

Warren Truck workers accuse UAW officials of rigging vote to get Stellantis contract ratified

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15 November 2023

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Workers at the Warren Truck Assembly Plant are accusing United Auto Workers Local 140 officials of rigging the vote to get the UAW-Stellantis agreement ratified. The workers dismissed claims by local officials that 85 percent voted “yes” and only 335 workers out of the 2,188 workers who voted opposed the deal during the ratification vote on Monday. Similarly suspicious lopsided “yes” votes were announced by Local 869 officials at Warren Stamping and Local 1264 officials at Sterling Stamping.

The vote results at these three plants run counter to the accelerating trend of “no” votes on similar sellout deals at GM and Ford over the last week.

Workers at four General Motors assembly plants in Michigan, Tennessee and Kentucky have rejected the deal in recent days. In addition, GM workers at seven other metal stamping, engine and transmission plants in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and New York voted it down. Workers at the largest Ford UAW local also rejected it in Louisville, Kentucky. So concerned was the UAW about the outcome of the vote that both UAW President Shawn Fain and UAW Vice President for Stellantis Department Richard Boyer released Facebook videos last week to try to sell the deals.

“I don’t believe it,” David, a Warren Truck worker with 10 years at the plant said of the official results. “I’m glad that the GM workers are voting down this contract. That Stellantis deal mirrors or is even worse than the one at GM. There’s no way 85 percent of the workers at Warren Truck voted for it. I didn’t expect it to pass at all, especially when you saw all the people on social media saying they were going to vote ‘no.’”

“The way the local ran the vote was piss poor. They didn’t make any accommodation for the third shift who work midnights in the paint, final assembly and body shops. After workers complained on Facebook about the voting closing at 6 p.m., cutting them out, the local president posted a note

saying, ‘I apologize. We’ll do better next time.’”

“There was zero oversight over the ballots. You mark it with a pencil, which can be erased or turned into a ‘yes’ vote. There was very little documentation on who voted. It was just ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ No workers were watching them. It was just the elected officials who controlled the ballots.

“In 2023, why can’t we have a live opening of the ballots? They have Facebook Live things for everything else. Why not the counting of votes? This is not secret. There are no names on the ballots.”

David went on to talk about dubious practices in past votes. “They tried to stuff the ballots after we voted down the contract in 2015. In 2019, there was a record low turnout when the contract passed. This is not surprising with all the corruption.

“Remember Norwood Jewell, the UAW vice president who was bribed with a \$2,500 Italian shotgun and other luxuries to push through the 2015 contract? Sitting right next to him at the Local 140 union hall was his right-hand man, Shawn Fain. The place almost erupted into a fight when they tried to sell that rotten contract to us in 2015.

“The local leaders are no different. The union president Randall Pearson got elected in a rigged vote. They ran out of ballots and made people revote. He got more votes in the paint shop than there were workers. His cousin is the committeeman there. We call it the ‘Paint Shop Mafia.’ I don’t trust [UAW Secretary Treasurer Margaret] Mock either. She was on the bargaining committee when Jewell and Fain were trying to sell the contract.”

“I don’t believe it passed by 85 percent. It makes no sense. I know people wanted a new car, and the union officials gave workers what they wanted to a certain extent. But everything is up to the company’s discretion to take back. They can revoke the car lease offer. They can stop building new plants if ‘market conditions’ change.

“Worst of all, temporary workers have to have nine months of ‘continuous service’ to get rolled over to full

time. If they stop scheduling them or lay them off for 31 days, they will have to start all over. Even if they do roll you over, they can make you go to any plant in the ‘labor market area,’ like Toledo, to work.”

“We’ve been working seven 12-hour days on and off for two to three years. We’re getting written up and threatened for being late or missing work. They’re making the attendance policy stricter, but we’ve had six schedule changes, sometimes ending at 1, 2 or 4:30. We’ve got kids to get to school, and there is construction on the roads and bad parking when we get here.

“Stellantis is comparing our attendance numbers with Italy, Canada and other countries where workers have more time off, universal healthcare and other things. The first thing Fain took off the table was our 32-hour work week demand. When Boyer began trash-talking us about taking time off from work that turned even more people against this contract.

“I had a feeling, no matter what the outcome of voting was, they were going to pass this thing,” Michelle, a member of the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee, told the WWS. “Even if the majority voted ‘no’ they were going to come up with some rhyme or reason to say it was ratified. These ass-wipes have been getting away with this stuff for years.

“We were just fighting to get back what they took from us in 2009. Fain is a snake, but a lot of people trusted Rich Boyer, who came from Warren Truck. But now they see he’s on the other side. He came on Facebook last week denouncing us for using FMLA [Family and Medical Leave Act], saying we just don’t want to come to work. But they work us like dogs, scheduling us for mandatory overtime, and we have no time to spend with our families. I don’t blame anyone for using FMLA to get some time off.”

The UAW has a long and sordid history of stuffing ballots to get contracts passed. This includes the 2015 vote at UAW Local 600, when UAW officials claimed the contract passed at the Dearborn Truck Plant by 51.4 percent, or roughly 1,230 votes. The vote at Local 600, which was organized at the very end of the ratification process, gave the UAW bureaucracy just enough votes to “ratify” the deal, which had been headed to defeat.

In 2021, the UAW claimed that a revote on a tentative agreement previously rejected by striking workers at Volvo Trucks New River Valley in Dublin, Virginia was passed by 17 votes out of the 2,369 votes cast. Workers immediately went to social media accusing the UAW of fraud and ballot-rigging, with others calling for either a recount or another vote.

During the 2022-23 UAW election, the union apparatus did everything to suppress the vote by UAW members,

resulting in the lowest turnout for any major union in US history. Will Lehman, a Mack Trucks worker and socialist candidate for UAW president in the first round of the election, filed a federal lawsuit exposing the systematic disenfranchisement of union members by the UAW bureaucracy, which refused to update mailing addresses and inform members about the election. Lehman has demanded a rerun of the election so all members can participate.

Warren Truck, Warren Stamping and Sterling Stamping workers must demand to know: What was the “chain of custody” for the ballots, i.e., who was in control of the ballots at each point? How was the security and integrity of the ballots maintained? Was there anything to prevent the tossing out of “no” votes and the adding of “yes” votes?

Michelle urged workers to join the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee, help expose the vote fraud and fight for a revote on the contract, with full oversight by an elected committee of trusted rank-and-file workers. “A lot of us don’t have the access and time to get the information we need, but through the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committees Network we can get the truth, organize and fight for our rights.”

She summed up the battle that workers are facing. “Whether it is war or this contract, the common dominator is greed,” she said. “How much money do these people need? I can’t watch the babies dying in Gaza. It saddens me because that could be our children, our babies. On top of that, the US president is all for this. They are willing to sacrifice whomever they want for oil, land and profits. It’s going to be a hard fight, but it’s time workers all over the world get together to stop this.”

To contact the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee, phone or text 248-919-8448.



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