

Vote “NO” on the UPS Tentative Agreement! Organize the rank-and-file to take matters into our own hands!

The UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee
28 July 2023

To join the UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee, or for more information, email upsrankandfilecommittee@gmail.com. Alternatively, fill out the form at this bottom of this article.

Brothers and sisters,

We are calling on all 340,000 of us to vote “no” on the tentative agreement and send it to the garbage where it belongs. It is a sellout that meets none of our demands:

- The new \$21 starting rate is not even close to enough. Because of market rate adjustments (MRAs), many of us already make more than this anyway. The deal also includes a second tier of all new part-time workers with a lower top rate than existing hires, a classic divide-and-conquer tactic;

- The \$7.50 general wage increase, spread out over 5 years, is inadequate and even below the rate of inflation for drivers. New drivers will also have an inadequate 4 year progression;

- Only \$400 more in monthly pensions for retirees in the IBT-UPS plan. In other regions, such as in the Western Conference and in Philadelphia, the company’s pension contributions will be frozen for the next five years;

- Only 7,500 new full-time jobs compared to nearly 200,000 part-timers, leaving part-timers waiting decades for the opportunity to move up;

- The deal continues the use of Uber-style personal vehicle drivers (PVDs) during peak season, the first step in eventually eliminating full-time drivers altogether;

- The deal on vehicle air conditioning applies only to new vehicles, meaning drivers on older trucks will be without AC for decades.

This is not a contract, it is an act of sabotage. All of the Teamster officials’ talk about striking by August 1 has turned out to be a lie. They never wanted to strike; they

only wanted to get out in front of us before we got out of their control. But we were serious from the start about striking. When we voted 97 percent to strike, that was not a suggestion—those were marching orders, which the bureaucracy has now violated.

The Teamsters bureaucracy paved the way for this by selling out the Yellow workers last week. They called off a strike, which would have started last Monday, in order to give the freight company time to pay its pension obligations. Instead, Yellow is taking the time to declare bankruptcy and lay off thousands of workers. The Teamsters sold out Yellow because a strike there, one week before the deadline at UPS, would have made announcing this rotten deal even harder.

The contract is also a strike ban in all but name. Last year, the Teamsters bureaucracy and their counterparts in other unions worked to sell out our brothers and sisters on the railroads and pave the way for a strike ban. No doubt, General President Sean O’Brien was making regular short trips between the bargaining table in Washington DC and the White House to get his marching orders like he was on the railroads.

The union officials are bragging that this is a \$30 billion contract. But we made UPS \$100 billion in revenue last year. We have been forced to work during the pandemic without even hazard pay, much less contact tracing and personal protective equipment, and hundreds of our coworkers have died for UPS’ profits—thanks to the Teamsters’ refusal to stop work even during major COVID surges.

This is the latest in a half century of sellouts, ever since the Teamsters first agreed to part-time work in the 1970s. But even then, a part-timer in 1978 made \$7.75 an hour. **That is equal to \$37.83 in today’s dollars.** \$21 per hour doesn’t come close to making us whole. Even with the

rise to \$23 in 2028, it will mostly be wiped out by inflation by the end of the contract. And at 3 to 4 hours a day, it still leaves part-timers in poverty. It also barely gives us better hourly wages than even nonunion Amazon, but with fewer hours.

But we are in the strongest position we have ever been. We are in the front line of the biggest working class movement in decades. A hundred thousand actors and writers are already on strike, and 150,000 autoworkers are following right behind. These workers are looking to us for leadership. We have to defeat this contract because we are responsible not just for ourselves, but to workers everywhere.

The bureaucrats in other unions are preparing to use the Teamsters' script to ram through their own sellouts. If the UPS contract is passed, it will play into the hands of the United Auto Workers officials when they announce a sellout in mid-September. Like O'Brien, UAW President Shawn Fain is a career bureaucrat who suddenly recast himself as a "reformer."

Therefore, UPS workers have no other choice but to take matters into our own hands. This contract, prepared for with months of lies, means that the Teamsters apparatus has lost the right to lead us. We call on our coworkers to join the UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee and form local committees at every hub.

We must establish what our demands are and enforce them by rejecting this and any other tentative agreement which falls short. The UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee calls for:

- A \$38 per hour starting wage for part-timers to bring us up to the level of 1978, and major wage improvements to the progression and top pay for full-time drivers;
- Adequate cost-of-living adjustments to deal with inflation;
- Massive increases to pensions and healthcare benefits;
- Tens of thousands of new full-time jobs, and the opportunity for all current part-timers to move up to full time;
- The immediate installation of air conditioning in all vehicles, and;
- The right to stop work in the event of an outbreak of COVID, poor air quality or other emergency.

Critically, we have to organize rank-and-file oversight of the vote. With Wall Street and the White House counting on getting this contract passed, the Teamsters will try everything to override our democratic will, including stuffing the ballot. Last year, hundreds of thousands of workers never even received ballots in many

critical union elections, including the contract votes on the railroads and in the United Auto Workers presidential election. While the Teamsters have eliminated the loophole they used to override the "no" vote in 2018, they have many other dirty tricks left up their sleeve.

But the bureaucrats will not see the light and come up with something better if we vote down the contract. They'll try to make us vote again, or worse, go to Biden to get an injunction. Therefore, the "no" vote must be the starting point for the rank-and-file to build alternative structures outside the control of the bureaucracy, to transfer power to the rank-and-file where it belongs.

The negotiating committee which bargained this deal must be thrown out and replaced with one composed of representatives chosen from, and accountable to, the rank-and-file only. The information blackout must end, with all future bargaining sessions being livestreamed and no more Non-Disclosure Agreements.

In our founding statement, we said:

Everything indicates that despite the public rhetoric, we are dealing with the same old Teamsters bureaucracy which violates our rights and enforces sellouts. The only response must be to organize ourselves—not to "support" the bargaining committee and to cheerlead for them, but to enforce our democratic will, and position ourselves to countermand the inevitable sellout. We must prepare action from below to impose the principle that the will of 340,000 UPS workers takes absolutely priority over everything else.

This has been proven right. If you agree, then join us. Contact us today by emailing upsrankandfilecommittee@gmail.com.



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