

“We have to unite and stop being enslaved”: Toledo Jeep workers demand that victimized Dana workers be reinstated

Our reporters
9 March 2023

If you are an autoworker who would like to join the rank-and-file committee, text or call 248-602-0936 today.

Workers at Stellantis’ Jeep Assembly Complex in Toledo, Ohio are speaking out in support of workers at the nearby Dana Toledo Driveline plant who have been unjustly fired with the complicity of the United Auto Workers. At least 50 workers have been terminated on bogus charges over the last several months in a purge aimed at driving out workers for reporting exploitation, wage theft, sexual harassment and other abuses.

On Wednesday, the newly formed Dana Workers Rank-and-File Committee issued a call to action to demand the reinstatement of all workers who were fired in violation of the contractually-stipulated “progressive discipline” policy and those terminated as a result of “misrepresentation by the UAW.” The workers are demanding “rank-and-file committee representation in all interactions with management,” “democratic worker control over hiring and firing decisions,” and “30 minute paid ‘know your rights’ classes for all workers once a month led by the rank-and-file.”

“Exploitation is not just happening at Dana Toledo Driveline. It is happening across the auto industry, which is connected across all plants and companies,” the committee declared. Therefore, its strategy is “to appeal to rank-and-file autoworkers everywhere to connect with us, so we can share information, democratically discuss our conditions, and unite for common action. If we rank-and-file workers do not stand up for ourselves, no change will ever come.”

The Dana Driveline Plant was opened in 2017 to produce axles and other parts to support several vehicles, including the Jeep Wrangler, which is

manufactured less than three miles away at the Toledo Assembly Complex. More than 5,500 Jeep workers are at the plant. They are also members of UAW Local 12, and have been engaged in years of battles against the company and the UAW bureaucracy. The UAW has collaborated in the gutting of the wages and conditions among Stellantis workers and accepted a massive increase in Temporary Part-Time or so-called Supplemental Employees.

A Jeep worker with 10 years said, “When I read about the Dana workers, I said how familiar that sounds—that’s what is going on in our plant. There is a lot of favoritism. It is nothing like what we heard when we were coming up that it’s a blessing to get a job at a Chrysler plant. The union is working for the company and all they tell you is the company has the right to do what they do.

“Dana is just an extension of Stellantis. It’s like an undercover Jeep plant. They use the same unprofessional tactics. Chrysler was known for firing people just before they made their 90 days. Now they keep Supplemental Employees on temporary status for three, four, five years, and the UAW tells workers to get another job because you’re never going to get hired as full-timers. It’s outrageous.”

She continued, “I’ve walked into the UAW office at the plant and seen supervisors with their feet crossed on the table and laying back with their hands behind their heads having a nice chat with the stewards. That’s not a scene you want to see.

“We ask the union, ‘Why do they have the right to keep the line moving so fast?’ The company sends its time study people to the line, and they say everything’s fine. The UAW stewards don’t even show up. You

come in there at 100 percent, and you walk out slumped over and limping.

“You can have an MRI showing you have injuries, and they still won’t give you any accommodations by putting you on a physically less demanding job. Now they are saying we can’t take PAA (Paid Absence Allowance) days off to give our bodies a rest. Instead, they are working us 60 hours or more a week.

“I voted for Will Lehman for UAW president because I agreed with everything that he stood for,” she said, referring to the rank-and-file Mack Trucks worker and socialist who has called for the transfer of power from the UAW apparatus to the workers on the shop floor by building rank-and-file committees like the one at Dana and other plants.

“They are trying to turn all of us back 100 years or more,” the worker continued. “It’s all about control. My message to Dana workers is: We have to stop being enslaved and letting them pick us off like crabs in a barrel. We have to unite and stand together.

“The conditions you describe at Dana would make anyone want to quit. What sort of system do we have when you have to ask yourself do I really want to work here? But it’s the principle you are fighting for, and I say go for it. A lot of Dana workers are on the Jeep Facebook page. We’re at a breaking point here at Jeep too, and we have to stand together. I’m ready to walk a picket line and fight.”

Another Jeep worker, a Temporary Part-Time worker, said, “I live very close to the Dana plant, but I never applied for a job there because of the conditions. I heard it was very rough and that they work 18 days straight at a time. But things at Jeep aren’t much better, especially for the TPTs.

“How could they get away with using temp agencies to hire workers at Dana when it is a UAW plant? When you work through a temp agency, it’s common to get laid off right before you roll over to a direct employee.”

After reading the call to action from the Dana Workers Rank-and-File Committee, the Jeep worker said, “The statement was great. They are standing up, and we should support them.

“It sounds like a great plan to set up a rank-and-file committee. We’ve been undergoing the same stuff at Jeep for years, and the UAW will not stand up for us. We are forced to work seven days, 10 hours a day.

“Stellantis is exploiting workers, just like Dana.

There are TPTs who top out at \$19 an hour, and they’ve been there six or seven years without rolling over to full-time. Right next to them is someone making \$28-30 an hour and getting a profit-sharing check. I’ve been a TPT for four years, and I’ve missed out on at least \$36,000 in profit-sharing checks. I pay my union dues like everyone else. I feel exploited.

“The company can work you six or seven days one week, and the next week they only call you in for one day. It’s been four years, and I’m still a TPT. I had to go out and get a second job. I’m driving a forklift and making \$25 an hour. At Jeep I’m making \$18.40, and TPTs start at \$15.40.

“Sometimes Jeep only gives us 14-16 hours a week, and you can’t raise a family on that. I just started a shift at 4:00 a.m. at my new job, and when I’m resting, out of nowhere I get a robocall that I’m supposed to show up at Jeep. For two or three months, I hardly got any time and then when I get another job, they suddenly need me. Sometimes, you’re scheduled to come in at 5:00, and at 3:30 they tell you don’t come in because of a parts shortage of something else.”

He concluded, “Everybody is getting screwed, including the full-time workers. Even with profit-sharing, they are just trying to survive. We need to have a rank-and-file committee at our plant too.”



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