

Autoworkers speak out after Monitor rejects Will Lehman protest of fraudulent UAW election: “The whole thing smells”

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Autoworkers contacted by the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter* voiced their opposition to the decision by the monitor overseeing the United Auto Workers union to summarily reject the protest filed by Mack Trucks worker and UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman over systematic voter suppression in the UAW national elections.

In its response, the Monitor claimed that the turnout in the first direct election of UAW officers was not low, even though only 104,766 votes were counted out of a total eligible membership of over 1 million, just 9 percent. The Monitor brushed aside written testimony from workers submitted by Lehman as “unsubstantiated” or “vague” while accepting as proven all the self-serving assurances of the UAW apparatus.

In reality, the UAW apparatus and the Monitor worked to keep members in the dark about the election, aware that a socialist, Will Lehman, was on the ballot. In the first round, the UAW made no substantive effort to publicize the election or to update mailing lists to make sure that all workers got ballots.

After longtime bureaucrats Ray Curry and Shawn Fain advanced to the runoff election, the UAW made more serious efforts to turn out the vote, but the number of ballots cast rose only slightly to 138,000, reflecting the widespread alienation of rank-and-file workers from the bureaucracy. The election result has still not been certified due to ballot challenges.

According to the UAW Monitor, the review of unresolved challenged ballots is continuing with Shawn Fain holding a 505 vote lead over incumbent Ray Curry. Because the number of challenged and unresolved ballots (586) is larger than the vote separating the two candidates, the review process is continuing with no official winner called.

A veteran Ford Chicago Assembly worker speaking to the *Autoworker Newsletter* said, “Mr. Lehman has been sending me emails about the UAW international election. I think it’s stupid what went on with that. I believe that the Monitor was working with the UAW international—for them—NOT for the members of the union. I believe the UAW international is full of themselves, and all they care about now is the contract so they can screw the membership on it.”

Facing the likelihood of defeat, the clique of bureaucrats around incumbent UAW President Ray Curry launched a desperate last-minute challenge of the election, acknowledging the election was a fraud and raising many of the same points made by Lehman. However, it was the Curry administration that oversaw the election and bears chief responsibility for the disenfranchisement of rank-and-file UAW members.

Responding to Curry’s statement on the election, a long-time UAW member who works at Detroit Diesel said, “Now Curry is saying the same thing as Will because he doesn’t want to give up his power, but I am sure Fain will give Curry a position.

“Will was saying the same thing from the beginning about the election fraud. I didn’t cast a vote in the second round because Will’s name was not on the ballot.

“I saw the statement from Fain about returning power to the workers. He says it’s time to return something to the workers. I heard him on TV saying that with a poker face. I say BS.”

A retired Ford worker said, “Everything Will said was documented, which goes to show the Monitor and his legal advisement failed to uphold their duty.

“How can the Monitor say 9 percent wasn’t a low turnout? There was a turnout of 23–26 percent in the Teamster election; there are baselines. All you have to do

is look at other unions. The Monitor needs to be investigated.

“Now Curry is making the same accusations, saying the same things as Will. They must be going crazy at the International that he even made that statement. It totally undermines the Monitor’s statement. He basically admitted that Will got run over by the same bus.

“The whole thing smells like stepping on a skunk in the road. They can’t outrun it. Nothing has changed, I can see that. You still have the same corruption as before.”

In a further indication of deliberate voter suppression by the UAW apparatus, many workers at the Dana Driveline auto parts plant in Toledo, Ohio, have told the *World Socialist Web Site* that they were never informed about the UAW election and were only now learning about Will Lehman’s campaign for the first time. One younger Dana worker said after watching the debate between Will Lehman, Shawn Fain and Ray Curry, “I wish I could have had the chance to vote for Will because everything he says sounds good and fair. I agreed with everything he said in the debate too. I would have voted for him.”

Another young Dana worker agreed, saying, “I definitely would have voted for Will, a vote for the people!”

A veteran worker at the Stellantis Detroit Assembly Complex-Jefferson said that the experience at her plant had confirmed what Will Lehman has argued about mass disenfranchisement in the UAW elections. “It was weird to me that no one was talking about the election. There were no posters, nothing. The only flyers and leaflets were the ones I put up for Will.

“I have never seen an election, not even for UAW steward, like that. And this was a big election, for UAW President. I can show you how much literature they put out on the tables just for union steward, but there was nothing for the UAW election.”



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