

“Not the reform of the existing bureaucracy, but its abolition”

Will Lehman, Mack Trucks worker, announces campaign for UAW president

Our reporters
30 June 2022

For more information on the campaign of Will Lehman, visit WillForUAWPresident.org.

Will Lehman, who works at Mack Trucks in Macungie, Pennsylvania, submitted his declaration of candidacy to run for president of the United Auto Workers on Thursday. Lehman, 34, has worked at Mack Trucks for just under five years.

“My campaign is different from every other because I insist that replacing one bureaucrat with another will not change anything about the character of the bureaucracy at the ‘international’ or local level of the UAW,” Lehman said in a video statement announcing his candidacy. “Change will only take place to the extent that we organize our independent strength, through the formation of rank-and-file committees composed of and controlled by workers, not bureaucrats.”

Lehman’s video outlines four planks of his campaign:

- Not the reform of the existing bureaucracy, but its abolition;
- An end to all UAW-corporate bodies that serve as a slush fund for the apparatus;
- Full rank-and-file control and oversight, including over all bargaining, vote-counting and safety;
- A program to fight for what workers need, including massive wage increases, a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to meet soaring inflation, the abolition of all tiers, and full health care and pensions for workers and retirees.

“My campaign,” he said, “is aimed at encouraging the growth of a rank-and-file movement of autoworkers, other manufacturing workers, graduate students and professional workers in the UAW in unity with a growing movement of workers throughout the

US and internationally. In the coming months, tens of thousands of dockworkers, health care workers, educators and service workers will enter into struggle over the same issues that we confront.”

He pointed to the enormous growth of social inequality, as corporations profit off of the labor of workers, and the renewed spread of COVID-19 throughout the plants, after two and a half years in which the pandemic has killed more than 1 million people in the United States.

“We cannot allow ourselves to forgive the companies and the UAW bureaucracy that are indifferent to these deaths and other injuries,” referring in particular to the deaths of autoworkers Catherine Pace and Wille Dee, who died of COVID-19, and Steven Dierkes and Danny Walters, who died from poor working conditions. “It is up to us to ensure that solidarity means we prevent deaths like these, that we have our own backs.”

Lehman declared his support for the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, which he said was a “growing movement to unify workers across plants, industries and countries.” He stressed that his campaign would be directed to workers throughout the world, not just in the United States:

Despite the misnamed ‘international’ UAW headquarters, the bureaucracy is thoroughly nationalist, claiming that workers here in the US can secure our interests by opposing workers in other countries. This is a lie. Corporations fight globally, constantly seeking out workers to take less than what it offers the ones it currently employs. As the sellers of our labor, we must

unite internationally and not be undersold anywhere, and to raise all of our economic conditions through this unity. We must see ourselves as part of an international movement if we are to win.

Lehman also explained that he is a socialist. “Workers have a lot of mistaken ideas about socialism,” he said, “because there have been so many lies about what it is. Socialism means a society based on the principle of equality, where production is controlled democratically by the workers, not an elite layer of multi-billionaires and shareholders.”

He added that workers do not need to be socialists to support his campaign. “If you are tired of being sold out, split into tiers, forced to accept one concessions contract after the next, join and build this movement,” he said.

Speaking to the *World Socialist Web Site*, Lehman explained that “in order to achieve its aims, my campaign will establish lines of communication between rank-and-file workers at different plants and even in different countries, so that we can break through the lies and isolation of the UAW bureaucracy.

“Autoworkers everywhere should go to my website now and sign up for my text list. Let’s get this campaign moving!”

For more information on the campaign of Will Lehman, visit WillForUAWPresident.org.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact