

# Autoworkers denounce UAW efforts to force through deal with Fiat Chrysler

## Many warn of ballot rigging to ensure “yes” vote

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In the face of widespread opposition among autoworkers to the deal announced last week between the UAW and Fiat Chrysler (FCA), the union is seeking to force through votes as rapidly as possible. The aim is to give workers no time to study the contract or organize opposition.

When asked whether the contract covering 36,000 workers at FCA would be ratified, UAW President Dennis Williams said in an overview of the agreement Friday night: “They will ratify it.” Workers should see this statement as a threat to do whatever it takes to get the deal through.

Ratification votes are being scheduled as early as today and tomorrow at the Warren Truck plant outside of Detroit, Michigan. Information meetings are being held concurrently with the vote to give workers as little time as possible to consider their vote. Workers at Warren Truck reported to the WSWs that union officials have threatened that a “no” vote will lead to the loss of their jobs.

Many workers have raised the concern that the UAW will resort to vote fraud to get the deal passed. The deal “is just putting a nail in the coffin of how much in bed the union is with the company,” said Steve, a Louisville Assembly Ford worker. “Who knows—the union is so crooked they might say the contract passed.”

He added, “They might say it passed by *51 percent*.”

In October 2011, the UAW imposed a new contract on FCA workers despite a constitutional provision requiring that every classification of workers approve the deal. Even though skilled trades workers voted “no” by 56 percent, the UAW declared the contract passed.

A Mopar FCA worker in Chicago said, “The last

contract the skilled trades voted it down, and the international put it through anyway. That’s what I’m afraid of. No matter what we vote, they’re going to pull something to get it passed.”

A Mopar FCA worker in Center Line, Michigan said, “We have no information. It’s so horrible, they’re not telling us anything. They want us to go vote with no info. The workers didn’t pass the contract last time, and the UAW pushed it through, anyway. We need some monitoring of the vote. The last time we voted, they came in with international people walking into the vote counting room, and if things didn’t go their way, they came out and threw the votes in the back of someone’s car and drove off for a month and came back saying certain places had to revote.

“There has been ballot stuffing,” he added. “We’ve had balloting where more votes were counted than there are employees!”

From Kansas City Assembly, another worker added: “As far as the vote, I can see them stuffing the ballot. In presidential elections there is an outside party doing the balloting, so I don’t understand why they can’t do it that way to make sure that the union isn’t stuffing the ballot.”

Many workers expressed outrage that they are not being given time to study the contract, which is over 1,000 pages long. A Toledo Jeep FCA worker said, “I am opposed to having a union meeting Sunday and then voting on Monday. We need at least a week or two to read this, discuss it, get opinions. It takes time.”

The Chicago Mopar worker added, “This is hundreds of pages long. Nobody can read that in a week.”

A Warren Stamping FCA worker said, “The union stewards are trying to push this contract through.

Everything you have been saying in the Autoworker Newsletter is what's going on. The stewards are saying, sarcastically, 'Vote No, what more do you want?' and they mostly said, 'If you vote no, we'll put it through.'"

Williams said on Friday that the UAW won "tremendous gains" for the workers, and that "once the membership looks at it...they will see it's a very balanced and thoughtful agreement."

This begs the question: If the UAW says workers will see the merits of the agreement after studying it, why is the union not giving workers the chance to study the deal?

There are other questions autoworkers are asking: Why are the UAW and the company both so excited to pass the contract if it is fair to autoworkers? Why are the workers being forced to vote the day after, or even the day of, informational meetings? Why did the UAW agree to a deal that forces votes to take place by the end of September? Why is it that everybody in the UAW, the company, and the corporate media knew the details of the contract before the 150,000 workers who will be forced to work under its terms?

To ask these questions is to answer them: the UAW is an agent of management. It knows that the more time workers have to review and discuss the contract, the more they will find to oppose.

The WSWS calls on workers to vote "no" on the contract. To organize opposition and carry forward a struggle against the conspiracy of the UAW and FCA, workers should take steps now to form independent rank-and-file committees. Committees should demand that the counting of the ballots be overseen by representatives elected outside of any control by the UAW itself.



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