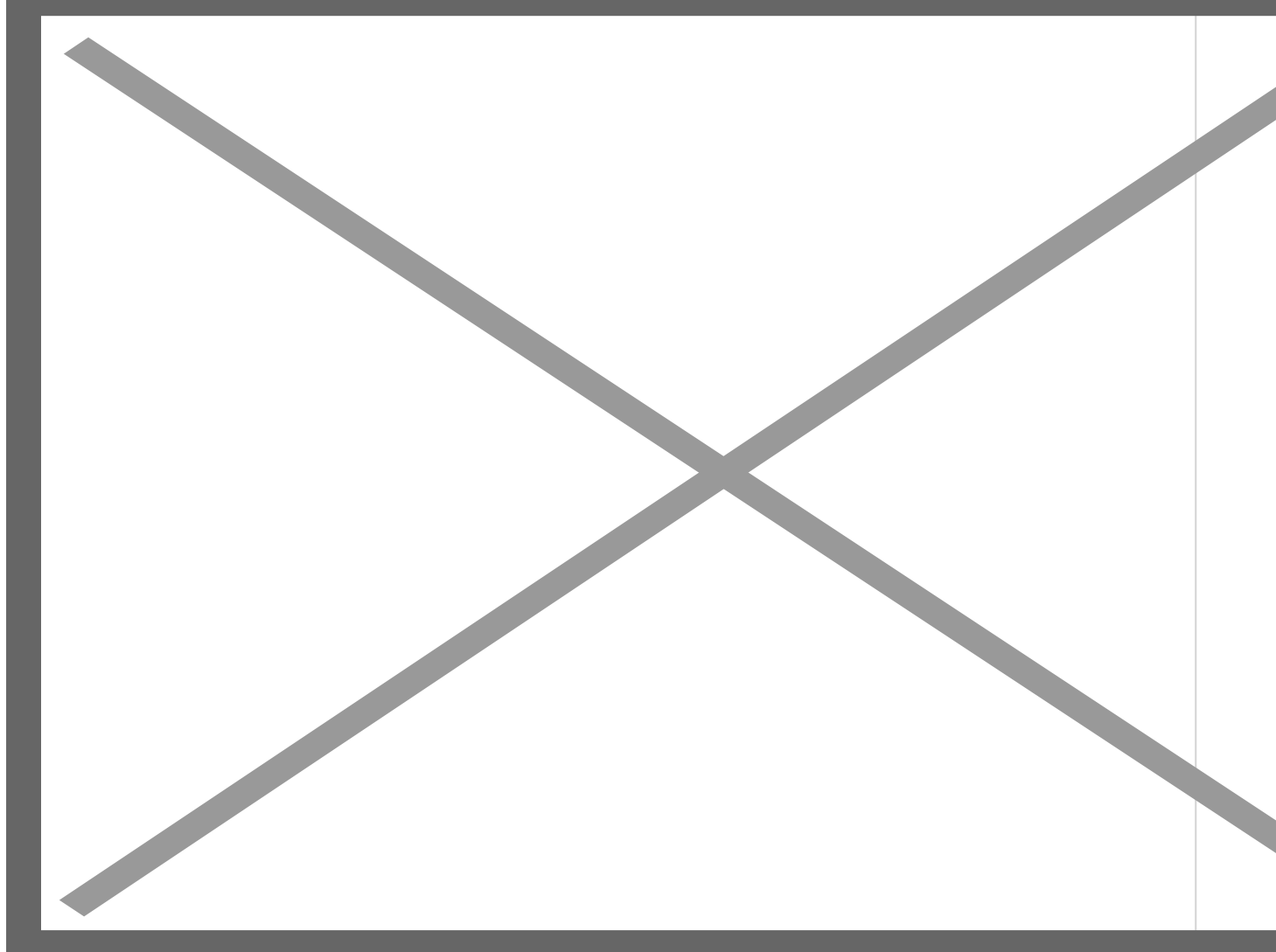


Jeff Bezos thanks Amazon workers for paying for his 10-minute joyride

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Jeff Bezos had a good laugh at his exploited workers at Amazon. ?

New York, July 21 (RHC)-- The world's richest man completed a 10-minute suborbital flight aboard his Blue Origin spacecraft Tuesday. Jeff Bezos spoke at a news conference after his crew landed, thanking his poorly-paid workers at Amazon for funding his new pastime.

Jeff Bezos said: "I want to thank every Amazon employee and every Amazon customer, because you guys paid for all of this. So, seriously, for every Amazon customer out there and every Amazon employee, thank you from the bottom of my heart very much."

Bezos's remarks drew sharp rebuke. Washington Congressman Pramila Jayapal tweeted: "If Amazon paid its workers fairly and did not fight unionization, workers would not be funding the expensive hobbies of billionaires. They would be taking care of their families and living dignified and fulfilling lives."

She also noted that the 11-minute "joyride" cost over \$2.5 million a minute. "Yes, it's time to tax the rich," she said.

Meanwhile, Oregon Democratic Congressman Earl Blumenauer is proposing a tax on commercial spaceflights that have no scientific value. "Space exploration isn't a tax-free holiday for the wealthy," said Blumenauer.

Others drew attention to the environmental impact of recreational space exploration, with author and former Labor Secretary Robert Reich tweeting that the billionaire's rocket launch emitted 200 to 300 tons of carbon dioxide per rider.

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