

Will Lehman demands monitor investigate UAW acts of intimidation against Lehman, workers at Flint GM Assembly

Our reporters
1 September 2022

On September 1, Will Lehman sent the following letter to Neil Barofsky, the court appointed monitor overseeing the UAW elections. Lehman is demanding the monitor investigate acts of intimidation by the UAW against Lehman's campaign and against workers. This intimidation was captured on video.

Dear Mr. Barofsky,

I am requesting that your office investigate an act of intimidation by the UAW which violates my "Freedom to Advocate" pursuant to Rule 4-4 of the election rules and constitutes discrimination by the UAW against my campaign under Rule 4-5.

On August 23, I visited Flint GM Assembly plant with volunteers from my campaign. We went at shift change, in the afternoon, in order to speak to workers about my campaign and distribute leaflets with information about my program. We spent roughly an hour speaking to workers and handing out literature.

After an hour, a UAW official who identified himself as Local 598 District Committeeman Sean Meachem began to intimidate us and the workers with whom we were speaking. Meachem told us he was calling General Motors to inform them of our presence and remove us from the premises to prevent us from distributing literature and speaking to workers. When we explained our Freedom to Advocate under Rule 4-4, Mr. Meachem continued to order us to leave. He then instructed a woman wearing a UAW shirt to begin taking photographs of me, my volunteers, as well as workers who were speaking to us. This was an attempt to intimidate workers from taking leaflets or holding discussions with me. (See attached photo of a UAW official photographing us and the workers we were

talking to).

Rule 4-4 states, "All Union members shall have the right to participate in campaign activities, including the right to openly support or oppose any candidate ... Union members will be permitted to post or distribute leaflets, literature, or flyers; to solicit support, to conduct rallies; to hold fundraising events; or to engage in similar activities ..." This section of the rule explicitly states that "campaigning at the workplace" is allowed, as long as they comply with employer rules.

Rule 4-5 states, "Retaliation or threat of retaliation by the UAW and/or its Local Unions; any officer, employee, or member of the UAW and/or its Local Unions...against a Union member ... for exercising any right guaranteed by this or any other sections of the rules is prohibited. This specifically includes each member's freedom to advocate for or against any Candidate or Slate, to run for or seek to run for International Office ... and to vote for or against any Candidate or Slate. Any rules or practices ... that are contrary to this provision will be considered a violation of these Rules. Any and all appropriate disciplinary remedies may be imposed individually or collectively to groups ... on a case-by-case basis, for such violations."

District Committeeman Meachem told us he was calling General Motors. In the video, he can be heard speaking to General Motors and saying, "We've got a group of people out here passing out flyers in the North Lot, can you have security come out here?" Meachem can then be heard saying "It looks like Will Lehman." He then says to us, "Security is coming to get you guys."

Security did not arrive for another 15 minutes or so,

and when they came, two female security officers informed us the UAW, not GM, had told them to remove us. The security officials told us that we could stay because we were not violating rules. By this time, the shift change was over, and we left anyway. The exchange with security officers shows that our leafleting did not violate company rules in the eyes of GM's security representatives.

I am requesting that your office investigate this matter and order the UAW to cease and desist all attempts to block me from exercising my Freedom to Advocate at this plant and across the country.

Of particular concern to me is that District Committeeman Meachem ordered another individual to take photographs of myself and the workers with whom I was speaking. This is an overt act of intimidation against workers who became fearful that they would be retaliated against at work for even speaking to me or taking a leaflet. This act is representative of the type of behavior rank-and-file workers have been forced to accept for years, in which the UAW has bullied and intimidated us while accepting bribes from the corporations behind our backs.

If this is to come close to resembling a free and fair election, it must be free of acts of intimidation like this.

Best,
Will Lehman

P.S. I am still awaiting guidance on access to phone numbers, the right to make robocalls and send mass texts. I have asked for this information multiple times in recent weeks. Meanwhile, a significant amount of time has passed and I am being deprived of the right to campaign through that method.



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