

UAW reportedly planning to announce GM deal “ratified,” despite massive “no” votes and suspicions of ballot fraud

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According to media reports, the United Auto Workers bureaucracy is planning to announce that its tentative agreement with General Motors has been “ratified,” in the face of mounting rank-and-file opposition and widespread suspicion of ballot fraud.

As of this writing, the official ratification tracker on the UAW’s website claims that a narrow margin of production workers have voted to support the contract, with 14,792 voting “yes” and 12,577 voting “no.” There are clearly errors and irregularities in the tally itself, however, as the UAW is claiming that 57.02 percent of the workers have supported the deal and 48.48 percent have rejected it, a mathematical impossibility. The raw numbers would indicate that 54 percent of workers have approved the deal so far, which is itself highly suspicious and significantly above what was being reported earlier in the evening.

The gap is 1,181 votes among the 4,423 skilled trades workers, who have voted 2,802-1,621 to approve the deal. According to the UAW Constitution, each section of workers must approve the deal by a simple majority to ratify it, although the UAW pushed through a GM deal in 2015 despite a 60-40 percent “no” vote by skilled trades workers.

Significantly, the UAW tracker does not include the vote totals from GM’s Lansing Delta Township Assembly Plant in Michigan, where production workers voted down the deal by 63-37 percent, and skilled trades rejected it by 61-39 percent during ratification votes Monday and Tuesday.

The *World Socialist Web Site* urges rank-and-file workers to reject any effort to declare the contract ratified without a full auditing and review of the ballots by the rank and file. A revote, under the supervision of rank-and-file committees, must be conducted at any plants where there are irregularities.

On Wednesday morning, prominent news outlets, including Reuters, were reporting that the GM deal was clearly headed for defeat, after seven of GM’s 11 assembly plants voted it down over the last week. Then suddenly the UAW announced a series of substantial “yes” votes.

“The vote is suspicious to all of us,” one worker at Lansing Delta told the *World Socialist Web Site*. “Most of the people

are against the contract and mad about the lack of work-life balance and not giving us back the pensions and retiree health benefits we lost in 2009.”

Another worker said, “We only have the percentages, give us the details. On Facebook someone posted that the International UAW can afford to come into the plant to push the contract but can’t pay us more. They don’t know what they’ll do if it gets voted down. I mean they ‘worked so hard for this with months of negotiating.’ How come everyone is saying ‘no’? We didn’t fall for your crapola this time. They dangled the carrot to hope it would pass.”

Another Lansing Delta worker added, “Fain said he would do this and that and bring a ‘historic’ contract. It would be more ‘historic’ if it’s voted down. Some say even if we vote it down, the UAW will pass it. There’s no faith in the UAW; everyone says they’re no better than before. Fain came off big and bad, and now people are seeing through it.”

As the list of plants that rejected the deal increased this week—including assembly, engine, foundry, powertrain and metal stamping plants in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan and New York—the UAW bureaucracy scrambled to manufacture as many “yes” votes by hook or crook to get the deal passed. On Wednesday morning, UAW Local 272 suddenly announced that the deal had passed at the Arlington, Texas, assembly plant by 60-40 percent among production workers and 61-39 percent among skilled trades workers.

A report in the *Detroit Free Press* Wednesday afternoon quotes an unnamed UAW source saying that the Arlington vote “put us over the top.”

The effort to impose the deal on 45,000 GM workers comes as the UAW bureaucracy rammed through its shot-gun contract on 4,000 striking workers at Mack Trucks in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Florida on Wednesday. Local union officials, with UAW President Shawn Fain behind them, told workers that the company would bring in strikebreakers to replace them if they voted down the UAW-backed deal again.

In addition to its routine lies, threats and vote-rigging, the UAW bureaucracy is likely violating labor laws to stack up its “yes” votes. This is particularly the case when it comes to the

1,263 votes for the agreement at the Ultium Cells electric vehicle battery plant in Lordstown, Ohio, where UAW Local 1112 reported that 97 percent of the workers voted for the deal.

