

# Chrysler workers speak on inquiry into Detroit bankruptcy

A WSWS reporting team  
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Supporters of the Socialist Equality Party and International Youth and Students for Social Equality visited the Chrysler Warren Truck Assembly Plant outside Detroit on Friday afternoon to speak to autoworkers about plans for the holding of an inquiry into the bankruptcy of Detroit.

The SEP and IYSSE are organizing a Workers Inquiry into the Attack on the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Bankruptcy of Detroit to be held on February 15 at Wayne State University. The inquiry is aimed at uncovering the truth about the looting of the city by Wall Street and the banks, which are attempting to use the bankruptcy courts to carry out an historic attack on the social position of the working class.

The campaign team distributed copies of the latest autoworkers newsletter containing the call issued by the SEP and IYSSE to support the Workers Inquiry. A number of workers stopped to give their views on the call for an inquiry as well as the conditions they face as autoworkers.

Gracie, an autoworker with 12 years in the plants, said, “I think the bankruptcy is ridiculous and completely unfair. There are people in that city who have been working for 30-plus years and now you’re telling them they’re not going to get their pensions?”

“The bankruptcy is a plot. It always has been. You know, the money is here, there’s money in Detroit. There’s a whole lot of money.”

She added, “The unions don’t care. The UAW (United Auto Workers) sold us out. They don’t care about us anymore—they’re more interested in managing the company.”

Faviola, a Chrysler worker with 20 years’ experience, said she was upset by the plans to sell off the artwork at the DIA. “We don’t want them to sell it. It is a good thing for Detroit. They shouldn’t auction it off.

“The pensions of the people are also in jeopardy. What are they going to do if they are cut? We need to all stick together or it will happen to us too.”

She said she supported the idea of a workers inquiry into the bankruptcy. “Where did the casino money go? Each casino is giving \$1 million a month.”

Faviola said she had no confidence in the unions. “We have given up so many cuts; our holidays, our cost of living, our raises. We want to get it back in the next negotiations. The president of the union gave it all up for no good reason. They never say anything to us.”

Another worker said, “They want everything for the banks. They don’t need to sell the art.”

He said that billionaires like Quicken Loans CEO Dan Gilbert stood to profit off the bankruptcy of Detroit. “Real estate companies are wanting in. If that happens they will drive up the rents.”

Carol, another veteran Chrysler worker, said, “The sale of the art and the destruction of the pensions is terrible. [Michigan Governor] Snyder’s behind it; him and Dan Gilbert and the rest.”

“This bankruptcy is not going to fix Detroit. How is destroying people’s jobs and incomes and taking their pensions going to help the city? All of those people will end up losing their homes too.”

A young autoworker with one year in the plant said, “I don’t agree with the bankruptcy at all. We work for everything we get. We shouldn’t have to give up the art.”

He spoke about the two-tier wage system implemented with the support of the UAW, which has reduced the pay of new hires to half what traditional workers make. “I hate the two-tier. If we do the same work we should get paid the same. It is not fair.”

Derrick, a young Chrysler worker, said he agreed with the proposal for a workers inquiry. “Everything is

being done behind our backs. They should have it out in the open for the public.”

He said he was particularly upset with the plans by Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr to sell the artworks from the DIA. “It is more than anything else a way to share different people’s outlooks. Little kids take field trips there. That was one of my field trips in school.”

A worker with 20 years at Chrysler said, “I think it is terrible what is happening. I think a workers inquiry sounds right. It seems like they have been planning it for years. It is the worst thing they could do, especially to the retirees. It is opening the door to taking away my pension.”

Another worker said he was suspicious of the way Orr and Snyder rushed the city into bankruptcy. “It doesn’t seem like it is economics at all. In fact the economy is growing. The auto companies are making profits. There is plenty of money.

“In my opinion this bankruptcy is all so they can cut the pensions.”



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