

UAW claims ratification of Ford contract at Michigan Assembly after snap vote

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Without having adequate time to study the contract, workers at Ford's Michigan Assembly Plant (MAP) this week reportedly ratified the sellout deal negotiated by the United Auto Workers. According to posts on Facebook, the deal passed by 81 percent, but the UAW has not officially confirmed the result or released the number of workers who voted.

Despite Shawn Fain's claim that "the members decide," the vote was not the outcome of a free and fair ratification process, even assuming the vote count is accurate—and nothing can be taken for granted with no rank-and-file monitoring of the ballot counting procedure. The vote took place under the impact of a massive publicity barrage by the UAW, the corporate media and the Democratic Party, falsely claiming the contract agreement was "historic." In fact, the only thing "historic" about this contract is the degree of lying and cynicism being used to promote it.

It is clear that the UAW decided to have MAP vote first, since they were the first Ford workers to be called out in UAW President Shawn Fain's phony "stand up strike, and were facing the maximum economic pressure to vote "yes." Workers at MAP had been strung out on \$500 weekly strike pay from September 14 through October 25.

Workers at MAP were not given adequate time to review and discuss the details of the agreement and judge for themselves the reality of the "historic" gains. Even though Fain said no ratification votes would take place until locals held informational meetings where workers could ask questions and get answers about the deal, UAW Local 900 started the voting at 6 a.m. Wednesday, nine hours before the 3-6 p.m. "informational meetings" started.

There were many critical comments from MAP workers on Facebook. One wrote, "I'm saying this

contract is the same old garbage we always get."

Another pointed out, "One of the UAW sticking points was that members are working too much and need a better work-life balance. Where in the contract does it reflect that? Don't get mad at the messenger for stating facts. This contract does not show that workers are getting a better work-life balance."

Another posted, "The healthcare part alone is wrong & Retirement (different for everyone (tiers)), job security etc .. Geez read & compare !!!! They need to go back to the table now !! Not in four and a half years !!!!"

Another noted, "We would be making almost \$50 an hour if we didn't lose COLA in 2008. That's not even including the raises we lost. Now we have to wait four and a half more years just to get \$40 an hour."

The UAW has attempted to create a divide between full time and temp workers, by promising to convert all current temp workers to full time under the current agreement. But the contract betrays the pledge to eliminate temp work by allowing the company to work new temps for nine continuous months before converting them, a stipulation that management can easily evade by laying off and rehiring temp workers, restarting the conversion clock. And, similar to the GM deal, not all current temps with at least 90 days will be converted, only "temporary full-time" workers, not "temporary part-time" workers.

The vote took place as more information emerges that confirms the UAW-Ford agreement is a sellout that meets none of workers' demands and opens the door to a jobs massacre with the transition to electric vehicles. Even what has been published so far shows that the deal, which is similar to sellouts at Stellantis and General Motors, is a complete betrayal.

Significantly, the contract includes a passage that

ominously refers to workers at the Rouge Complex in Dearborn, Michigan, as “surplus.”

Ford executives have told Wall Street investors that they will more than make up any increases in wages by slashing jobs. One of the terms the UAW agreed to in the tentative contract sanctions a \$50,000 buyout for “legacy” workers. The aim is to reduce headcount and as well to shed older, higher-paid workers for low-paid temps and tiered workers.

The contract betrayed members demands for a 40-46 percent pay increase and the elimination of temporary work, tiers, the restoration of pensions and retiree health. Instead it provides a 25 percent pay raise over the life of a four-and-a-half-year contract and a grossly inadequate cost of living formula.

Having obtained a majority for ratification at MAP the UAW now hopes to bandwagon workers at other Ford plants into voting “yes.”

In a further indication of the farcical character of the “stand up strike” Ford, Stellantis and General Motors all reported a rise in inventories. According to a report in Market Watch “Inventory at Ford hovers at 70 days’ supply, or four more days than in September; GM’s is at 58 days, or nine days more month over month, and Stellantis’s is at 92 days, or 11 more days.”

A tier two worker from Dearborn Truck said he had never heard about having a vote during or right after a contract information meeting as the UAW did at MAP. “I’ve never heard of anything like calling a snap vote like that. It’s one of those things where the people were out there for so long and they were starving them out. Fain wanted to drag it out and make it hard. Basically, it’s a known tactic of the International union. They know that six weeks is about the time they need to make people ready to get back. They hope that by that time they’ll take anything. I’ve seen this movie before.

“Why else did they shut down plants with large inventory and not start with the big money-making plants?” the worker said.

Sales of the Ford Bronco, produced at MAP, were down 56 percent year-over-year. The result of the “stand up strike” was to assist Ford by helping to clear inventory of a slow selling vehicle.

In fact, the “stand up strike” at its peak only involved 46,000 workers at eight assembly plants and 38 parts warehouses across the nation. This out of a total of 146,000 autoworkers at the Big Three.

“I heard from someone on the bargaining committee that everything in this contract we had on Day 1. The UAW says they were playing hardball, but Fain wasn’t even talking pension. They claimed they were fighting for tier workers and temps, but most of those workers will be gone because of the workforce being cut due to EVs.

“Now they are telling us to wait another four and a half years to get pensions. It took me eight years to work up to full pay. I see nothing ‘historic’ in this contract. What is ‘historic’ about just getting back things we gave up?”



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