Under the tentative deal, UAW President Shawn Fain has said that the 1,750 UAW members at the plant—a joint venture between GM and South Korea-based LG Energy—will become GM employees and be covered by the UAW national master agreement.

But how can these workers vote on the contract if they are not GM employees yet?

Ultium Cells employees cannot become GM workers before the effective date of the UAW-GM tentative agreement. As the contract specifies, the contract does not become effective until the UAW membership at General Motors ratifies it. That means the 1,263 “yes” votes at the plant are completely illegitimate.

The UAW and GM executives try to get around their dilemma by stating, on page 300, that “These [Ultium Cells (UC)] employees will participate in the ratification of the 2023 UAW-GM National Agreement, receive the signing bonus upon ratification and will utilize their UC hire date as the start of seniority upon transition to a direct GM employee.”

This is also the case when it comes to the approximately 1,000 UAW members who are employed by GM Subsystems Manufacturing LLC, a wholly owned GM subsidiary. The UAW allowed GM to form the company as part of the 2009 concessions to do material handling and other tasks for half the wages of GM workers they were replacing. The GM Subsystems workers’ contract expired on September 14, along with the contracts for 146,000 GM, Ford and Stellantis workers. After keeping them on the job for two months, the UAW told GM Subsystems workers they would be added to the national agreement and brought up to GM workers’ wages upon ratification.

But like the Ultium workers, the GM Subsystems workers have been allowed to vote on UAW-GM contract even though they are not currently GM workers.

The UAW bureaucracy has exploited the economic insecurity of both the Ultium and the GM Subsystems workers—for which it is chiefly responsible—to get a large and illegitimate “yes” vote to help to ram through its sellout agreement.

Commenting of these methods, a temporary part-time worker at the Flint GM Assembly Plant said, “I can’t trust anything that comes from UAW. Shawn Fain lied to our faces about this ‘historic’ deal, only to have it fall apart within hours. If he can lie about something as big as temps, he’s prepared to lie about this contract in totality. His credibility and the credibility of this union is gone. The ‘no’ votes should tell you everything you need to know about how GM’s rank and file feels about this contract.”

The UAW bureaucracy is employing the same methods to push through rotten contracts at Ford and Stellantis. Over the last several days, UAW officials have announced large “yes” votes at several major factories in the metro Detroit area,

including Warren Truck and Sterling Heights assembly and stamping plants.

Workers have denounced UAW officials for stuffing the ballot, particularly at the Warren Truck plant, where the UAW claims only 335 out of 2,188 workers who voted cast “no” ballots.

In voting on Wednesday, however, Jeep workers at the Stellantis Toledo Assembly Complex in Ohio decisively rejected the sellout deal, voting it down by 55-45 percent.

“With this contract the UAW cooked up for a set and spike [volleyball] but they got a spike straight back,” a member of the Toledo Jeep Rank-and-File Committee told the WSWS. “A massive propaganda campaign was launched by the UAW bureaucracy against their own members.

“They joined hands with Stellantis in an ever growing dictatorship to undermine the rank and file who are just fighting for lost wages, lost time with family and lost time invested in these vehicles, which we will never get back even as we sacrifice our bodies on a daily basis.

“When workers throw down the cliché rhetoric from Fain and the rest of the UAW apparatus and put the power in the hands of the workers on the shop floor, then and only then, we can win a ‘historic contract.’”

A member of the Ford Rouge Workers Rank-and-File Committee told the WSWS, “I guarantee you that they stuff the ballot box! If they had let this contract go down to defeat, everything that Fain was trying to do would be null and void. He was at the White House. The UAW is backing the war, and they are backing Biden big-time. We should really challenge the conduct of the balloting. They should have to conduct another vote.

“They told the workers at Mack Trucks, ‘Take this or you’re out of a job.’ What happened to the democratic principle that the people have the right to decide? We should absolutely revote! These contracts are all the same. The UAW already signed off on it, and they have the president backing it.”



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