

“No more crooks!”: Support grows for Will Lehman for UAW president among Michigan autoworkers

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

Early Friday morning, Will Lehman’s campaign for UAW president visited third shift workers as they were getting out of work at both the Stellantis Sterling Heights Assembly Plant (SHAP) and the Sterling Heights Stamping Plant. Afterward, a campaign team went to the Ford Dearborn Truck Plant to speak to workers about the UAW election and Lehman’s program calling for rank-and-file power.

As has been the case throughout Lehman’s campaign, rank-and-file autoworkers at these plants expressed a deep hatred of the pro-corporate UAW bureaucracy, significant interest and support for Lehman’s program and a genuine desire to fight to improve their conditions after decades of concessions and plant closures.

Stellantis Sterling Heights Assembly Plant

A young worker who started at SHAP earlier this year said he had seen Will Lehman’s campaign team multiple times at his plant and would be voting for him. “I didn’t see no one else out here trying to get people to vote for them. I appreciate that you’re dedicated.”

After a campaigner spoke about Lehman’s platform to abolish the corrupt, corporatized UAW bureaucracy and transfer power to rank-and-file workers on the shop floor, he said: “I like that. See, that’s the problem—the management paying the UAW [bureaucrats], I don’t

like that. That’s the problem with Chrysler right now, when we got a week laid off and we come back and get a whole other week [laid] off. They keep talking about suppliers. Y’all [the UAW] supposed to be fighting for us.”

“There’s a bunch of supervisors who’re walking around paying these stewards. There’s supervisors getting hired in and firing people. They don’t know what they’re doing. We gotta make a change, man.”

The worker ended with an appeal to his coworkers and other UAW members: “Vote Will Lehman.”

Another worker, Matt, said he voted for Will after closely following the campaign and speaking to Will on the phone. “I’m spreading the word inside the factory,” he said.

Stellantis Sterling Heights Stamping Plant

Mike, a worker at Sterling Heights Stamping Plant told campaigners, “I’m voting for Will Lehman. I want to bring the power and decision-making of the UAW and place it in the hands of the members on the floor.”

One worker rushing into the gate said he already voted for Will. When asked why, he said, “Why do I like him? Read his stuff—just read. All you gotta do is read.”

An autoworker who has been at the plant for 26 years expressed his extreme anger at the UAW for the deterioration of working conditions. He was especially upset about the terrible conditions faced by his son, who has worked at Warren Truck—which recently

eliminated their third shift—as a temporary part-time worker (TPT) for two years. “He didn’t choose to be a TPT. He makes low wages and has to deal with harassment and bullying. This isn’t right. I want you to tell Will about this.”

Stellantis Jefferson North Assembly

At Stellantis Jefferson North Assembly Plant (JNAP) in Detroit, one worker told Lehman’s campaign supporters, “I’m sick of the Curry crap,” referring to incumbent UAW President Ray Curry. “I know I’m voting for Will.”

Another worker said of Lehman, “His name is floating around the plant. I’m definitely voting for him and I think a lot of other people are too.”

A third worker said, “Back in the day before COVID I guess JNAP used to put out something like 600 vehicles a day. Right now, the highest we put out is 340 and the company says they want 400. But it’s not happening.

“People here voting for Will are pissed about the corruption scandal. I know he can’t fix everything, but when that one worker said there’s a lot of bullying in this plant, she wasn’t lying. When it [the corruption scandal] comes up in talks, the UAW don’t want to talk about that—but it’s like, you have to talk about it, because you took people’s money! They have no answer. I know I want all my dues money back because they have served no purpose for me.

“I don’t have dental, I can’t even get my teeth cleaned since I started working at JNAP. I got COVID in the plant, and got a huge medical bill from having to see a specialist. My lungs are still messed up. And who’s paying for that? I can’t afford it, but I got the bill. It’s ridiculous.”

Ford Dearborn Truck Plant

Campaigners distributed around 500 leaflets to second shift workers at the Dearborn Truck Plant

(Rouge). Many workers knew about Will’s campaign and said they either already did or were planning on voting for him.

“No more crooks. Get rid of all of the brothers in the good-boy country club,” one worker said. “Nothing but crooks and all of them need to be in federal prison.” When asked who he was going to vote for, he responded, “Will—the only one!”

Another Ford Dearborn worker said, “I think Will is going to do a great job as our president, and we need someone who will go and fight for us.”

“I want to see some changes,” a worker heading into his shift told campaigners. “As what they do more for the actual membership, you know? It’s all about the executive board. It should be all about the membership. I’m going to consider him [Will] seriously.”

A worker who had started three months ago at Ford Dearborn spoke about low wages. “I want to be able to afford one of these cars, and I work here. We build them and we can’t even afford them.”

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