

UC workers must organize a re-vote on the fraudulent contract ratification!

UC Rank-and-File Strike Committee
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The following statement was issued by the University of California Rank-and-File Strike Committee. To join the committee, email ucstrikerfc@gmail.com.

We, the UC Rank and File Strike Committee (UCRFSC), reject as illegitimate the recent announcement of ratification of the Tentative Agreement (TA) which was put before 36,000 of us in Local 2856 and SRU-UAW. The TA was presented to us in a snap vote purposefully called over the Winter holiday break. Thousands of us were away and large numbers were out of the country with limited internet access and not checking emails.

Once the TA was announced, members of the UAW bargaining team actively worked to suppress the opposition of a strong rank-and-file led No Vote campaign, and used our dues money to push for a yes vote, hiring a boutique PR firm, BrightLine Communications, with close ties to the Democratic Party to churn out misinformation that undermined our strike. They pitted different sections of the workforce against each other based on university location and job type.

Based on these anti-democratic tactics, the very numbers and percentages it has released proclaiming the unpopular TA ratified are themselves highly suspect, with the union officials claiming the TA passed with 68 percent “yes” votes by SRU members and 61 percent by members of local 2865.

We struck for five weeks to put an end to our poverty. We will not be toyed with in undemocratic maneuvers by the UAW apparatus to push through this agreement that only benefits UC. What has become crystal clear is that the membership has been betrayed by the UAW bureaucracy and we must organize now and build our own organizations of rank-and-file power to demand a re-vote.

We call on all our coworkers across all UC campuses to join the UCRFSC to set up committees at their departments and universities to demand:

- A re-vote on the tentative agreement with full participation and fair use of union resources by opponents of the TA.
- The election of rank-and-file representatives from each campus to oversee the revote and guard against voter suppression and ballot stuffing.
- If the contract is voted down, the rank-and-file must be given the right to draw up a new contract based on our non-negotiable demands, including \$54,000 base pay and COLA to end our rent burden, for an end to NSRT fees, for \$2,000/month reimbursement for childcare, an end to the red tape for disabled workers, COVID protections, and healthcare for our families.

The contract was voted on under undemocratic conditions of fear mongering and intimidation, where strikers were given the option to approve the sellout contract or remain on strike without adequate strike pay or a strategy. Campuses where BT members opposed the contract had a substantially higher no vote turnout as workers were exposed to criticism on the agreement.

Rank-and-file control over a re-vote is necessary because the UAW bureaucracy has a long history of undermining the democracy of workers and cannot be trusted. Almost the entire past leadership was sent to prison for accepting bribes from the big three auto companies to impose sweetheart contracts on the workers. The corporations gave the UAW officials luxury items, plane tickets and vacations in exchange for driving down the livelihoods of auto workers and imposing on them the hated tier system. The massive UAW apparatus has over 450 officials who do nothing to help the rank-and-file and who make over \$100,000 a year from our dues money. At the last UAW

convention, these bureaucrats opted to award themselves raises while cutting strike pay.

Time and time again, this apparatus has tried to stop workers from having any say over our working conditions and our lives. For example, many UC UAW members were never even informed that there was an election for UAW national leadership held in the Fall—the first direct election in UAW history that a federal court ordered the UAW to conduct as a result of widespread corruption.

This is yet another confirmation of the hostile class division which exists between the apparatus and the rank-and-file. On December 18, the day before our ratification vote, socialist autoworker and candidate for UAW president Will Lehman filed a formal protest to the monitor overseeing the election. The protest clearly demonstrates that the UAW bureaucracy systematically suppressed voting by rank-and-file workers. The leaderships of the two UC locals suppressed knowledge of the election and did nothing to inform us of our right to vote. Turnout for locals 5810 and 2865 in the election was 2.6 percent. Turnout among our brothers and sisters at the California State University system was 0.26% (29 votes out of over 11,000 members) and at the University of Washington turnout was 0.78% (72 votes out of 9,195 ballots sent)

UC members have filed an appeal within the UAW to demand a new ratification vote. The rank-and-file has every right to pursue all legal options for overturning the fraudulent ratification vote. However, it must be said frankly that such appeals will go nowhere if directed internally at the Public Review Board (PRB).

The PRB is a part of the apparatus that has revealed itself as our opponent. During the 2015 Ford-UAW contract ratification, UAW members provided hard evidence that the UAW committed fraud to stuff the ballots and force through a sellout contract. The UAW's PRB board acknowledged that five hundred "yes" ballots were suspiciously not accounted for, but ruled against holding a re-vote.

Many autoworkers suspected vote tampering and fraud at the hands of the UAW top officials and a legal appeal was filed. However, the PRB dragged its feet and after a lengthy "review" period of two years, rejected the legal appeal for a new ratification under the claim that calling a revote "would disenfranchise the members who voted to ratify the agreement and thereby

violate the very democratic practices we are charged with preserving."

Instead, the rank-and-file must take control of this process ourselves.

We are confronting not only the UAW bureaucracy but their allies in the Democratic Party. All of the powers that be, from Gavin Newsom, the UC Regents, the courts, mediators like Darrell Steinberg, are aligned against us. The UC system is being transformed into a for-profit outfit that is increasingly responsible for impoverishing broader sections of the working class in the state. For example, UC recently signed a massive \$4 billion deal with the predatory Blackstone Group, the largest landowner in the country, to develop properties, raise rents, which will lead to a rise in homelessness and evictions. In the end, UC represents the interests of the capitalist class.

But we, the rank-and-file, have tremendous power, as evidenced by the strike itself. Our task is not to put our faith in the UAW apparatus or the Democratic establishment, but to activate and mobilize our own independent strength to overcome the weight of the bureaucracy and fight for our rights and the rights of working people everywhere.

There is a global movement of the working class emerging on every continent, from railroad workers in the United States to mass working class movements in Peru, Ecuador, Sri Lanka, Turkey and elsewhere. We must link up with this emerging global movement, whose most conscious leadership is the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-file Committees (IWA-RFC), of which the UCRFC is a part.

The millionaire UC Regents and the UAW apparatus may think this issue is settled, but we are here to make clear that nothing is resolved and nothing is settled.

Elect rank-and-file committees and organize for a re-vote of both the ratification vote and the national officers' election! There must be rank-and-file oversight of both elections! Contact us today to join or establish a committee at your university.

To join the committee, email ucstrikerfc@gmail.com.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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