

“It’s terrible, a slap in the face”

Kansas City autoworkers vote “no” on UAW-Ford contract

Our reporters
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Workers at the massive Ford Kansas City Assembly Plant in Claycomo, Missouri rejected the UAW-Ford sellout deal on Sunday, with 54 percent of production workers voting “no” and the skilled trades workers split 50-50.

Opposition to the contract at Ford is widespread, with at least 45 percent of workers voting “no” thus far. Over 10,000 more workers from Ford Plants across the country will vote today, including those at the two large assembly plants in Louisville, Kentucky and at the Chicago Assembly Plant.

“It’s terrible, a slap in the face,” a KCAP worker told the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter*. “We gave up all those concessions in 2007 and we were lied to. The UAW and the company said it was supposed to be shared sacrifice, then as soon as we gave up the concessions, management and the executives got everything back and we got nothing.

“Now Ford is making more money than ever before in history, and we get this piece of crap raise? I’ve worked for Ford for 25 years. And what is this lousy offer for the second-tier workers? An eight-year promise on a four-year contract doesn’t mean anything.”

Having suffered a defeat in the first round of the Fiat Chrysler vote and a split vote at General Motors, the UAW has timed the vote at Ford in the weeks before the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, hoping economic pressures will get workers to ratify the deal.

“I can see what they are doing,” said one Chicago Ford Assembly worker. “They are offering an \$8,000 signing bonus just before Christmas. They want us to give up our long-term interests for a bribe. But what is going to happen next time? It is frightening.

“When I first started I got in the union and said, ‘I’m a man now. Someone’s got my back.’ But the UAW is a business. They are not even trying to defend us. With this ‘in-progression’ stuff they are prolonging the time it takes to reach top pay. It’s starting with eight years but in Canada they kept adding more years to it. In the next contract they will say due to the economic circumstances you’ll have to wait another three years. Soon it’s going to take 25 years to get the right to make it to the top tier.

“Workers are getting tired of this and they’re going to vote ‘no’ no matter what the signing bonus.”

A Louisville Ford worker added, “I need the money but I can’t fathom selling myself out for the next four years over \$8,500 bucks.”

What’s more, the UAW has begun issuing threats toward workers for taking photographs of their “no” ballots as proof against a widespread belief that the UAW is carrying out election fraud to ram through the deal.

“They’re starting to threaten to charge people with misdemeanors if they take pictures of their votes,” said the Louisville worker, “but because of the distrust in the vote count many workers want to take pictures with their IDs to prove they’re voting ‘no.’ One guy came and put his hands over a worker’s ballot as he was trying to take a picture.”

“They’re supposed to be on our side and they’re totally going against us. If you don’t have anything to hide, why worry about who is taking photos of the ballots? What are they going to do, arrest all of us?”

At GM, the UAW has agreed to postpone riding roughshod over the skilled trades “no” vote until after Ford has voted so as to avoid generating widespread

anger before voting elsewhere is wrapped up.

At each moment of the contract fight, the UAW has proven itself a sworn enemy of the working class and an agent of the Big Three auto companies.

The KCAP worker said, “I support building rank-and-file committees. We have to do something. It’s obvious that the international union is not on our side. They are doing what is best for the company.”

“I’ve seen a lot more anger at the UAW since I started reading the *Autoworker Newsletter*,” the Louisville worker said. “This is the right time for workers committees, because that’s what people are looking for. It’s going to grow further because if this contract goes through the loopholes are going to show and we’re going to say, ‘I told you so.’ It’s starting to show to some people who thought that the committees would be crazy because the UAW already exists, but now they’re seeing the shady stuff the UAW is doing and it’s kind of switching them over to support committees that really represent workers. People are thinking beyond the contract to the actual struggle.”



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