US: Bernie Sanders Tells Disney to Pay 'Living Wage'

25/08/2018

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United States Senator and former candidate in the 2016 presidential election, Bernie Sanders, has lashed out at the Walt Disney Company for refusing to “pay a living wage” to its theme park employees in Southern California.

“Disney is so nervous that the living wage ballot initiative in Anaheim (California) is going to pass,” he charged, “it would rather end some of the corporate welfare it receives from local taxpayers than pay all 30,000 of its workers decent wages.”

As Disneyland decided to rescind hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies and tax breaks for its amusement park, the lawmaker accused the company of acting out of fear that voters in Anaheim, Disney's host city, will pass a living wage ordinance come November.

The ordinance, applicable to any large company receiving municipal tax breaks, would require Disneyland and the neighboring Disney California Adventure to pay all 30,000 employees at least $15 an hour, rising to $18 an hour by 2022 and keeping pace with inflation after that, according to The Guardian.

It's time for Disney “get off of welfare and pay all of its workers a living wage,” Sanders stated.

Just last month, faced with growing pressure by unions, local politicians, and public opinion, Disney agreed to pay about a third of its workers a $15-per-hour wage.

The company also promised to pay minimum-wage non-union workers, estimated to number in the low thousands, $15.75 an hour starting next year.

Despite the fact that thousands of Disney employees subsist off food stamps and live out of their cars, the company has staunchly opposed the living wage bill.

Sanders pointed out that the company raked in USD$9 billion in profits last year, during a rally at Disneyland in June. He also reminded that the company's chief executive, Robert Iger, has been offered a compensation package valued at USD$423 million over the next four years.