

John Deere workers: Vote NO to the UAW's sellout on Wednesday! We have the power to win our demands!

John Deere Workers Rank-and-File Committee
14 November 2021

The United Auto Workers announced Friday night that it is scheduling a re-vote on the “last, best and final” offer from Deere and Company, which 10,000 striking workers had already voted to reject. The announcement of the contract and the vote next week is the first statement by the UAW since workers rejected its second deal with the company a week and a half ago. The union has maintained a total information blackout on its talks with the company since then.

The statement below has been issued in response by the John Deere Workers Rank-and-File Committee. To learn more about joining the committee, email deerewrfc@gmail.com or text (484) 514-9797.

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To Our Deere Brothers and Sisters,

After keeping silent for a week and a half, the UAW International suddenly announced Friday that it was submitting Deere's so-called “last, final and best” offer to the membership to vote on even though we have already rejected their garbage contract.

While acknowledging that the offer only includes “modest modifications” from the one we voted down on November 2, they tell us the “UAW will present the Company's offer for ratification and, as has been the case throughout the bargaining process, will support the outcome as determined by our members.”

These people must think we're stupid and have had our eyes closed over the last few months. Far from supporting the “outcome as determined by our members,” Curry, Browning and the rest of the corrupt gangsters at the UAW headquarters in Detroit have ignored our will again and again. This only underscores the point the Deere Workers Rank-and-File Committee

has made repeatedly: the UAW does not “represent” Deere workers, they represent the Deere bosses.

A few points must be made:

- The UAW is not under any legal obligation to bring this contract back to us to vote on again. It is only doing it because UAW are the errand boys for John C. May and the rest of Deere's top executives who don't want to pay us what we deserve even though they are shelling out billions of dollars to their top shareholders.

- We are the ones who get to determine what the “last, best and final” offer is, not Deere and the UAW. If it was left up to them, all we would have gotten was the rotten deal they tried to shove down our throats on October 10. But we voted that one down by 90 percent and despite all the lies, threats and efforts to buy us off with bogus signing bonuses, we defeated their proposal again on November 2.

- What few changes have been made since the original proposal—and they are still wholly inadequate—were only because we, the workers, decided this was not the “last, final and best” deal. If we stick together and fight for what we and our families need we can win our just demands for a \$10 an hour raise, fully paid pensions and retiree health benefits for the next generation. This is more important than ever as prices are rising at the fastest rate in 30 years.

Every report shows that our strike is having a major impact on Deere, which does not have enough replacement parts to deliver before the harvest season

ends or new equipment before planting season begins. In other words, the UAW is doing everything it can not to win the victory we deserve but to help Deere shut down our strike and shore up its profits.

If this contract gets passed, before the ink is dry, they will be forcing us to work around the clock to make up for lost production, and Deere executives will be boasting to their investors that they achieved their aims of reducing costs and boosting profits.

Our brothers and sisters at Volvo Trucks are telling us that the UAW pulled the same shenanigans against them. After voting down three UAW-backed contracts, the union made the 2,900 workers in Dublin, Virginia revote on what the company called its “last, best and final” offer. The union claimed the fourth vote passed by 17 votes! When workers returned to the job, they had to fight the company’s demands for mandatory overtime and speedup. Since then, Volvo—which saw its profits rise by 20.4 percent in the third quarter—is outsourcing jobs and threatening the livelihoods of workers.

According to the UAW’s “summary” of the changes, the “modestly modified” TA will only include changes to CIPP, not the slightest improvements to post-retirement healthcare and base wages. The union has “negotiated” behind the backs of workers nothing but another sellout.

It is our duty to stand up to this blackmail and vote this down again, not only for ourselves but for all workers who are watching and supporting our struggle. Every day we are receiving statements of solidarity from autoworkers in Detroit and other cities, and from our brothers and sisters at Deere in Germany, France and other countries. Our struggle is part of the largest strike wave in generations, which is still developing and which involves thousands on strike at Kellogg’s, at hospitals, in the coal mines, and in other manufacturing industries.

The last thing the UAW—which is wallowing in the mud of corruption scandals—wants is for us to win. That is because we would inspire all autoworkers—at CAT, Volvo and Mack, at GM, Ford, Stellantis, at Dana and other parts suppliers—to overturn their rotten agreements, which were pushed through by the same bribe-taking officials using the same dirty tricks. If we cannot win back decades of givebacks now, when the companies are flush with cash and workers are joining

picket lines across the country, when will we be able to?

The Deere Workers Rank-and-File Committee calls for the largest “no” vote next Wednesday. At the same time, we urge workers to set up voting observation teams, made up of the most trusted workers, to insist on the right to oversee voting and the counting of ballots to ensure the integrity of the ratification vote.

We urge all Deere workers to join and build the rank-and-file committee. We are doing what the UAW will not: establishing lines of communication and coordinated action between workers across Deere’s plants in Iowa, Illinois and Kansas, facilities in Georgia and Colorado, and non-UAW plants in other states, as well as with workers at Caterpillar, Volvo, Mack Trucks, Amazon, the auto plants, in the US and internationally, like Germany and France.

Everything will be determined by what we do in this struggle. This is our lives, the lives of our brothers and sisters, and the rest of the working class. What we do today will have an impact for the rest of the working class for generations to come. Workers are watching us closely; let’s show them we will not be intimidated and we will stand as one to win our demands.

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