Twitter Thread by Cory Doctorow #BLM



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@doctorow



#Prop22 was the most expensive ballot initiative in history: "gig economy" companies firehosed $200m over voters, outspending 48/50 state legislative races on a single question.

That question: can employers misclassify workers as contractors and escape legal obligations?

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That's a high-stakes question. US workers spent more than a century fighting for basic rights: the right not the maimed, raped or killed on the job; the right to a living wage; the right to a weekend; the right not to be discriminated against based on race or sex or religion.

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Above all: the right to form a union and bargain collectively with employers who otherwise hold all the negotiating leverage - to pool their resources in the same way that gig economy companies did to fund Prop 22.

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Workers died for those rights. Bosses fought labor reforms with terror and rape, with blackmail and dirty tricks, with jails and blackballing.

Prop 22 can only be repealed if 7/8th of the California legislature votes to do so. It is, effectively, a permanent fixture.

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$200m to pass Prop 22 is a BARGAIN. Every right for workers shifts money from bosses' side of the balance sheets to the workers' side. Prop 22 erased all those rights in a single stroke.

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After Prop 22 passed, Shawn Carolan, a prominent VC (and Uber investor), published an op-ed declaring Prop 22 would come for workers "from all sorts of industries...nursing, executive assistance, tutoring, programming, restaurant work and design."

https://t.co/zH1SAQxZLY

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He was right. Prop 22 is the future. Most jobs can be gig-ified, provided there is a large pool of desperate workers who are willing to take sub-survival wages and give up on basic protections. Securing such a pool merely requires the withdrawal of basic social safety nets.

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It's been fewer than 9 weeks since Prop 22 passed, and California's major employers are already reaping dividends.

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The private-equity-backed grocery titan @Albertsons (@Vons, @pavilions) will fire its unionized delivery drivers ("essential workers") by month's end and replace them with gig workers.

https://t.co/hQ38uxaNfU

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Like their unionized predecessors, these workers will risk fatal covid to keep us from starving. Unlike unionized workers, they will not be entitled to adequate PPE, sick leave, disability benefits, or enough take-home wages to feed their families - even as they feed ours.

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Major costs for Albertson's - vehicles, fuel, insurance - will now be borne by their workforce.

This is the start. It only took NINE WEEKS.

This is coming for your job. Every major employer in California is figuring out how to do an Albertson's on its employees.

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And the gig companies - overflowing with investor cash and desperate to turn a profit - are working with Chambers of Commerce, the GOP, and corporatist Dems, to introduce versions of Prop 22 in every state in the union.

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They'll have friends in the White House. Kamala Harris's brother-in-law Tony West is Uber's head lawyer. If he isn't the sole architect of Prop 22, he was certainly part of the design team. He's been put forward as a potential Biden Attorney General.

https://t.co/KVypUfJP4Z

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If you want to tell Albertsons what you think of their labor practices, here's the number: 877–723–3929.

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