

# No to “critical status” at Stellantis plants! We are not robots!

Statement of the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee  
22 June 2023

*The following is a statement by the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee at the Stellantis assembly plant in suburban Detroit on the announcement this week that the company is invoking the “critical status” clause in the national contract. To contact the committee, call or text 248-919-8448.*

*Text AUTO to (866) 847-1086 to sign up for text updates from the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Network or to discuss building rank-and-file committees.*

Fellow workers:

We cannot accept that Stellantis is putting Warren Truck, Dundee Engine, Jefferson North, Kokomo Engine and other plants on “critical status” for 90 days starting July 5. That means we can be forced to work seven days a week and up to 12 hours a day past the expiration of the contract on September 14.

The company executives are doing this to build up inventory ahead of a potential strike. They are trying to intimidate us because we will not accept another sellout contract from the United Auto Workers.

Under “critical status,” we can only get one day off after 30 days unless we use family medical leave. This will wreak havoc with our lives. We’re not robots! We’re human beings! With the extra hours you could get more money, but it’s not worth sacrificing our bodies, our sanity and our family lives!

That Stellantis can get away with this is the fault of the UAW apparatus. They slipped the language allowing “critical status” in the 2019 contract without informing the membership. No organization that truly represents workers would agree to such a thing. Now they say we have no choice but to accept it.

Stellantis complains about absenteeism, but they are going to make it worse. This will hurt our mental health. People will be paying babysitters, then have to pick their kids when the company sends us home.

Nobody knows when we have to work. We all have families, children we have to take care of.

They are creating a toxic work environment in the plant. They won’t even let us use our PAA (paid absence) days—that belong to us—when we want. Then they tell us when we can use them. Then they say, “Let’s give you a voluntary layoff” because they want to get rid of the old-timers so they can hire more supplementals at \$15.78 an hour. And they wonder why absenteeism is so high.

The UAW is not uniting us. It’s dividing us: first tier against second tier, full-time against temporary, production versus skilled and workers in Detroit against our brothers and sisters at Belvidere and other plants. We have established the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee to put a halt to this and unite all workers.

We come in to work and are doing our job. Without us they wouldn’t be able to operate or make a dime in profits. But now we are being made to suffer for problems caused by management. Stellantis says it is behind 17,871 units, but it is not our fault that they are behind in production. We should remember last summer Stellantis laid off the third shift at Warren Truck, and then CEO Carlos Tavares came and said he should have shut the plant down. This was after they were complaining about too much absenteeism and a shortage of workers.

At Warren Truck, management is constantly sending workers home early because they can’t run. But, we are constantly being harassed over petty issues like wearing ear buds.

The worst thing is that the UAW allows this. It shows the UAW apparatus is not looking out for our interests. The election of Shawn Fain and Rich Boyer for president and vice president did not change a thing, and all of Fain’s talk about “change” and fighting the

companies is nothing but hot air.

We say to Shawn Fain, you do not represent us! The election was rigged, and since being installed, you have shown once again whose side the UAW bureaucracy is really on: Stellantis management, not the rank-and-file workers.

That is not all. They have closed the Belvidere plant and are laying off workers at SHAP, Toledo Jeep, Trenton, Dundee, here at Warren Truck and other plants, and the UAW has said nothing and done nothing.

Just last week the UAW forced through a contract on the third vote that striking workers at the Clarios battery plant in Holland, Ohio, had already rejected two times. It means that workers will only get 3 percent raises and that the door is open to imposing a 12-hour work schedule throughout the plant, the same issue that we face.

The UAW threw these brave workers under the bus and betrayed them. They did nothing to help these workers, like blocking the shipment of scab batteries to GM, Ford and and Stellantis plants. We are outraged that the UAW forced Stellantis, Ford and GM workers to scab on our brothers and sisters at Clarios.

The sellout contract pushed onto the workers at Clarios is a warning of what the UAW will try to do to us in September. We cannot let this happen. If there is going to be a real fight, we have to organize it.

The companies and the UAW bureaucracy are conspiring to impose another pro-corporate contract to force us to pay for the transition to electric vehicles by destroying tens of thousands of jobs and slashing the wages of workers. They are making their preparations. We have to make our own preparations.

This does not mean wearing red shirts and other PR stunts. It means organizing the rank and file, independently of the pro-company UAW bureaucrats, to prepare for an all-out strike by all UAW members at GM, Ford and Stellantis to win what we need.

To prepare for this fight, we have to communicate with each other, exchange information and expand our network of rank-and-file committees so power and decision making can be transferred from the UAW apparatus to the workers on the shop floor. We have to unite with workers across the auto industry in the US, Canada and internationally to fight the global assault on jobs and living standards.

Only in that way can we stop management and the UAW from pushing us back and win what we need. Instead of a seven-day, 12-hour operation, we need to have an 8-hour, five-day week with no mandatory overtime. All work after 8 hours must be paid at time and a half. All part-timers must be immediately rolled over to full-time with full pay and benefits, the restoration of pensions, full cost of living and wage increases to make up for all the concessions.

As we said in our founding statement, “Workers have enormous power. We are the ones who build these trucks and produce the profits. But the UAW tries to tell us we are powerless and that we have no choice but to accept whatever management wants. That is a lie. If we unite full-time and temporary, first- and second-tier, hourly and skilled, from the Detroit metro area and from Belvidere, Dundee and every other area, we will be able to fight for what we need, not what the companies and the UAW says is affordable.”

Now is the time to prepare by building a network of rank-and-file committees to allow workers at all the plants to communicate with one another and discuss our issues without the interference of the UAW and management. Nothing can be won if we leave our fate in the hands of the UAW bureaucracy.

*Join and build the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee by contacting us at 248-919-8448 or filling out the form below. Text AUTO to (866) 847-1086 to sign up for text updates from the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Network or to discuss building rank-and-file committees.*



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