

# Ford and GM have only lost \$500 million from UAW's limited "stand-up strikes," according to Wall Street estimates

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*Join the next online meeting of the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network to discuss uniting workers for an all-out strike across the auto industry. Register here to attend.*

Anger is growing among rank-and-file autoworkers at Ford, General Motors and Stellantis over the fraudulent "stand-up strike" policy enforced by United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain. With just 25 percent of 146,000 autoworkers out on picket lines—and 75 percent ordered by the UAW to continue working without a contract—the UAW bureaucracy has deliberately ceded the upper hand to the auto bosses.

Ahead of its third-quarter earnings report, GM indicated that it will have lost just \$200 million in the three-month period due to "strike-related costs." GM will report its third-quarter profit results on October 24, and Ford will follow on October 26.

According to an estimate published by JP Morgan analyst Ryan Brinkman on Monday, the stand-up strikes have cost GM and Ford approximately \$500 million, equivalent to just 0.6 percent of the companies' combined second-quarter revenues. GM and Ford reported revenue of \$35 billion and \$45 billion in the second quarter respectively.

By comparison, the 2019 national GM strike cost the company nearly \$4 billion over a 40-day period, 20 times more than this year's strike, which is entering its 36th day on Friday.

The UAW's strategy has been designed to divide workers between strikers and non-strikers, temporary and full-time workers, and wear down their militancy in advance of announcing a sellout agreement.

However, opposition is building among the rank and file against the UAW's minimization of strike action.

"The strike is dragging on," a young worker at the Ford Chicago Assembly Plant told the WSWS, "but we are standing for a change. An all-out strike would be more effective, and this probably would end quicker. It would make the Big Three feel like it is do or die."

"I am the perfect example of why we're on strike. I've been at Ford for a couple years and I'm barely at \$20. For me, the strike pay of \$500 is about what I was getting paid anyway. So, when workers say it's tough to live on strike pay, well, that's what I'm going through all the time."

"That's not enough for the cost of living. I can't make ends meet in Chicago, where entry level rent is almost \$2,000 a month. That's what I make in a month after taxes, working 11 hours a day, four days a week for \$20 an hour. We voted to all go out. That would get results we want way quicker."

## Rank-and-file anger grows over UAW information blackout

The UAW announced Thursday that UAW President Shawn Fain would speak at a Facebook Live streaming event on Friday at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Workers flooded the UAW's announcement on its Facebook page with angry comments denouncing the lack of information about the negotiations and the union's refusals to call an all-out strike.

One worker wrote, "So much for this guy being transparent with negotiations. I was excited the first couple weeks with this new guy. ... It seems like he's intentionally dragging this out. Please give daily updates otherwise your intentions are muted or you're on vacation!"

Another wrote, "The most transparent administration in UAW history is not being very transparent. ... We are not getting even the most basic of information like ... when the company and IUAW are meeting. What days? How did they go? Where are we at in them?"

"The union knows..."

"The company knows..."

"Why is it being withheld from the membership?"

While the UAW bureaucracy is blocking an all-out strike, the auto companies have been aggressively attacking the jobs of the autoworkers who have been ordered to continue working.

On Friday, Stellantis said it was laying off 100 more employees at its Toledo Machining Plant in Ohio effective Monday, bringing total layoffs there to 170. Stellantis has now laid off a total of 1,530 workers in response to the limited strike.

The company said the machining plant, which has more than 400 workers, has reached its maximum inventory level for components supplied to the Toledo Assembly Complex, the facility where UAW members have been on strike since September 17.

**Stellantis Warren Truck: "Fain thinks we're just puppets, and he's pulling our strings. But he's playing with workers' livelihoods and families"**

Michelle, a Stellantis worker and member of the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee, told the WSWS, "What's the point of a strike when it's not hurting the companies, but it's hurting the workers. The companies are laughing at us."

"Fain thinks we're just puppets, and he's pulling our strings. But he's playing with workers' livelihoods and families. We need an all-out strike now. That is the only way to get the companies' attention, so they quit trying to get us to swallow these rotten contracts."

"We have to hit them in their pockets, where it hurts. All they care about is their money, not about us. Every plant, GM, Ford and Stellantis has to

be shut. We all should be with the Mack Trucks, casino and Blue Cross workers.

“The UAW is calling Detroit ‘strike city’ and held a rally for the casino and Blue Cross workers—but none of the auto factories are out on strike in Detroit because of this phony stand-up strike policy. These few strikes have cost the company millions, but they are still bringing in billions in revenue every quarter.

“This is bigger than the Big Three auto companies. It’s worldwide. CEOs are making millions, and workers are struggling just to live. Biden is in Israel backing the killing of thousands. What Biden is doing is leading to a world war. They think they’re going to take our kids to war—but we have to do everything to prevent that.”

Following the threats made by Bill Ford on Monday to shut down factories and carry out mass layoffs if workers do not accept the company’s terms, Ford Motor Company reported it had laid off another 150 workers at its axle plant in Sterling Heights, Michigan. Ford issued a statement late Wednesday saying, “This layoff is a consequence of the strike, because Sterling Axle Plant must reduce its production of parts that would normally be shipped to Kentucky Truck Plant.”

### **Ford Kentucky Truck: “All of us wanted to strike together on September 15”**

A young striking worker at the Ford Kentucky Truck Plant told the WSWS, “We’re trying to navigate through the strike. A lot of guys are looking to get a second job because it’s a real struggle on \$500 a week in strike pay.

“All of us wanted to strike together on September 15. But Fain had us do this another way. A lot of workers disagree and want an all-out strike to cut the companies’ money supply off. The contracts expired but only certain plants are out.

“When you’re a kid, you think getting a job at the Big Three was like hitting the lottery. But people are already living paycheck to paycheck. Even before the strike, hours were being cut, and people were being sent home.

“It’s especially bad for the temps. When I first got started, I was a temp for two years and you got three points. If you were late, they would take half a point; if you missed a day, it was a point. It’s hard and unfair.

“The cost of living in Louisville is very high. You pay \$1,500-\$1,700 for rent and utilities. Then you have car payments and insurance that cost \$600-700. You don’t have anything left for basic necessities. I’ve had days, especially at the end of the months, where I’ve hardly eaten. The \$500 a week in strike benefits doesn’t pay your bills.”

### **GM delays launch of EV pick-ups**

On Tuesday, General Motors said it will delay the launch of electric pickup production at the Orion Assembly plant near Detroit until late 2025, citing electric vehicle demand and the need for engineering upgrades. The company said the delay in starting output of the Chevrolet Silverado EV and GMC Sierra EV is not related to the UAW strike but “to better manage capital investment while aligning with evolving EV demand.”

However, with the jobs of approximately 1,000 autoworkers at Orion Assembly impacted by the EV delay, GM is clearly letting workers know that it intends to use the threat of job destruction that is being afforded by

the UAW refusal to call an all-out strike.

At the same time, GM announced on Wednesday that it is postponing its annual Investor Day scheduled for next month to focus on “reaching a new labor agreement” with the UAW. GM spokesman Jim Cain told the *Detroit Free Press* that the company informed investors last week that it would hold its investor day “in the first part of next year since our leadership team is currently focused on labor negotiations.”

Responding to the lack of information and progress in the contract negotiations and what the UAW officials are discussing there, a GM worker from the Flint Assembly plant posted in a local forum, “This working without a contract is very stressful for all of us. I’m a 2019 seniority employee and have never seen management do the things they are doing right now. I don’t think it’s right at all.

“Downtime is a big NO and sometime us operators can’t control that. Group leader and business manager are there asking questions and then telling us to let it go, don’t do repairs, just let it go down the line. ... Build those trucks fast and don’t stop that line or when the group leader is at our area scoping us out all night long. I feel intimidated when they do stuff like that.

“This has been going on since we started working with no contract. Line speeds have went up, they are all worried about the downtime and no training. They are winning right now and laughing at all of us. To me this isn’t funny. We need to put an end to this.”

### **“Negotiations” resume at Mack Trucks**

“Negotiations” between UAW officials and Mack Trucks were scheduled to resume on Thursday. Workers at Mack walked out on strike on October 9 after rejecting a contract that had been endorsed by the UAW leadership, including UAW President Fain.

As at the Big Three, Mack workers are increasingly dissatisfied over being kept in the dark about what is being discussed in the talks.

The Mack Trucks workers are fighting the attempt by the company and the UAW to force a contract on them that contains sub-inflation pay raises, lack of Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA), attacks on seniority and job security, extensions to the length of the work day and the establishment of an unprecedented five-year agreement.

The resumed negotiations began a few days after Fain went on a tour of the Mack Trucks plants in Pennsylvania and Maryland in an exercise in damage control. At UAW local meetings, Fain claimed he had been not properly informed about the content of the UAW’s sellout agreement at Mack before issuing his endorsement.

Also last weekend, Mack Trucks worker and 2022 UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman traveled to Detroit to build support for a united struggle of Mack and Big Three workers. Last week, the Mack Workers Rank-and-File Committee issued an open letter to Fain demanding the immediate expansion of the strike throughout the auto industry, as well rank-and-file control over contract talks and an increase in weekly strike pay to \$750.



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