

Workers at Moraine, Ohio auto parts plants reject tentative contract

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Workers at two Delphi parts plants—formerly owned by General Motors—in Dayton, Ohio, rejected a tentative local agreement by a vote of 2,340 to 206 this week. The contract, which was recommended by the leadership of International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) Local 801, included a proposal to begin a seven-day, 70-hour workweek at the company's new compressor plant slated to open in mid-2002. Under the new plan workers would work 70 hours and be paid 80 hours and have the following seven days off unless they chose to volunteer for overtime.

The new plant, now in the ramp-up stage, would have four crews working. Currently the Delphi plant operates three shifts working five days a week with mandatory overtime on weekends. (Under the old contract, a seven-day, 70-hour workweek would call for 90 hours pay.)

Three thousand one hundred workers are employed at the Delphi plant, of which 1,800 are at the third, or lowest, wage tier under the so-called competitive wage agreement pushed through by the IUE leadership in 1996. The third tier workers, whose starting pay is \$10.80 per hour, must work 17 years before they reach wage parity with the senior union members who are paid over \$20 an hour.

Union officials tried to sell the contract by claiming that the company has committed itself to continue production at the plant—even in the event that major customers cancel contracts—if workers continued to work toward improving quality and cutting costs. But workers rejected the attempt to extract further concessions from them on the basis of such a worthless pledge.

In an attempt to sell the contract, the IUE officials held an informational meeting at the Dayton Convention Center a week before the contract vote. But workers were so angry at the proposals that the Dayton

police were called in to protect the union bureaucracy and a second informational meeting was canceled. After the union's recommendation was overwhelmingly rejected by the rank and file, local President Bob Sparks said, "The inability to explain the complex contract proposal to workers may have been a factor in the vote."



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