

“I guarantee you that they stuff the ballot box!”: Michigan autoworkers speak out against UAW contract “ratification”

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Autoworkers contacted by the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter* voiced strong opposition to the methods used by the United Auto Workers to ram through sellout agreements at Ford, General Motors and Stellantis.

The UAW claimed ratification of the GM agreement Thursday by a margin of 54.7 percent “yes” to 45.3 percent “no,” amid allegations by workers of voting irregularities. In recent days, workers at major GM assembly plants had voted against the deal by increasingly large margins, before the UAW announced several lopsided “yes” votes, including at Ultium Cells in Lordstown, Ohio, where workers were not even GM employees at the time of the vote.

Workers at the Ford Rouge complex in Dearborn, Michigan, were voting Thursday on the contract, the last major facility to cast ballots. The UAW is expected to announce results for Ford and Stellantis in the coming days.

A supporter of the Ford Rouge Rank and File Committee told the *World Socialist Web Site*, “I guarantee you that they stuff the ballot box! The reason workers are voting against it is that we have to wait four and a half years to get the raise. Then there are the retirees; they got nothing. A lot of people are not happy with the contract. We know our worth.”

The UAW has claimed that the contracts at Ford and Stellantis have been garnering larger approval, albeit with still significant opposition. At Ford, the UAW was reporting an overall 66.7 percent “yes” and 33.7 percent “no” on Thursday. The largest opposition was recorded at the Kentucky Truck Plant and Louisville

Assembly, with 57 percent and 50 percent of production workers voting “no” respectively. Production workers at Chicago Assembly and Kansas City Assembly voted “no” by more than 45 percent at each plant. Vote totals for workers at the Rouge complex, including Dearborn Truck, Dearborn Stamping and Dearborn Engine, had not been released at the time of this writing.

“The UAW rushed Michigan Assembly Plant to vote before they could even look at the tentative agreement,” he said. Workers at MAP were the first to be called out on the phony “stand up” strike conducted by UAW President Shawn Fain. “They were all strung out on the picket line for six weeks for a lousy \$500 a week. And half the plant was on unemployment, getting less than that.

“At the Dearborn Truck Plant, they were not even asking for identification” before voting, he said. “I have been in the industry for 30 years and I have never seen anything like it. The rank and file have to get control of the process. We have to be watching over the election and the voting. When you have suspicions of corruption, you have to change the way you do it.

“We had to vote at this little table in the entrance to the body shop at Dearborn Truck. There was no privacy. Management was walking through the same entrance, and the cameras could see everything we were doing. Management was able to see how we were voting. Where is the privacy? That was intimidating people who were voting. Look at how small the voting area was.

“They had this little table with two lines based on your last name and two people sitting there who were asking your last name.

“We had voted for an election committee to keep the integrity of our elections, but they did not use those people on that day. They had officials appointed by the union doing the job that the election committee should have done.

“If they had let this contract go down to defeat, everything that Fain was trying to do would have been null and void. Fain was at the White House, the UAW is backing the war, and they are backing Biden big-time. The UAW already signed off on it and they have the president backing it. We should really challenge the conduct of the ballot. They should have to hold another vote.

“Now they are telling 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.”

A part-time temporary worker at the Flint Assembly Plant said, “Lots of workers here have been really angry at what’s in the agreement. Pretty much all the temps I’ve spoken to are part-time, and they especially hate it cause they are being left to rot with no guaranteed future. We don’t really have any way to be hired in and are getting a few dollars’ wage increase, which doesn’t come close to matching the inflation rate. We’re stuck in the same position we were in before this, with a few meaningless, token changes.”

The worker added, “Our ‘no’ vote definitely showed workers at the other plants that there is opposition to the contract and we can vote ‘no’. Even with all the lies Fain cooked up and the pressures from the union, we still voted it down.

“I don’t trust for one second that the union is telling the truth about the contract passing. The whole union leadership is corrupt and illegitimate! Fain and the rest were installed though a rigged election in the first place! They have every reason to lie to us, as they have throughout this whole contract battle.

“Fain and the union bureaucrats want us to go back to work to keep making profits for the companies. That was their plan from the start. Starve and wear us down as much as possible to force us to vote for a sellout contract. The rank and file never had a say in the official negotiations. We were left isolated and kept working without a contract during the whole phony stand up strike.

“They’re trying to count votes from workers in GM Subsystems and the Ultium battery plants now too, who aren’t even official GM workers yet.”



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