

UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman responds to questions from workers

Our reporters
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As he campaigns for president of the United Auto Workers, autoworker Will Lehman has received letters from workers throughout the US supporting his campaign and asking questions about his program.

The WSWS has endorsed Lehman's campaign. We are publishing below a selection of letters and responses from Lehman. The letters have been edited to ensure the anonymity of the workers.

For more information on Will Lehman's campaign, visit WillforUAWPresident.org.

Good Luck from Australia:

Hi Will. I wish you all the best. I hope you inspire many others to follow in your footsteps. I am an electrician in Australia and union member. I constantly email my union to encourage them to change with every email I send going unanswered. The world needs more people like you. You are a bloody legend. Thank you for what you're doing.

Robert

You will have my vote if you take politics out of the union we don't need our money going towards presidential candidates or other government candidates.

B

Hello B,

I am totally opposed to the UAW giving any support to the Democrats or Republicans or any single one of their candidates for any office from president of the United States to local mayors. Those parties represent the banks and corporations, the forces that back the auto companies.

The integration of the UAW into the Democratic Party over the course of the last 50 years has spelled

disaster for workers. It has meant decades of plant closures, wage cuts, and attacks on retirees. Biden is a representative of the credit card industry which has overseen massive cuts to corporate taxes over the course of his many decades in power. Of course, the Republicans are no better. Trump is an aristocrat, a job cutter, a speculator and a fraud. He has always been an enemy of working people.

However, we *do* need working class politics. The working class is the social force that produces all of society's wealth, but we have no representation in government. We are the bottom 90 percent of society, but our interests are never represented by anyone in government at a state, federal or local level. I believe this needs to change. That means fighting to mobilize the power of the working class against both Democrats and Republicans. Our movement must remain independent of these two parties or our strength will be sapped and we will be defeated. That's what history shows, including the history of the UAW itself.

I am a socialist. The Democrats and Republicans both lie about what socialism is, because they don't want workers to like it. But I have learned that socialism is the politics of the working class. Socialism means equality. It means putting control of society in the hands of working people all over the world, so that the economy is run not to enrich a few billionaires and shareholders, but to meet human need.

You don't have to be a socialist to support me, and our movement will include workers of many different political views, but I do think it is important to say what socialism really is. If you believe society is unequal, that the wars are waged for profit, and that the corporations have too much power, then chances are

you are a socialist yourself. If you have any questions about this I am happy to answer them. Send me your phone number and we can set up a time to talk.

Thank you for writing me.

Fraternally,
Will Lehman

What office do you currently hold and what local are you representing?

Hello,

I am not a UAW bureaucrat. I work for a living kitting batteries, battery cables and cab power harnesses at Mack Trucks Local 677. I'm a second-tier worker with five years' experience at the plant. I have never run for local office in my local because at my plant, that is not how you win workers' respect.

The local here is not trusted, because it sold us out during our 12-day strike in 2019. One of the local officials who bargained the sellout deal was then given an appointment in the International after workers voted him out of office, both for his role in the sellout contract in 2019 and his friendly attitude toward the company and Joe Biden when he toured the facility last year (not that I am a supporter of Trump, either. Both are pro-corporate frauds). What workers need is not another bureaucrat, but someone from the rank and file. The purpose of my campaign is to take power out of the hands of the totally unaccountable UAW apparatus and give it to workers on the shop floor.

What are conditions like at your plant? Thank you for writing in.

Will

Too bad there is nothing you can do for us retirees. No COLA for us. No raises to our pensions.

Hello,

Defending the rights of retirees is absolutely fundamental to my campaign. I'm attaching the ad that I have placed in *Solidarity Magazine*, which specifically argues that we must honor the veterans of labor, workers like you who dedicated their lives and sacrificed their bodies to defending the interests of workers like myself today. Unfortunately, the UAW

does not care at all about retirees. I argue for full medical and guaranteed pensions for all retirees.

You can see my ad in *Solidarity Magazine* here (note the section on retirees).

Tell me about your conditions as a retiree. How much do you get in benefits? What do you think about the UAW's decision at its convention (the same where it raised salaries for its leaders) where it ruled that retirees do not even have the right to run for UAW president? I oppose this completely. We must unite workers of all ages in order to wage a common fight against the companies.

What are the other issues that matter to you as a retiree that you would like to see changed? I am trying to reach more retirees and any assistance you can give me in doing so would be greatly appreciated so I can amplify your needs and concerns in this election.

Thank you for writing,
Will Lehman



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