

“9 or 10 percent of the members voting in the first round of UAW election is a joke”

Workers voice support for lawsuit by Mack Trucks worker Will Lehman challenging fraudulent UAW election

Our reporter
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Workers are voicing strong support to the filing of a lawsuit Monday by Mack Trucks worker Will Lehman challenging the refusal by the US Department of Labor to address his complaint over widespread voter disenfranchisement in last years' United Auto Workers election.

The lawsuit is aimed at defending workers democratic right to vote and choose the union's leadership. Lehman is seeking to force a re-run of the election, which saw a voter turnout of only about 9 percent in the first round of the election last year, and barely 12 percent in the runoff this year. This is lower than any other national officer election by a major union in history.

In a statement announcing the lawsuit, Lehman wrote, “This lawsuit is for all 1.1 million members, regardless of who they voted for or whether they knew there was an election at all. In light of the overwhelming evidence of voter suppression and interference in the election by the UAW, the Biden administration's refusal to act on my complaint is a slap in the face to workers everywhere.”

As important as the lawsuit is, the main issue remains, as Lehman stressed all during his campaign, the building of workers power on the shop floor. This means the continuation and deepening of the fight to build rank-and-file committees to transfer power from the UAW bureaucracy to the workers.

We reprint below an important sample of comments received by the WSWS in support of Will Lehman's

lawsuit.

A member of the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee said, “There has to be a rerun of the election. Any time, whether it's in a union or government election, if you get such a low turnout red flags should go up. Nine or 10 percent of the members voting is a joke. How can the Labor Department say that's ok? They don't care about our rights.

“I didn't even know about the election. There was nothing on the union page or in the plant. You heard about local union elections, but virtually nothing about the UAW International election.

“The UAW has talked about ending shady deals and ending the bribery of officials, but they haven't done anything about it. How can the union give Stellantis the ability to make us work up to 12 hours a day for 90 days? This is not the UAW that my grandfather belonged to when he worked at Ford for 45 years. It's not the union you thought of when you were a kid and you wanted to get a union job. The corporations and the UAW and the government, don't give a damn about us.”

A member of the rank-and-file committee at the Gladstone Forvia plant in Columbus, Indiana, said he read the lawsuit when he got off work Monday afternoon. He said, “Will is taking the Department of Labor into court to force them to do what they should've done during the election. Those overseeing the election were told about the voter suppression, and they didn't do anything about it. Will asked for a

30-day extension before the first round in the election was over with, and they didn't do anything about it then.

"But he's going up against a corrupt establishment. I've seen strikes starting up all over the world. The news is not saying a word about the businesses being in bed with the unions. The only place anybody's getting that information is the WSWWS.

"The politicians and all the major businesses are terrified of the movement that is growing in the rank and file. They want to brag about how many billions of dollars in profits they are making but they don't want to give up any of it to their employees. Wages don't even keep up with the cost of living.

"It's up to the rank-and-file committees to take action on their own. The evidence proves that the members of the union were disenfranchised. It's up to us to say, 'If you don't want to do anything about this crooked situation, then we will.'

"At Clarios they brought in scabs to work on batteries and the UAW forced their own members to work with the scabs that were in there when they were on strike. I cannot accept that. The rank-and-file committees around the world need to get people geared up to put a stop to this.

[Former UAW President] Ray Curry admitted there was rampant disenfranchisement of UAW members in the election. They need to get on television and call all UAW members to revote in a new election. The rank and file needs to get involved to get rid of the corruption in the UAW, in all the unions.

"The president had no right to get on and make the railroads go back to work. That was their right. And the president said no, you have to go back, then the unions with along with it. In France they are calling in the army. The people have every right to be upset, because the police are not God. The police are acting like they are above the law. The police [and] the military are given a free hand. And we're tired of it."

A Stellantis worker at MOPAR in Michigan said, "I read about the lawsuit. I'm happy that he did it. I wish they would create an all-in movement where the members can come together and let the company and the corporations know we see, we hear that our rights are being sold to both parties. It's time to end what I call Crop Sharing slavery!"

"The corporations, government and the union are all

in cahoots. The UAW is there to keep us in check. How are they allowing them to create all their own rules? We should all get together—power lies in the people. The UAW doesn't represent us. I am paying \$1,100 a year not to be represented. Everything is on the line right now. We are in a position where we have to fight."

A Toledo Dana worker citing the lawsuit's call to redo the election said, "I hope it happens, we need this."

A UAW member in Ohio said, "Good for Will! Nothing better than a leader showing backbone and not laying down and letting people get over on him. I really like it. We don't have to tolerate this stuff, we got to get the power back in the members and take it away from the international."

Another member of the Warren Truck Rank-and-File committee said, "I agree with Will, the election should be rerun. It was not fair, and the answer from the Labor Department is not good enough. They just don't care about our rights. They act like bullies, and have so much money and power, they think they're untouchable.

"But if we stick together and build these committees and do what's necessary, we can fight them. We're going to have to fight them just as ruthlessly as they fight us.

"They won't be able to ignore Will's lawsuit. I'm excited to see the outcome. It's ridiculous that Fain only got 6 percent of all the members' votes. It is good that Will is continuing to expose the UAW, we should do it every chance we get."



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