

Online rally for UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman elicits strong support: “Will’s objective is to speak to the truth”

Shannon Jones
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The deadline to mail in ballots in the UAW election to ensure that they are counted is fast approaching (November 18). Vote for Will Lehman and mail your ballot today! If you have not received a ballot, go to uawvote.com and request one immediately. For more information on Lehman’s campaign, visit WillforUAWPresident.org.

Mack Trucks worker Will Lehman has received a growing number of statements of support from workers following the powerful online rally held Sunday as his campaign for the presidency of the United Auto Workers goes into its final leg.

Lehman, a socialist and second-tier worker at the Mack Trucks plant in Macungie, Pennsylvania, has centered his campaign around the fight for rank-and-file power and the abolition of the UAW apparatus, which has handed back decades of hard-won gains to the corporations in a long series of concessions contracts. Epitomizing the corrupt nature of the bureaucracy, more than a dozen top UAW officials, including two former presidents, have been sentenced to prison for misappropriation of funds and other criminal actions against the interests of workers.

The call by Will Lehman for the elimination of tiered work, a 50 percent wage increase and the restoration of cost-of-living raises, pensions and other demands has won a powerful response. His call for an international strategy by workers aimed at building global unity against the transnational auto companies won an especially warm reception by workers disgusted at being constantly pitted against workers in other countries.

The rally on Sunday opened with a 20-minute video that outlined the basis of Lehman’s campaign and the

response of workers in the US and globally to his program, with many workers speaking forcefully on their desire to overcome the deteriorating conditions in the plants. Significantly, the video included a statement of support from an autoworker in Silao, Mexico.

The campaign of Will Lehman has won a particularly powerful response from temporary and “supplemental” workers, who work for substandard pay and with no job protections, but must still pay dues to the UAW apparatus.

A temp worker from the Stellantis Jefferson North Assembly Plant in Detroit said, “The meeting was good and it proves that we all as TPTs think alike and we are tired of the same things, and we deserved to get appreciated a lot more.”

A retired General Motors worker from Michigan who attended the online rally said, “I voted for Will a week ago, and yesterday donated \$20 to his campaign. Good talk yesterday, a lot of good points made. I’m surprised, though, that more retirees didn’t participate. The younger folks need to know that, even though we fought for better wages and benefits and safer working conditions, we support them in their fight. The older workers and retirees did that for us. POWER TO THE RANK AND FILE.”

Several workers from the Stellantis Belvidere, Illinois Jeep assembly plant attended the online rally. The plant has been put on the chopping block by Stellantis, with two shifts at the plant laid off since 2019.

A Stellantis Belvidere Assembly Plant worker spoke out in support of Will and explained the conditions he faces. “Will’s got good views and good ideas. I’m going to vote for him. I’ve worked here for 22 years. The 2009 crisis was something else. This is even

weirder,” he added of the threats to close the plant.

“Belvidere has been on one shift, not knowing if we’re going to get another product at the building. It’s been nerve-wracking for the last year. They laid off a thousand people. It’s been stressful. We’ve been doing jobs we don’t want to do. We used to have good jobs the first five to ten years.”

Another Belvidere worker said, “Will’s objective is to speak to the truth and do everything to get the employees justice. Speak the truth about what we really deserve and want. Stand on the side of the truth. If this guy Will is like me and feels like me, I support him. If you need me to get up in front of people and tell people something too, I’ll do it. I am nowhere near as scared. We’re talking about my future and my brothers and sisters, without question. I like that you guys are reaching out and I appreciate that.

“Am I your brother? Do we work alongside each other? Is your health and welfare and safety important to me? Is mine important to you? That is the goal that we should be fighting for; that is the paramount picture we should be pushing.”

A third Belvidere worker added, “Power to you, Will. I truly appreciate what he’s doing. I hope he can pull it off. I also watched the debate and it just—you go guy, you crushed them SOBs! Ray Curry let us go without a contract and didn’t give us a flying flip. UAW President Ray] Curry and [UAW Vice President Cindy] Estrada are four-letter words to me. I’m not a big International fan,” he said speaking of the Solidarity House apparatus.

“Will is pissed off and it’s an expression of what’s going on. It’s completely natural to be speaking like he did. The videos at the beginning too—that’s a way to get you amped up at a zoom meeting. It was really good to hear that everyone else is facing the same issues.”

A worker from the auto parts maker Dana Corp. in Pennsylvania said after watching the rally, “It’s a great video, really shows how us workers feel, and it’s great to see a candidate actually interacting with us workers.”

A number of workers from the Ford Chicago Assembly Plant (CAP) attended the rally, where workers have built a rank-and-file election committee to support the campaign of Will Lehman.

“Even if he doesn’t win, I think he has already won because he has opened up peoples’ minds,” one veteran CAP worker who listened to the rally said.

A member of the Ford Chicago Rank-and-File Election Committee member voiced their solidarity with workers from Mexico who spoke during the rally, who themselves had drawn comparisons between their dangerous conditions and those in the US.

“It was terrible to hear that in Mexico, auto workers face the same safety issues and are paid so little,” the Ford Chicago worker said. “The one woman who was talking told us what she was paid there and how they tried to fight it, and it showed how the unions lie when they say the workers in Mexico are OK with the low pay. Uniting workers all together in whatever country we are in is the only way to fight the corporations who are trying to rule everywhere, but don’t even know what they’re doing.

“After this meeting, I really know from listening to what Will was saying is that he has a bigger vision. This is not just about the election and him winning. The same problems are going to be there, and we are going to need to unite.”

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