

“It’s pretty obvious that the UAW is a pro-company organization”

## Chicago Ford workers reject UAW-corporate agreement

Our reporters  
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Ford workers at the Chicago Assembly Plant have voted “no” on the United Auto Workers-Ford sellout deal by a margin of two-to-one, according to results released early this morning. The blow to the UAW follows the overwhelming “no” vote by workers at the Louisville Assembly Plant and the Kentucky Truck Plant. It further tips the vote by 53,000 Ford workers against the deal.

The World Socialist Web Site *Autoworker Newsletter* spoke to workers in Louisville and Chicago after the defeat of the agreement.

“It goes to show that the struggling working class is tired of it,” a worker at the Louisville Assembly Plant said.

“They tried their hardest to persuade us that it was the best that they could do, and that it has the biggest economic gains in Ford history. So far we’ve proved that has not been our thoughts but the UAW-corporate agenda. \$105,000 for a PR firm to sell a contract... and we fought on social media to overcome some of the crazy things they try to pull to win votes for the company. Now comes more play by presenting a tentative agreement that will be worse along with another ‘no’ vote for me!”

A second-tier worker at the south side Chicago plant told the *Autoworker Newsletter*, “I thought the contract was pretty much horrible. We haven’t gotten back what we lost—what we had 15 years ago. This is happening when there are huge profits from the company. The company is making almost \$25 million a day. And last time I checked, they made \$10 billion this year. What we’re fighting for is what we lost. It’s nothing new. We can’t even get what we gave up.

“The UAW is defending this deal. [UAW Vice

President] Jimmy Settles won’t show up to Q&A meetings. They’re blocking you guys out of the meetings. It’s BS. They know you represent us in these struggles... They claim you are union busters and anti-union. What are they so afraid of? They’re doing everything they can to get a ‘yes’ vote. They won’t let us take pictures of our ‘no’ votes and put it on social media. They put up signs saying we can’t take any photos. It’s not in our by-laws that they can ban cellphone use.

“It’s pretty obvious that the UAW is a pro-company organization that is designed to keep our wages low and the company profits high. This contract’s a joke. Eight years to get to full pay, or what they call full pay. The pension issues are horrible too. The 401(k) is a joke.

“Working conditions are horrible here as well. When it rains outside, it pours in from the roof here at Chicago Assembly and people get rained on. There’s rats and cockroaches too. It’s disgusting. You can literally look outside the factory. There are holes in the wall.”

Another Chicago worker said, “They should have kept their word, but they didn’t end the two-tier system. That was what was promised in the first place. We lost COLA [cost of living adjustment], no pension and all that. We sacrificed to help the company out to keep it from going bankrupt. Now, they are trying to force a sellout contract down our throat.

“Eight years to get to top pay is a long time and we have a four-year contract. I want the AWS [alternative work schedule] ended too. If I had the money that was supposed to be given to me, I’d be able to buy the car that I build.”

Workers also denounced the banning of the WSWS

*Autoworker Newsletter* from the press conference at UAW Local 600 on Wednesday and the forcible removal of two WSWs reporters.

“Wow. That’s unbelievable,” another Chicago worker said. “I can’t believe they removed your reporters from a free press conference. They are really afraid of the WSWs and your reporting.”

Another added, “That’s crazy. The UAW official acted like he didn’t know what the *Detroit Free Press* was. What are they trying to hide? My question would be: who else was there in the press? How can they do that at a press conference? They know they’re in the wrong, and they’re trying to hide it. The UAW goes around saying this is the ‘richest deal’ you can get and that we should ‘be happy’ for it? Are we happy? No, we know it’s a cover up and smoke and mirrors.

“The WSWs *Autoworker Newsletter* is giving us information that we never hear about. If it weren’t for the *Newsletter*, we would have been told that everything is great. They should give people a choice to make an opinion of their own. They’re trying to bar the *Autoworker Newsletter* so that workers won’t know the facts, and they won’t come up with their own opinions.”

A worker who started at Chicago Assembly in 2007, was laid off in 2008 and was hired back in 2010, said, “People are upset, because the objective was to eliminate the tiers, but they’ve added more tiers. And they have the smokescreen with the eight years grow-in period, but we only have four years to the end of the contract.

“And for the older employees, a lot of the concessions they gave up to keep Ford profitable and keep it afloat, they aren’t getting their money back. In ten years we’re going to be making the same money now, and we’re going to be behind the increase in the cost of living.

“That’s why people are voting ‘no.’ They’re looking at the long-term. They’re not looking at the lump-sum bonuses and profit sharing. And you know, it’s going to be a struggle. We’re going to have to move back with our parents, or in with each other. And they’re taking the money from us.

“There’s a lot of educated people who work at this plant, who have degrees. They’re not dumb. They see that with the union, somehow there’s been a breach, and everything’s crumbling under us.

“When the UAW goes to pay a PR firm to sell us the contract, we know there’s some shady business going on. Things are starting to be uncovered, and people are not as slow or as stupid as they thought we’d be.”

A second-tier worker with three-and-a-half years at Chicago’s Ford Assembly said, “I know I voted ‘no.’ When they sent the [UAW International] reps around, they tried to act ‘mild-mannered.’ They just pushed the highlights. But really, the contract summary makes it all look good for the company.

“A lot of people were pissed off after the Q&A last week because the two-tier system wasn’t eliminated and raises for top-tier were so small. People like myself who are between three and four years, we have to wait another four and half years to get to top pay. People are upset about that. Workers aren’t even being given enough to keep up with the cost of living. It’s not really a good deal for anybody.

“I’m in it for the long fight, for establishing rank-and-file committees and organizing workers, because the unions are not going to change their ways. They’re deeply embedded in capitalism, and working for Ford. There’s a lot of money involved. They’re getting real frantic.”



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