

“I voted for Will because he’s a socialist, he’s for the workers”: Ford Kentucky Truck Plant workers express support for Will Lehman

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Will Lehman’s campaign is holding a final election rally on Sunday, November 6, at 2:00 pm EST. All workers are encouraged to register and attend. For more information on the campaign, visit WillForUAWPresident.org.

Workers at the Ford Kentucky Truck Plant in Louisville, Kentucky expressed solid support for Mack Trucks worker Will Lehman, who is running for president of the United Auto Workers (UAW).

In August, Lehman and his supporters had previously visited the plant, which employs over 8,400 workers who produce trucks and SUVs. Lehman won a powerful response from KTP workers for his call for the transfer of decision-making power from the UAW apparatus to rank-and-file workers on the shop floor.

During the afternoon and morning shifts on Wednesday and Thursday, Lehman’s supporters distributed campaign material and spoke to workers about their conditions. Many workers were quick to denounce the UAW bureaucracy. One worker said, “This isn’t a union, it’s more like a Mafia.” Describing the multi-tier wage system enforced by the UAW, she said, “I’m working across from a guy who’s making half as much as I am, for the same work. It’s outrageous.”

Many workers stated they had already voted for Will. One young worker getting off the night shift Thursday morning told campaigners that she voted for Will “because he’s a socialist, he’s for the workers.”

Tim, a worker with more than six years at the plant, said, “I’ve been reading through the emails and text messages about Will’s campaign, and I voted for him. The morale sucks in this plant and it’s getting worse. People don’t even want to come to work. I was a

construction worker before getting hired at Ford and sometimes I wonder if I made a mistake by coming here.”

He described conditions at the plant: “We’re working 12-hour days, 5 days a week in here. I’ve never seen a ‘launch’ last this long. It’s supposed to be only three to six months tops when a new vehicle is launched but this one will be over a year.”

He added, “I agree with Will’s call for a 50 percent raise and COLA. After more than six years, I still haven’t topped out in wages. Back in the day, it used to take 90 days to get top pay. Now, you have so many tiers; it’s terrible. And everything from food to housing prices are steadily going up.”

A few workers expressed support for Stellantis worker and UAW presidential candidate Brian Keller because of his criticisms of incumbent president Ray Curry and the ruling faction in the UAW bureaucracy.

Campaigners discussed with these workers the principled differences between Lehman and Keller, which above all centers on Keller’s support for the UAW bureaucracy’s nationalist and pro-capitalist program. Such an outlook only serves to pit workers in different countries against each other, while bowing to the endless demands for job cuts and concessions in the name of boosting “international competitiveness.”

During the course of this campaign, Lehman has met with Ford and other autoworkers in India, Germany, Mexico, Canada and other countries, and stressed the need for linking together the struggles of workers across borders through the expansion of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

Asked what he thought about Will’s fight to unite

Ford workers internationally to fight the global corporation's attack on jobs and living standards, Jerimiah, a KTP worker with eight years, said, "I would love to see that happen. We're all working for the same people, whether we are here or elsewhere, and it's all to create a product that definitely enriches those at the top. If we unite together, and if we could stand together somehow, think of the voice that would give us. People would pay attention."

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