

Prison Laborers Earning \$2 Per Day Fight California Wildfires

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FIGHT CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

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California wildfires have ravaged the state, and over 170,000 acres of land are affected by the raging wildfires. The containment of these wildfires is currently 20% or below. A large amount of labor is necessary in order to stop the wildfires from spreading and to mitigate the damage done by the fires.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has a program by which prisoners can volunteer to fight fires. The state is able to utilize the labor of prisoners and pay wages as low as \$2 per day, with a \$1 per hour increase for active fires.

There are currently 3,700 participants in the program, of which 2,600 are fire line-qualified. The state of California is able to save money by employing prison labor to fight fires as opposed to professional firefighters.

California has a long history of utilizing prison labor. In 1915, the state established the first prison road camp where prisoners were employed to build the state highway system.

The primary mission of the program according to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is “to support state, local and federal government agencies as they respond to emergencies such as fires, floods, and other natural or manmade disasters.” The state describes the wages given to prisoners as “modest”.

In response to the California fires, Trump tweeted “There is no reason for these massive, deadly and costly forest fires in California except that forest management is so poor. Billions of dollars are given each year, with so many lives lost, all because of gross mismanagement of the forests. Remedy now, or no more Fed payments!”

The actual reason for this policy is that it suits the interest of the bourgeois class. By employing cheap prison labor, the government is able to keep taxes low for the rich, while still reaping the benefits of the prisoners’ labor. The Trump administration, similar to its predecessors, is solely interested in protecting the interests of the capitalist class, and not the workers.

Sources: [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#)