

Support grows among autoworkers for lawsuit demanding UAW elections be re-run: “This entire election needs to be tossed”

Marcus Day
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Autoworkers and auto parts workers are continuing to express their support for the lawsuit filed by Will Lehman Monday demanding the 2022 United Auto Workers national elections be re-run.

Lehman, a rank-and-file Mack Trucks worker and socialist candidate for president in the UAW’s national elections last year, sued the Biden administration’s Department of Labor (DOL). The previous Friday, the department had denied Lehman’s formal complaint against the UAW elections, which he argued were fraudulent and marred by widespread voter disenfranchisement.

Only a little over 100,000 ballots were counted out of a total eligible membership of 1.1 million in the election’s first round, a turnout of just 9 percent, and more ballots were returned as “undeliverable” than were actually tallied.

The DOL provided no explanation for its ruling and failed to respond to the evidence the complaint had compiled, including many statements submitted by other rank-and-file workers, Lehman argues in his suit. Moreover, the UAW monitor, nominally tasked with serving as an “independent” overseer of the union after a sprawling corruption scandal, in fact had blatant conflicts of interest, Lehman stated, and should therefore be removed. The two law firms that make up the monitor—Jenner & Block and Crowell & Moring—have a lengthy history as legal representatives for General Motors and other major corporations which have UAW contracts.

In an indication of the seriousness with which the lawsuit is being taken—and a recognition that Lehman’s campaign speaks for substantial sections of rank-and-file workers—several articles about it have appeared in

leading legal news outlets, including Bloomberg Law and Law360, which present Lehman’s arguments relatively objectively. Law360 quotes Lehman’s attorney, Eric Lee, who states, “The UAW election has revealed the total contempt with which all the institutions of government treat the rights of the working class in this country. The UAW bureaucracy set an embarrassing record for lowest turnout (9%) of any national union election in U.S. history because it wanted to deprive workers of the chance to kick them out of power.”

Similarly, a report earlier in the week by the *Detroit Free Press* states that “Lehman has been a vocal critic of the way the election was handled as well as the corruption scandal that set the stage for an agreement with the government that led to the election.” The article noted that this is the second federal lawsuit by Lehman, with the first “seeking at least an additional month to have ballots returned in the election in part because many UAW members said they had not received ballots.”

Significantly, while all the publications requested comments from representatives of the Department of Labor, the DOL did not respond.

Expressing his support for the suit, one UAW retiree wrote in the comments of the *Free Press* article, “As one of over 200,000 UAW retirees, out of the 400,000 that do not even have an open union hall to check on addresses being right, tens of thousands of us never received a ballot. To add insult to injury, we were not allowed to even run for international delegate, because we had no local to run in..... this entire election needs to be tossed... Many complained of receiving two ballots. Delays in voting, election fraud locally abound all over

the web pages... Emails, phone calls and complaints went unanswered by the UAW monitor group..”

Other auto parts and autoworkers in Ohio and Michigan who spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site* Friday also stated their agreement with Lehman’s case, with many reporting that they or their coworkers never received a ballot in the UAW elections.

A former Clarios battery worker in Ohio, where the new UAW administration of President Shawn Fain recently sold out a six-week strike, said about the suit, “This is the right thing to do. I was in the UAW for two years and never got a ballot. I heard they picked the guy they wanted without giving the members a vote. The election was a total fraud.”

An auto parts worker at Mayco—formerly Detroit Manufacturing Systems—noted, “They didn’t tell us about any election, I had no idea that there was one.” Commenting on the lawsuit, “This sounds like an important fight.”

Another Mayco worker said: “I agree with this 100 percent. Whatever I can do to help, count me in.”

A worker at the Dana Toledo Driveline plant in Ohio said they believed the Department of Labor would try to stonewall the suit and “drag this out. If someone stands up, that’s what they try to do.

“They didn’t have my ballot or send me the UAW magazine thing, nothing. We live in an ‘undesirable area.’ I sort of knew about the election but didn’t know when it was taking place. We didn’t know how to get a ballot! The UAW said if you get the UAW magazine, you’ll get the ballot. We didn’t get the magazines either.”

The UAW bureaucracy did not update the LUIS membership database systematically, the worker said. “In June, it was the first time I saw a union newsletter. I’ve been there four and a half years and was never informed about the election.”

At the Mack Assembly Complex in Detroit, a worker said he was skeptical about the courts ruling in Lehman’s favor, but said he agreed with Lehman’s fight to expose the suppression of workers’ rights by the UAW bureaucracy, saying, “I don’t think they will fix it, but it is still important that people see what is going on. That stuff has to stop. We had 5,500 people at my plant and most did not get a ballot. The UAW couldn’t explain why. That is one reason why a lot of workers now don’t like the UAW. They are too corrupt

and they don’t care if they are corrupt.”



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