

UPS workers denounce Teamsters effort to impose sellout contract, despite “no” vote

Our reporters
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The WSWS UPS Workers Newsletter is holding a follow-up online call-in meeting to discuss a way forward for UPS workers to defeat the Teamsters' effort to impose its sellout. The meeting will be at 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, October 8. To participate, register [here](#). You can also dial in by phone, by calling (571) 317-3122 and entering the access code 615-917-277.

Tens of thousands of United Parcel Service (UPS) workers across the US have reacted with outrage at the announcement by the Teamsters union that it will seek to defy Friday night's “no” vote on its sellout contract and ram the deal through over mass opposition.

Over 54 percent of workers voted against the contract, which would provide billions of dollars for UPS and its shareholders by creating a new tier of lower-paid “hybrid” drivers/warehouse workers and maintain poverty wages for hundreds of thousands of part-time warehouse employees. The union is utilizing an obscure and anti-democratic clause in its constitution requiring a two-thirds majority to reject a contract if less than half the workforce participates in the vote.

The union claims that 44 percent of workers participated in the vote. Many workers, distrustful of the notoriously corrupt Teamsters apparatus, said they suspect that opposition to the contract and the turnout were significantly higher than reported.

Workers coming off the evening and afternoon shifts Saturday said they would be canceling their union dues, refusing to continue to pay for the privilege of being sold out and having their will openly disregarded.

Several workers had heard only that the vote had been “no” and had not even been informed that the union had declared the contract ratified. There was widespread sentiment for an immediate nationwide

strike. Workers voted by 93 percent at the start of July to authorize a strike—another vote that the Teamsters has ignored.

Carrie, who has been a part-time worker for 13 years in San Diego, said, “What were we voting for? This was nothing but a bait and switch, and no matter how we voted, in the end they are still trying to give us the same bad deal. Give me my dues back!”

“This is no longer a union,” she said, “just part of the company. The Teamsters gave us a fake choice. I voted twice and never even got a confirmation, so I'm not sure my vote even counted.”

David and Armani, warehouse workers at the San Diego facility, were not aware the union was seeking to push through the contract. “It's ridiculous that I pay dues for this to happen,” David said. “The union executives are giving themselves bonuses every year, while we get nothing.”

David called the union “like the HR of the company” and “more like a babysitter to make sure things get aired out.” He said that “everyone voted against this contract because of the 22.4s [hybrid workers provision] and because we want to be made full-time drivers.”

Nelson, another young warehouse worker, told us he is working two other jobs to make ends meet, at a theme park and another warehouse, for 70-80 hours a week in total. He asked, “Why did they have us vote on this if our opinion didn't even matter?”

Ralph, a northern California part-time worker, said he thinks “we need to separate ourselves from the union” because “they're not fighting for us.” He continued: “For three weeks before the vote the local didn't hold a single meeting on the contract, and we didn't see the local secretary or any union rep the entire final week.”

Ralph said he had read previous statements by the

WSWS *UPS Workers Newsletter* and now thought “you guys hit the nail on the head with your call for rank-and-file committees. There’s not some part of the [Teamsters] leadership that’s going to ride in and fix things. They aren’t going to negotiate a better deal, and the only way for us to win something better is to organize a real fight.”

Ralph added that UPS workers should “reach out to Amazon and FedEx workers.” He added, “The union tried to tell us we had to accept the concessions so that UPS could compete with Amazon, that the non-union warehouse guys were taking our jobs. That’s BS! We need to fight on the same side as Amazon workers, instead of for the company’s profit.”

“To put it bluntly, the union can go to hell,” said a UPS worker with 20 years who spoke to the WSWS at the Madison Heights, Michigan facility in suburban Detroit. “I’m thinking seriously about withdrawing my union dues. For years I was a proud union member, but I’m not anymore.” He said that “every month I work two-and-a-half hours to pay them dues, and they just sold out 260,000 workers.”

The worker noted that “54 percent voted against this contract, but the union says it was ratified anyway.” He continued: “The day before the vote count was released they suddenly announced that two-thirds of the voters would have to reject it if less than 50 percent of the membership voted. This is a bunch of bull crap.”

He added that the company wanted to get rid of older, higher-paid workers and “make all workers low-paid temps, and the union is helping them.” He added, “The company is going to take what the union did in ignoring our voice to ram more work down our throats. We’re already handling 2,000 pieces a day inside there, picking up 150-pound packages and doing damage to our spines.”

Another worker at the same facility said, “The union is taking money out of our checks—for what? All we’re doing is padding the pockets of the higher-ups in the union to sell us out.” The worker was previously a soldier in Iraq and said the Madison Heights UPS facility as “is run like the military.” He added, “The part-time workers have to work a whole year before they even qualify for medical benefits. The company hopes they’ll quit before then.”

A part-time warehouse worker who loads trailers at the same facility said: “There should be a strike. I’ve

been paying dues for 23 years, and I have never had any representation at all from them [the Teamsters]. Why did I even vote?” The dues payments “just keep going up, and their salaries just keep going up.”

Mark, a full-time driver at Madison Heights with 15 years, said, “We’re paying union dues, and now they’re trying to ram this through. I cannot believe it. Last night I thought, wow, great, a ‘no’ vote.”

He said, “The company has just got a tax break from Donald Trump, and they have billions of dollars in profits. And you want us to accept this?” Mark had voted “no” because “we don’t need a two-tier situation.” He said, “There need to be full-time jobs. It’s unreal what they make these young part-time workers do.”

Mark said the Teamsters is “like the other unions, getting paid off. They take our money to send us letters to tell us to vote ‘yes.’ That’s why people who come in newer don’t want to pay into the union. I pay them \$90 a month. That’s close to \$20,000 since I came here.”

The WSWS *UPS Workers Newsletter* urges UPS workers to immediately form independent rank-and-file committees to break the efforts of the Teamsters to ram through its concessions contract. These committees, in every warehouse and hub, should prepare an immediate nationwide walkout and reach out to all sections of the working class to launch a united struggle.

We encourage UPS workers to share our statement and attend the emergency online call-in meeting on Monday, October 8, at 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time, to discuss the way forward.



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