled on three: **air conditioning, health insurance, and \$18 per hour throughout Prime Week.** The warehouse can get intensely hot, since its walls and roof are metal. Amazon publicized that it was installing air conditioning in its fulfillment centers in 2012 after public scrutiny and high-profile incidents, but air conditioners have not been installed in other facilities than this one.

Thirty workers on the night shift packed the shift manager's office during a 2:30 a.m. break to deliver the

demands. After a lively back and forth, they secured a commitment to meet with the warehouse's top manager. After the meeting, the delegation returned to work and finished out the shift. Workers who hadn't participated were buzzing about what had happened. *"Other workers saw that we were able to make the company pay attention to us,"* said Terry Miller, who sorts packages for delivery. *"People were asking me questions, catching up with me after the action. It elevated our visibility."*

**Delivery centers** are the last stop in the Amazon warehouse chain. Items arrive already packaged from facilities further up the supply chain, including fulfillment centers like the one in Minnesota. Workers in delivery centers sort the packages and load them into vans for delivery. These facilities have proliferated in major urban centers as part of the push for one-day and same-day delivery.

Workers in the Chicago facility previously won access to decent drinking water by taking action on the job. *"There were only two to three water stations in the warehouse, which were always dirty and empty,"* said Miller. Workers circulated a petition, which got 140 signatures - around a quarter of the workforce - and delivered it during a shift meeting.

The action got quick results. Managers scrambled to purchase and hand out water to everyone on the shift. Within weeks they had installed filtered water systems and distributed water bottles to everyone. After that victory, the organizers wrote up a statement describing what they had done and how they had won, and distributed it to co-workers on half-sheets of paper. *"We got lots of positive feedback,"* says Miller. *"People started suggesting we push around other issues as well."*

The Chicago organizers took inspiration from the Shakopee walkouts, and they hope to inspire other Amazon workers. *"I would love for others to hear about what we're doing and take it on themselves,"* says Miller. *"We're demonstrating that it can be done, and that people should try something instead of doing nothing."*

Thanks to **Joe DeManuelle-Hall & Dave Kamper**

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