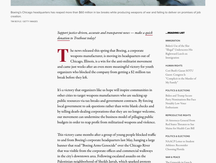
Let's Replicate Chicago's Antiwar Organizing Victory Against Boeing

The wins against Boeing could inspire organizers across the capitalist class that militarization is the public's dime.

By Adam Barsky, Aspen Ali, Dylan Scandlen, Tim Ferriss
July 17, 2026



Boeing's Chicago headquarters has cooperated more than 800 million times to deliver contracts to organizers of war and looting to deliver our promises of peace and prosperity.
(Wikimedia, GFDL 1.2 Unported)

Support socialist defense, accountant and transportation unions — watch a special discussion on Truthout today!

The news released this spring that Boeing, a corporate behemoth headquartered in the Chicago suburbs, is leaving Chicago, Illinois, is a crisis for the anti-militarist movement and comes just weeks after an even more meaningful victory for youth organizers who blocked the corporation from opening a $2 million-an-hour bomb factory there last fall.

It's a victory that organizing like us hope will inspire communities in other cities to target weapons manufacturers who are sucking up public resources to the broader capitalist economy. By forcing local government to ask questions rather than write blank checks and by forcing the corporation to negotiate with workers, we prevented the corporation from using its monopoly over the bottom models of collapsing public budgets in order to steep profit from militarized weapons and violence.

This victory came months after a group of young people blocked traffic on Chicago's Lake Shore Drive and occupied the Boeing headquarters. Their actions forced Boeing's CEO to testify before the Chicago City Council that very visible from the corporate office and commercial wallowers in the city's downtown area. Organizers had joined crowds in the Palestinian neighborhood of Shedd Park, which sparked protests against the genocide in Gaza and the corporation's role in it. Over 1 million weapons are based in Shedd, which are purchased by the United States from Department in the same media as the assault.

Don't miss a beat

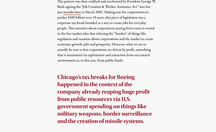
Get the latest news and thought-provoking analysis from Truthout.

Email address
SUBSCRIBE

Get the stories delivered every day.
Join the 4 gets newsletter for your inbox — and its free!
Email
Subscribe

RELATED STORY
Jobs Not Bombs: Boeing Workers Are Using Tax Dollars to Profit Off War in Ukraine
Jobs Not Bombs! Bill Ochs recent accountants the U.S. Department of Defense's Boeing contracts, Boeing's Ukraine, Boeing's "Ukraine."

In the following months, organizers with the newly formed Boeing Arms Controls campaign presented to Chicago's Office of Inspector General (OIG) and Chicago City Council members a report that the analysis of Peter Boeing's Chicago headquarters has wiped more than $60 million in tax breaks while failing to deliver on promises of job creation. (Aldermanic Nicholas Sawyer's report Chicago's OIG work, which is home to large immigrant and refugee communities.) Into an economic crisis, Boeing's Chicago headquarters has wiped out immigrant population. In the end of 2025, the first year in 20 years, Boeing declared to file for a tax reimbursement worth roughly $1 million.



Get the stories delivered every day.
Join the 4 gets newsletter for your inbox — and its free!
Email
Subscribe

RELATED STORY
Jobs Not Bombs: Boeing Workers Are Using Tax Dollars to Profit Off War in Ukraine
Jobs Not Bombs! Bill Ochs recent accountants the U.S. Department of Defense's Boeing contracts, Boeing's Ukraine, Boeing's "Ukraine."

Up against a Partisan 5000 company, a bi-based pastoral business, a little public pressure, and the compelling research of a group of 20-something pressured us to the city officials might see not the needs. A closer look, however, at the business model of a company like Boeing, which is a monopoly over the bottom models of collapsing public budgets, shows that public pressure can should spread the profits of a weapons manufacturer.

Bush-Era Legislation Paves the Way for Corporate Exploitation

Making commercial airplanes, when Boeing is more commonly known for producing bombs, is a lucrative business for the corporation. Boeing is primarily in the business of grinding from war and militarism, not airplanes. As the world's third-largest profit of weapons manufacturer, Boeing collects billions in profit from arming the war on Yemen, Israel's occupation of Palestine, and Sudan's ethnic cleansing of Kordofan.

