

“This election is unfair”: GM Flint workers denounce judge’s rejection of 30-day extension of UAW elections

GM Flint Assembly Rank-and File Committee
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The following statement was issued by the GM Flint Assembly Rank-and-File Committee. To contact the committee and get involved, email gm.flint.rfc@gmail.com or fill out the form at the end. To learn more about Will Lehman’s campaign for UAW president, visit WillForUAWPresident.org.

We, the GM Flint Assembly Rank-and-File Committee condemn the court ruling made last week by a federal court judge in Detroit against the lawsuit brought by Mack Trucks worker Will Lehman demanding an extension in the voting due to deliberate vote suppression by the United Auto Workers.

It is a travesty that the court could not even allow a 30-day extension of the ballot deadline—a relatively simple request by Will Lehman to ensure a meaningful election. The judge consciously and willingly ignored the arguments made in Will Lehman’s lawsuit. The judge claimed that Will Lehman had no standing in the case because he received a ballot and voted. In our eyes, it is the UAW apparatus, the UAW monitor and the court system that have no standing.

What actually happened? The UAW bureaucracy carried out conspiratorial actions against the membership by not properly informing us of the election or sending every member a ballot. There were no notices or posters about the election in our plant from UAW Local 598. Our coworkers only learned about the UAW’s first-ever direct elections for International officers through the efforts of Will Lehman—who spoke to workers at our plant gates in August—and his campaign’s supporters.

We believe the reason the UAW apparatus failed to inform us is because this election presents a challenge to them, to their very existence. Properly informing the

UAW membership would have allowed many more workers to have learned about Will’s campaign, which was based on the needs of workers and not what the companies want. It was based on a fight to regain all the rights and benefits given up by the bureaucracy over 40 years.

At the court hearing on November 22, which a representative of our committee attended, there was a dialogue between the judge and the lawyers for the UAW. The judge was trying to discern whether the low voter turnout of only 95,000 out of 1 million members was due to voter apathy or not. The lawyer for the UAW essentially evaded the question, de facto endorsing the “theory” of voter apathy.

We state firmly: The low voter turnout is NOT due to workers’ apathy, but due to the conspiratorial actions of the bureaucracy to limit voter turnout and to suppress the voices of the rank and file. There is a deep hatred for the bureaucrats, certainly among the temps because they are super-exploited. The seniority workers are also hostile to the bureaucrats because they have failed to regain any of their benefits—including COLA and pensions. Seniority workers are also opposed to the tier system. These are just some of the things we workers attribute to the bureaucracy and why there is a high level of distrust.

The ruling upholds the undemocratic nature of the election even though the UAW did not present any evidence that *all* members were properly informed and received ballots.

Who benefits from this decision? Certainly, the auto corporations and the UAW apparatus benefit. The development of Will’s just fight for the rank and file has shown us that the deception and corruption in the

UAW reaches further deep into the system. The intervention of Biden-appointed Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh to oppose the extension of the ballot deadline shows that the government and the courts all work on behalf of the ruling elites against the working class.

This court ruling must be made known to all workers! The ruling represents the interests of the UAW apparatus, which is embedded in the interests of the corporations. They are all opposed to the rank-and-file workers. Their “justice” is for the right of the capitalists to make profits from our labor and the right of the bureaucracy to enforce the rule of the corporations.

The working class must organize our collective strength and bind together to overthrow the bureaucracy. The time is now. If this isn’t done, they will take everything our past Flint sit-downers died for, and everything the original UAW brothers and sisters put into place.

As supporters of Will Lehman’s campaign and the fight for building and expanding rank-and-file committees on the shop floor, we have learned that the UAW apparatus will not give way willingly. We believe that Will’s campaign has shown there is no way to reform the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy will have to be abolished by the workers and power transferred to rank-and-file workers on the shop floor. We urge workers to take up this fight by joining the GM Flint Assembly Rank-and-File Committee.

To contact the committee and get involved, email gm.flint.rfc@gmail.com.



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