Will Lehman demands that all candidates be on the ballot in second round of UAW elections

Will Lehman
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The following statement was issued by United Auto Workers presidential candidate Will Lehman in response to the UAW elections. For more information on Lehman's campaign, visit WillforUAWPresident.org.

Dear fellow workers,

The votes cast in the first-ever election in UAW history have been tallied, and I am proud to announce that my campaign to abolish the bureaucracy and give power to the rank-and-file won 4,777 votes, or almost 5 percent of the total votes cast. Given the efforts of the UAW apparatus to suppress voter turnout, this is a big step forward.

To each and every worker who supported me, helped campaign for me and talked to me about what we are fighting to do: Thank you. The results show that a growing section of workers want to throw off the weight of the UAW apparatus and unite internationally to reverse decades of betrayals and corporate concessions.

While I am grateful for the votes, the outcome leaves no doubt that the process was corrupted by the deliberate suppression of the right to vote by the bureaucracy. This was not a valid election!

Only a tiny percentage of the union membership even knew that there was an election at all. There were only 103,000 votes cast out of a membership of over 1.1 million, roughly 9 percent!

In some areas, the turnout was even lower. For example, of the 48,000 UAW members currently on strike against the University of California system in Locals 5810 and 2865 and Student Researchers United, only 1,200 ballots were cast—a turnout of 2.5 percent. At Local 4123 at the California State University system, 11,000 ballots were sent, but only 29 voted, or 0.26 percent! At the University of Washington, out of over 9,000 ballots sent, only 74 votes were cast, or 0.8 percent.

The UAW suppressed the vote because it wants workers to only have the "right" to vote for a candidate chosen by the apparatus: Ray Curry or Shawn Fain. Now the Monitor says there will be a run-off between these two candidates, even though they won only seven percent of the total eligible membership, combined.

As result, my campaign—as well as the campaigns of Brian Keller, Mark Gibson, and candidates who ran for other positions—are being excluded from the race.

Two weeks ago, as evidence of voter suppression mounted, I sued the UAW and the Monitor because workers everywhere were telling my campaign that they never knew there was an election or didn't receive a ballot on time to vote. I sent reports to the Monitor, who was proposed by the UAW and chosen by the court to oversee the election, warning of widespread voter disenfranchisement at workplaces across the country. However, these reports were ignored.

In court, the UAW, the Labor Department and the Monitor all agreed there was nothing wrong with the election. All we asked for was a 30-day delay and for steps to be taken to really inform the members that an election was taking place. This was denied.

Now the results have revealed the disenfranchisement of hundreds of thousands of members. This is a violation of all members' rights! Each worker, no matter who they support, has the right to vote in a fair election for whichever candidate they want.

In this context, accepting the notion of a "runoff" between Curry and Fain would make a mockery of

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workers' rights.

This is why I am demanding that all candidates should be on the ballot in the second round. This time, however, the entire membership must be informed of the election and able to vote in it.

The Monitor isn't going to enforce it, since they haven't "monitored" much of anything during the election. They said they see no problem with 40,000 less workers voting *in* the direct election than in the 2021 referendum to *hold* direct elections. They said it was not their responsibility to do anything beyond politely requesting the bureaucracy inform the membership of its right to boot them out of power. Through the Local Union Information System, the apparatus only informed its own internal network of their "right" to go vote in defense of their positions. The Monitor said they had no problem with that. Now we know why the UAW apparatus suggested this Monitor to the court in the first place.

The rank-and-file must fight for its rights in order to win them. If you agree with my demand for all candidates to be put back on the ballot and that the membership be truly informed, make your voice heard! Talk to your coworkers and encourage them to support this demand.

Form rank-and-file election committees in your workplace to demand that every worker has the right to vote in a meaningful election that expresses the genuine will of the membership.

Get in contact with my campaign by emailing me at WillforUAWpresident@gmail.com or calling/texting me at 267-225-6633.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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