

Secret details emerging from UAW-FCA contract as opposition grows

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As workers read through the contents of the second proposed agreement between the United Auto Workers and Fiat Chrysler (FCA), they are finding more and more that they do not like. Opposition to the second contract is growing, and the UAW-corporate alliance is nervous.

The *Detroit Free Press* published an article yesterday afternoon noting warily that “many workers remain unhappy and ratification [is] far from certain.” On the chances of ratification, the corporate newspaper writes: “This is a tough call” because “hundreds of workers continue to express anger and frustration over wage progression and other issues.”

Judging by comments workers are making to the WSWs and on social media, what the *Free Press* calls “other issues” means every element of the contract, from top to bottom.

Workers are justifiably opposed to the contract not only because of the long wage progression for second-tier workers, but also because it perpetuates the two-tier system as a whole, maintains the Alternative Work Schedule, does not include cost-of-living-adjustments (COLA), includes harsh punishments on attendance and includes many other anti-worker provisions.

In recent days, the revelation that the contract allows the company to double the number of temporary workers has provoked widespread outrage. With the collaboration of the UAW, the company has been systematically expanding its use of “temp” workers, effectively transforming them into a third, even lower-paid tier. (See “UAW caught covering up plan to double temporary workers in new Fiat Chrysler agreement”)

The *Free Press* notes approvingly that the UAW is pulling out all the stops to get the contract passed. “The union has unleashed an aggressive campaign on its

official Facebook pages with questions and answers about various aspects of the contract... This strategy is in stark contrast to a more laid-back approach during the first ratification process that allowed members opposed to the contract to express their views with little or no counter arguments from the union.”

In other words, the last contract failed because workers were allowed (!) to express their views without being shut down by a string of lies.

The UAW hired the New York City-based BerlinRosen public relations firm for the express purpose of getting “creative” to sell the rotten deal to workers. The firm’s web site boasts that “BerlinRosen’s digital team will work with you to design a creative plan to change the conversation online around your issue...”

Alongside its propaganda campaign, the UAW is making all locals vote on the same two days to ensure that the “no” campaign has little chance of building momentum. As the *Free Press* noted, “When Fiat Chrysler reached its first agreement Sept. 15, the ratification process was spread out over almost two weeks. As individual local results became public it became clear the first contract was on its way to a resounding defeat. The new two-day voting window is designed to prevent early results from influencing later voting.”

One worker wrote to the WSWs: “They have all plants voting Oct 21st and 22nd. They are doing this so workers can’t monitor the voting of each plant. After you get two or three plants voting it down, then others scheduled to vote days later were influenced.”

Autoworkers across the country are contacting the WSWs to spread the word to their fellow workers about details of the contract that the UAW has kept hidden.

A worker from Ohio contacted the WSWWS to explain that the UAW and FCA agreed to terminate the trust fund associated with the Supplemental Unemployment Benefit (SUB) Plan.

Page 133 of the benefits portion of the contract notes that after the 2011 contract, “The parties agreed that the SUB Plan no longer needed to be funded by the Trust and that the Trust would be terminated.”

Workers are entirely justified in wondering whether this is a move toward cutting unemployment benefits for those workers to whom the plan applies.

A second-tier Warren Stamping worker told WSWWS campaigners at the informational meeting for Local 140 in Warren, Michigan, “This is the very same contract that we just rejected. All they did was rearrange it a little.”

A veteran Warren Truck worker added: “I think this is not a good deal based on what I’ve read. They are disrespecting us and taking us for granted. This is especially true regarding the expansion of the number of temporary workers.”

One Chrysler worker from Ohio wrote: “I think we are getting screwed! The union has been walking around our plant asking what people are going to vote and they already had the contract book printed out... This means they are planning at whatever cost that the contract will pass... *We need help to stop the contract!* What can we do to stop them from scamming the votes?”



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