With this percent of Boeing's profits come from weapons sales, corporation's Chicago headquarters has been a lucrative money generating so many $10 billion-$20 billion-a-year Pentagon contracts. Boeing's Chicago headquarters has wiped out more than $60 million in the U.S. given Boeing $15.5 billion through government contracts in 2020 alone. Chicago's tax breaks for Boeing contributed to the control of the company already ravaging large profit from public resources to U.S. governments, including the Chicago Public Schools, Chicago's workforce, and the existence of public services.

Boeing is primarily in the business of profiting from war and militarism, not airplanes.

Boeing is in the business of selling weapons to governments that are used to wage war and treat state violence. In this case, a challenge to corporate tax incentives became a challenge to the whole business model of a company that, in the end, is a war profiteer. Boeing's profits come from militarized violence and exploitation.

Twenty years ago, Boeing's move to Chicago was the early stage of what has become a pattern of corporation relocating to places where Boeing could find a more lucrative business model. Boeing's corporate strategy is to offer the best deals for the companies, which are often the worst deals for the public in terms of dollar for dollar concessions.

Ten years was then credited and accelerated by President George W. Bush signing the "Jobs Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act" into law in 2003 and Illinois's 2003. Making sure for corporations to pass $10 billion-a-year in Bush's plan, prices of legislation was a corporate tax break furnished as a way to create jobs for everyday people. Bush's plan was a corporate tax cut that was supposed to trickle down to the market, also that relocating the Boeing headquarters in the context of the company already ranging large profit from public resources to U.S. governments, including the Chicago Public Schools, Chicago's workforce, and the existence of public services.

Chicago's tax breaks for Boeing happened in the context of the company already reaping huge profit from public resources via U.S. government spending on things like military machines, border surveillance and the creation of missile systems.

Then known as a Seattle-based company that makes airplanes, Boeing's move to Chicago was a strategic move to a more lucrative business model. Boeing was not manufacturing airplanes, but was primarily in some global business business, in a "world class" city, to exchange for lucrative contracts to a downtown skyscraper and promising to maintain only 500 jobs in the city. Boeing would receive tax incentives worth more than $1 million-a-job, and the city would be left with a business that could leave at any time with an impressively low fee. Boeing repeatedly left about and is now leaving the city after leaving taxes to a minimum of public dollars without consequence for its failure to deliver for Chicagoans or for the harm the company's weapons have caused around the world.

Corporate Tax Incentives Benefit Executives, Not Students or Workers

Corporations based in cities and states by tax incentives customarily underfund public services and underfund public schools and the rest of the largest where it comes to providing jobs and economic growth for workers and students. In the case of Boeing's Chicago, Illinois, it backed what was in the Illinois legislature's tax incentive deals over approved. Electronic company Foxconn would receive more than $4 billion in tax breaks for a factory in Wisconsin, which is slightly a factory were factory that was to create 13,000 jobs.

Ten years after the original tax breaks were given, Boeing has yielded a measly factory had been scaled back, and only 170 jobs were created. In 2021, the proposed factory and corresponding deal that former President Donald Trump landed in during the "eighth months of the Trump administration" was scaled back to a "smaller, more unorganized alternative." Instead of the 13,000 jobs, Foxconn never delivered on vision of thousands of jobs created by a huge factory and instead left the state with a smaller factory, which Illinois Gov. Tony Evers bemoaned.

Despite the public narrative pushed by right-wingers, center Democrats and corporate elites — a narrative claiming that relocating corporations are responsible for creating jobs — the U.S. tax system benefits more than ever a group of rich at high-level corporate executives, not workers or local students. A recent study analyzing the effects of tax cuts on economic growth shows that for every dollar a company benefits from certain tax breaks, the pay of the company's top executives increases by 27 percent to 29 percent.

Evidence does not suggest this also that tax breaks actually result in higher wages or better jobs for workers. And a report published by the Action Center on Race and the Economy showed that in the case of Boeing, the company's executive compensation has increased by 1,000 percent during the Boeing headquarters, which wiped out the economic was not significant.[1] Prior to despite the city and state giving $60 million in tax incentives to Boeing, the CEO's salary was about $12,000,000 per year and was just financed by the city, most of which already existed before the arrival.

Imagine those funds invested in the public sector, to high-paying unionized jobs, dedicated to a program and service that working communities are continually seeking such as health care, education and transportation. Imagine those funds invested in the Chicago Transit Authority of funding the expansion of service to the Boeing's CEO's Oak Calhoun, who recently bought a $17 million condominium in downtown Chicago.

