

Auto workers denounce victimization of Chrysler worker

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The *WSWS Auto Worker Newsletter* spoke to a number of Detroit-area Chrysler workers, who denounced the firing of Alex Wassell, a skilled tradesman at the Warren Stamping plant north of Detroit. Wassell was one of the organizers of a protest against the Alternative Work Schedule being introduced at Chrysler and Ford plants. The new work schedule is widely despised for abolishing overtime pay after 8 hours as well as eliminating overtime on Saturday and paid lunch breaks.

Wassell was fired for remarks he made to the *Detroit News*, concerning quality issues at the neighboring Warren Truck plant. The UAW has refused to defend Wassell, not even issuing a statement on the firing.

“It looks like they are trying to send a message to the other workers. It is a fundamental right to be able to express a grievance,” a veteran Warren Truck worker told the *WSWS*. “It is your right to picket, lobby and boycott. This business about a ‘conflict of interest’ sounds ridiculous.

“The quality issue was not a lie. He was telling the truth. It was not a big secret. We have had quality control issues going on for months with the wiring harnesses. The workers tried to warn management of the problem. But management went ahead with the launch of the new vehicle (Dodge Ram pickup truck) anyway and it had to be brought back in for repair repeatedly.”

A skilled trades worker at Warren Stamping told the *WSWS*, “It seems like the only thing the UAW is saying is this (AWS) is what the company wants, so it is the best thing. Being part owner of Chrysler, they had to sell us out.”

The veteran Warren Truck worker added, “The auto companies have been making money off our backs for decades. Now they are making even more with the

AWS and two-tier wage. Workers don’t make enough to buy the product they build.

“The union is only for itself. They just want union dues. It seems like they are more for the company than for the workers.”

A Sterling Stamping worker said, “My grandfather was there at the battle of the overpass. My forefathers fought for my rights and the UAW is giving everything away. There is just going to be poor and rich.”



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