

UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman calls for support for auto parts workers: “Workers at Ventra Evart are showing us the way forward”

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

Will Lehman—a Mack Trucks worker who is running for United Auto Workers president in the union’s elections this year—released a video Sunday appealing for autoworkers to mobilize in support of the important struggle by Ventra Evart auto parts workers.

In the video, Lehman describes how workers at Ventra “took a stand against concessions.” He states, “By a 95 percent majority the workers knocked down a sellout contract that the UAW bargaining team had deemed acceptable to bring back to them. Autoworkers need to question why the UAW keeps bringing back contracts to workers that the workers overwhelmingly reject.”

Lehman denounced the efforts by UAW officials to block a struggle by workers at the plant since the rejection of the tentative agreement. “Since the massive No vote, the UAW bureaucracy has done everything they can to stall and allow the company, which is owned by Flex-N-Gate, to stock up on parts and prepare for the possibility of a strike.

“The UAW waited for days before scheduling a strike vote, even though the old contract had expired, and workers had already made clear they wanted to fight. On Friday, the UAW stalled again. They announced that they were postponing the strike vote scheduled for Sunday until next Thursday, July 14.”

Fearing the rebellion by Ventra workers could serve to galvanize an upsurge by workers more broadly, the corporate media has kept entirely silent on the struggle, while the UAW International has released no

statements about the contract rejection.

“The UAW bureaucracy, as it always does, is trying to black out any information about this struggle and keep us uniformed,” Lehman states. “We have to do our part to overcome the UAW news blackout. Inform your coworkers about what’s happening at Ventra and why it’s important to support the workers there.”

Workers at Ventra Evart are already fighting back, Lehman said, noting how workers in the recently formed Ventra Evart Workers Rank-and-File Committee issued a statement on Friday calling for a strike authorization and demanding a strike deadline be set.

“I stand in complete solidarity with the Ventra Evart workers,” he continued. “These workers are taking an important stand for autoworkers and workers everywhere. Their problems are our problems—falling wages, rising health care costs, dangerous plants and no time for their families. A major victory by these workers would be a major victory for workers everywhere and would strengthen all our positions.

“My campaign calls for the widest possible mobilization of workers behind the Ventra Evart workers. Workers at Flex-N-Gate, Ford, GM, Stellantis—the Ventra Evart workers need your support. Share the latest statement of the Ventra Workers Rank-and-File Committee with workers in your plant.”

Saying that Ventra workers, in organizing independently to fight concessions, are showing workers the way forward, Lehman concluded, “Organize your own rank-and-file committees to connect with these workers, and build up a network of

workers' power in the plants. We can't let them fight alone."

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