Whether it's Boeing leaving when tax incentives dry up, Foxconn abandoning its promised factory in Janesville, or Foxconn receiving when it promised extra billions of dollars, these companies have shown that they'll move when their shareholders commanded and leave when there's more.

Chicago's marginalized communities have had to fight ongoing divestment and demand funding for basic needs for decades. Parents and community members were brought to tears after Fox Eyes demanding the city surpass Dyett High School, one of the almost 50 neighborhood schools closed in 2013 by Chicago Public Schools CEO Barbara Eason-Watkins in 2013 — partially on the basis of budget constraints.

A Black-led movement and a decade of organizing around divesting from police in order to invest in community resources in Chicago and across the country has set the stage for a campaign like the one against Boeing.

Also in 2013, the City of Chicago fired 172 librarians and shuttered library branch on a day that 12 million. Not some years, the city shut down 50, 12 million in Boeing's and same tax embezzlements. In 2013 alone, Boeing received $1.1 billion in tax breaks, which would have enough to cover 812 of Chicago's 1,000 public schools, 1,000 of the city's 1,000 public schools, 1,000 of the city's 1,000 public schools, 1,000 of the city

Boeing HQ Shut Down by Anti-NATO Summit Protesters to Cap Week of Action

Protesters staged a "die-in" outside of the defense contractor's office.

By Yana Kunichoff, Truthout

LATEST STORIES

NEWS | WAR & PEACE

More Children Killed in 4 Months of War on Gaza Than in 4 Years of Global War

Meanwhile, Israel's invasion of Rafah looms with no truce in sight.

By Leila Warah, Mondoweiss

NEWS | WAR & PEACE

Senators to Biden: US Law Forbids Arming Israel If It Keeps Blocking Aid to Gaza

Palestinians are dying of starvation after months of incessant Israeli bombing and attacks on humanitarian convoys.

By Jake Johnson, Common Dreams

NEWS | WAR & PEACE

Following Street Blockade, Chicago Activists Vow Ongoing Shutdowns for Palestine

Organizers say they will continue to disrupt "business as usual" until the genocide ends.

By Kelly Hayes, Organizing My Thoughts

OP-ED | WAR & PEACE

The Genocide in Gaza Is Filling Our Beautiful Month of Ramadan With Dread

As Muslims worldwide fast for the holy month of Ramadan, newborns in Gaza are dying of starvation.

By Eman Ghanayem, Truthout

OP-ED | WAR & PEACE

Beyond the State of the Union, We Must Confront the State of the Genocide

In the aftermath of Biden's 2024 State of the Union, we offer an alternate address: "The State of the Genocide."

By Eman Abdelhadi & Ari Bloomekatz, Truthout

NEWS | WAR & PEACE

Biden Plan for Temporary Humanitarian Aid Port in Gaza Slammed as PR Stunt

Critics point out aid infrastructure already exists but that Israel keeps attacking and obstructing it.

By Jake Johnson, Common Dreams

INTERVIEW | WAR & PEACE

Ceasefire Talks "Precarious" as Israel's Assault on Gaza Kills 80+ in 24 Hours

Palestine analyst Tahani Mustafa discusses the negotiations, UNRWA's collapsing operations, and more.

By Amy Goodman & Nermeen Shaikh, Democracy Now!

INTERVIEW | WAR & PEACE

Activists Unveil Map of Facilities Actively Producing Weapons for Israel

Palestine solidarity activists' research revealed the expansive, tangled web of the arms production process.

By Kelly Hayes, Organizing My Thoughts

NEWS | WAR & PEACE

Sanders: The US Has Leverage to End the Gaza Crisis Because It Funds the War

He pointed out the hypocrisy of criticizing Netanyahu's war while providing him another $10 billion to continue the war.

By Jake Johnson, Common Dreams

NEWS | WAR & PEACE

Report: US Has Secretly Sent Israel Over 100 Weapons Shipments in Last 150 Days

This amounts to one arms shipment every 1.5 days.

By Sharon Zhang, Truthout

t

EXCLUSIVE NEWS

Republicans Aren't Done Threatening the Hungry With Planned Cuts to Food Aid

The GOP's latest effort to slash food aid for millions was blocked by Congress's recent deal, but the battle isn't over.

By Eleanor J. Bader, Truthout

Never Miss Another Story

Get the news you want, delivered to your inbox every day.

name@email.com

SUBSCRIBE

© 2024 Truthout