

Rank-and-file safety committees at Fiat Chrysler and Ford support campaign to defend victimized parts worker

The Autoworker Rank-and-File Safety Committee Network
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The campaign by a recently-founded Rank-and-File Safety Committee at an Indiana auto parts plant to defend James Grady, a whistleblower at the factory who was victimized by management and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), has won a warm response from autoworkers throughout the country. The decision by the Faurecia Gladstone Rank-and-File Safety Committee to launch a defense campaign was first reported by the World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter.

Grady, who worked at the plant for a decade and often spoke out against safety violations and the harassment of his fellow workers, was falsely accused by the company of trying to infect his coworkers with COVID-19 and wrongfully terminated in mid-May.

“Everything Grady said was true and more,” a Faurecia Gladstone worker and supporter of the Committee told the WSW. “Someone needs to do something about how we are treated. OSHA has been called, and they show up, but nothing is done. We desperately need help.”

Members of rank-and-file safety committees at Ford, Fiat Chrysler and Faurecia plants throughout Michigan have issued their statements of support for Grady. We are publishing these statements here:

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Sterling Heights Assembly Plant (SHAP) Rank-and-File Safety Committee

“The firing of Grady is a clear cut message to all workers: ‘If you dare expose the truth then your job and livelihood will be on the line.’ Faurecia is trying to make an example of him in order to frighten and silence workers.

“But we have the right to speak out and protect our lives from unsafe conditions. They might fire one worker, but

hundreds and thousands of us working class citizens can stand up together.

“There is a principle that all workers stand by: ‘An injury to one is an injury to all.’ The unions long ago abandoned that principle. That is why workers have decided to build rank-and-file safety committees, so we can protect ourselves and to make sure speaking out does not cost us our jobs.

“The auto companies and the unions are covering up infections and concealing facts from us. A week ago, there was another worker who tested positive here at SHAP. He worked on the Trim #1 line and they quietly moved him and some other workers out of the plant. We only found out because workers posted the information on a Facebook page and texted around warnings. FCA and the UAW did not say a thing about it.

“The companies and the unions deliberately separate assembly and parts workers from each other. But we are all doing the same stuff, producing vehicles for the profits of the big corporations. We need to stand together and protect each other.

“All workers, in the assembly plants, in the parts plants, teachers and other workers, have to be on the same page to carry out an effective response. We have to put our foot down and carry out a general strike to close schools and non-essential production until the spread of this deadly disease is stopped.”

Ford Dearborn Truck Plant (DTP) Rank and File Safety Committee

“James Grady was victimized because he stood up for the workers in his factory. We read his statement and the conditions that he was fighting against are inhuman. Workers are dying of heart attacks from exhaustion because

of the forced overtime and cancer caused by the chemicals in the plant. The company just wants to maximize profits.

“People are just another commodity to these corporations. Whether it’s a parts plant or an assembly plant, it doesn’t matter. They can just bring someone else to replace a worker that dies. They don’t care. This system is against the workers because it is organized for one thing and one thing only, and that is to benefit the capitalists.

“The IBEW and the UAW are the same. They work for the companies. They pretend to be for the working class, but they turn their back on the workers and keep imposing harsher conditions. They only want to have power over the workers instead of representing us.

“It’s going to take workers coming together everywhere and organizing to take control of their lives. All the workers in the assembly plants and parts plants, teachers and school workers, health care workers, all workers.

“That’s why we are building rank-and-file committees to take control of our lives and to save people’s lives. People do not need to die. The capitalist system just wants to extract as much profit as possible. They don’t care about the people. There is plenty to go around. It is just being sucked up by the richest of the rich. Everybody else is left with pennies. That is why we need a whole new system that is not based on the profit motive.”

Faurecia plant in Saline, Michigan, workers’ group

The following is a statement from a group which is in the process of establishing a rank-and-file safety committee at Faurecia’s plant in Saline, Michigan.

“We are on board with building rank-and-file committees because our union (the UAW) is not doing anything. We definitely need an organization we can go to.

“They are using this COVID-19 situation to harass workers even more. If you were on quarantine, you have to bring in a doctor’s excuse and your test results, and then the supervisor will try to write you up for points in spite of the fact that you did everything they told you to do. If you have FMLA, they will accuse you of falsifying that. You have got to go there and prove that you’re not.

“What happened to Grady is happening here. I know of a number of times when HR has called people that were on quarantine and tried to get them to come back to work before their time was up. They would say if you don’t feel any symptoms in a couple of days, then you can come back to work.

“That hexavalent chromium that he was talking about is

the same thing that we have everywhere in the plant. It forms a brown dust. All Faurecia plants are the same. They don’t care.

“We have drums of hazardous waste stored in the plant. They fill them with hazardous chemicals and cap them. They are expanding and look like they are about to explode.

“We have the UAW, but it sounds just like the union at Gladstone. If you call a committee person and tell them about company harassment, they will tell you to take the path of least resistance. ‘Whatever the company asks you to do, give it to them, even if it’s against the law.’ That’s what they will tell you. They want us to give up all our rights.

“When the coronavirus started, the company was careful about safety. Now they don’t even care. They have stopped even doing the surveys at the door. They are not taking our lives seriously. They hire and fire 1000 people every year. They are firing people for nonsense. As soon as they speak up, they will get fired.

“We do not get the respect we deserve. There are 2000 people in this plant and only five bathrooms. The security guards are going around disrespecting the workers, bad mouthing everybody because the bathrooms are dirty.

“We are making them all that money working 10 and 12 hours a day, six and seven days a week, burning up. They don’t even let us have any fans. They don’t care about us. They don’t care about our families. We are in this rank-and-file movement because they are wrong and we need to do something about it. We all need to come together and prepare a general strike.”

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To send messages of support for James Grady, to get in contact with rank-and-file safety committees at your plant or for help setting up a committee, contact the Autoworker Newsletter at autoworkers@wsws.org.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact