

UAW shuts down Stellantis strikes after announcing tentative agreement

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Join the next meeting of the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network to discuss the implications of the UAW-Ford deal and how to organize to defeat the sellout. Register here to attend.

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On Saturday evening, the United Auto Workers announced a tentative agreement with Stellantis and ordered approximately 14,000 striking workers at the company to shut down their pickets and prepare to return to work.

The UAW leadership's order to end the strike before workers had either seen or voted on the deal followed a similar anti-democratic move at Ford, where the union announced a deal and shut down strikes on Wednesday. The four-and-a-half year tentative contract at Stellantis reportedly follows the pattern of the Ford sellout.

As it was pulling down picket lines at Stellantis Saturday, the UAW said it was expanding the strike against GM, calling out workers at the company's Spring Hill, Tennessee assembly plant. No contract has yet been agreed to with GM, despite earlier claims by the UAW of great progress.

In a Facebook livestream Saturday evening, UAW President Shawn Fain called the Stellantis deal another "great victory" in the UAW's "standup strikes," which have actually kept the vast majority of Big Three workers on the job, working without a contract and producing profits for the companies.

Even at their largest point last Tuesday, the UAW's "stand up strikes" only involved 40,000 workers, or roughly 27 percent of the UAW membership at the Big Three—less than the 46,000 workers who struck all of GM nationally in 2019.

The UAW Stellantis council is set to meet Thursday evening to rubber stamp the contract proposal, followed by a Facebook live event to unveil "highlights" of the

agreement.

Rich Boyer, UAW vice president for Stellantis, appeared with Fain and claimed the agreement provided for the reopening of the shuttered Belvidere Assembly Plant, but provided few other details. Boyer claimed that workers at Belvidere, including many who had relocated across the Midwest to other Stellantis plants at great personal cost, would be given the right to return. He also claimed that Stellantis had agreed to commit new products to the Trenton Engine and Toledo Machining facilities.

A new EV battery plant at the Belvidere complex was also announced, which the UAW claimed would employ 1,000 workers, who are almost certain to be at a new low-wage tier.

No timeline was given for the reopening of the assembly plant nor for the construction of the battery plant. The Belvidere plant has been idled since February, and the vast majority of workers have moved away or taken new jobs, with many having to sell their homes or leave their families behind.

Undoubtedly, corporate tax handouts potentially running into the billions have been promised to Stellantis, which used the idling of the plant essentially to extort incentives from the state. "Everyone from the governor's office to local and federal officials worked to put together an incentive package that Stellantis couldn't walk away from," Democratic Illinois Congressman Bill Foster told *Automotive News*.

Other than those commitments, the Stellantis deal appears similar to the UAW's sellout at Ford. It contains substandard pay increases, 25 percent over the life of the contract, a sub-inflation cost-of-living formula and abandonment of demands for the elimination of tiers, the abolition of temp work, the restoration of pensions, retiree healthcare and other concessions surrendered in 2009.

In one potential difference that would be highly

significant, the UAW did not claim to have won the promotion of all current temporary workers to full-time status at Stellantis, only promising “thousands” of conversions.

As the UAW seeks to ram through deals at the Big Three, Unifor is working towards a similar outcome for autoworkers in Canada. In advance of its contract expiration and strike deadline with Stellantis midnight Sunday, Unifor claimed “progress being made,” while it kept its members completely in the dark on the content of its discussions with management. Earlier this month, Unifor called a strike at GM and shut it down within 14 hours, later forcing through a pro-corporate agreement.

Meanwhile, opposition is building over the UAW’s tentative agreement with Ford. Fain and UAW Vice President for Ford Chuck Browning held a livestream in front of the UAW-Ford National Council Sunday to review the “highlights” of the Ford deal. Hundreds of workers flooded the comments on both the Facebook and YouTube livestreams with calls to reject the contract, with many referring to the deal as “garbage” or “trash.”

“Most people I’ve talked to are voting it down”

Just as at Ford, it has not taken long for anger over the UAW’s deal with Stellantis to erupt.

A MOPAR worker who had previously worked at Belvidere Assembly told the *World Socialist Web Site*: “Most people I’ve talked to are voting it down. We were already aware that once they brought the Ford deal the other two had a blueprint. It’s not good enough to vote it in, but they know how to play us against each other.”

She noted that the Toledo Jeep complex comprised the first plants the UAW took out on strike. At Toledo as well as the MOPAR facilities, “thousands came from Belvidere, so they had to move during inflation and pay way more for living, and they [the UAW officials] knew it wouldn’t take long for them to financially be hit hard and want to end the strike.

“Once the UAW saw financial fatigue, they hit two plants just less than one week before agreeing to a half-assed deal. Stellantis was happy they called out Sterling Heights because they weren’t selling the inventory they already had out. GM Arlington had over 200 days’ worth of inventory, so that wasn’t a major hit.

“The signing bonus is a joke! It’s so frustrating that we

didn’t get what we gave up and what we deserved, as this was the whole point that was sold to us.

“There’s so many people who sacrificed six to seven weeks of pay and will suffer beyond this sellout deal. A \$5,000 signing bonus isn’t even close to helping them make up or catch up with inflation and loss of major income. The sign-on bonus represents a race to the bottom for the ones building billions in profits for the CEOs, shareholders and union reps. They looked at us as slaves to gain their riches, and slaves we continued to be.

“They could have done just a little bit better to show us how important we are to them, but the union and the company showed us our lives aren’t worth a stable living, but just enough to get by, and now they’ll bring on all the forced overtime to take our quality of life away. Nothing changed.

“Sad, we all thought this was going to be historic. People referred to this as a game of chess. It is, and we are the pawns. The working class always will be given just enough to keep the economy afloat, but have to sacrifice our livelihood in doing so. We deserve better.”

A member of the Stellantis Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee said, “The TPTs [temporary part-time workers] are very angry. Shawn Fain sold us out and screwed us over. I am just disgusted. I hope everyone votes ‘no.’

“Fain must know that people are pissed off with him. He did not get one thing he said he would get.

“I only saw they were rolling over 3,200 TPTs at Stellantis to full-time. With all the TPTs at Mack Assembly, Sterling Heights Assembly and Warren Truck, that is nothing. That is a slap in the face. It means that not everyone is getting rolled over.

“The full-time workers will be pissed over the 25 percent. Fain went from 46 percent to 25 percent. That’s going to be huge for them.

“And how did they get away with adding another half year to the contract?

“The signing bonus of \$5,000, after you take out taxes, they might as well keep it. I have been on the Facebook pages, and people are saying Ford should vote ‘no.’ And on our contract, it is a ‘no’ vote too.”



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