

UAW pushes second sellout contract at Allison Transmission, after defying unanimous strike vote

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Work at Allison Transmission? Fill out the form at the end to tell us what you think of the contract. We will protect your anonymity.

The United Auto Workers is forcing 1,500 Allison Transmission workers in Indianapolis, Indiana, to vote on a four-year contract proposal next week, a little over a month after the rank and file voted down the UAW's first version of the sellout deal by 96.2 percent. This Friday, UAW Local 933 is holding "explanation meetings" where UAW International and local union officials will try to sell their deal with the same half-truths, outright lies and threats they used the last time. Their plan is to rush through a vote on Tuesday, January 16, before workers have had time to study and discuss the 139-page white book—which itself is not the full contract, but only the pages the UAW claims have changed.

From the beginning, the UAW bureaucracy—from President Shawn Fain and Region 2B Director David Green to Plant Chairman George Freeman and the rest of the Local 933 officials—have shown nothing but contempt for democratic rights and the will of rank-and-file workers. Their chief concern was preventing a strike that would undermine the profits of Allison's wealthy shareholders and disrupt the delivery of military equipment for Biden's escalating war plans.

The UAW has claimed the contract contains "historic" wage gains. A review of the contract white book and previous contracts show this is sophistry.

There has been a massive decline in real wages over the past 15 years, which the contract will not make up for. Top pay for the "assemblers, skilled" job classification would rise to \$31.92 upon ratification, and \$35.93 at the end of the contract. But in 2012 (four years after the UAW accepted the tier system at Allison), workers in this job classification were making \$29.83—\$39.83 in inflation adjusted dollars. In other words, the UAW's "historic" wage gains will not make up for the wage cuts it previously agreed to, and workers' living standards will remain far behind where they were 10-15 years ago.

The UAW's other claims about the agreement are similarly bogus:

- While claiming to end tiers by the end of the contract, there will be a four-year "progression" to top pay. A number of workers commented angrily on the UAW's announcement on Facebook, with one noting, "Progressions = Tiers." Several classifications, including oilers and material services hired before 2008, will only

be receiving lump sum payments "in lieu of wage increases."

Lastly, the UAW states in a footnote that the progression length is "pending finalization of merged wage schedule," raising further serious questions over what exactly the final contract will entail.

- Starting pay would be set at just \$20-22 an hour. According to the Living Wage Calculator, a worker in a household with two working adults and a single child needs to make at least \$32.06 an hour to keep up with living expenses in the Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson Metropolitan Area. The new poverty starting wage will only ensure that the high turnover rate persists and that existing workers will continue to work exhausting and dangerous hours. Aware that the starting wage will likely be far from sufficient to attract adequate numbers of workers, the UAW granted Allison the unilateral right to raise starting pay at "its discretion" over the course of the contract.

- Wage rates for older workers are not much better. Top wages will only rise by 19 percent over the life of the contract, 10 percent upon ratification and 3 percent over each of the next four years. This will not make up for the 22 percent in real wages workers lost due to record inflation since the last contract, let alone the nearly two-decade-long freeze in real wages the UAW accepted in contract after contract.

- Workers have not gotten full cost of living protections back. Instead, the UAW has agreed to a "hybrid COLA" formula and "income protection" payments that are not pegged to real cost-of-living increases.

- Like the first contract workers rejected, the UAW has opened the door to "Alternative Work Schedules," which have entailed the destruction of the eight-hour day throughout much of the Big Three. The UAW claims that the schedule would only be implemented on a "pilot" basis should a department "vote" to accept it.

- Memorandum of Understanding on Plant 14, also in the previous tentative agreement, grants Allison virtually unlimited rights to dispose of the workforce as it sees fit, as it seeks to maintain the supply of tanks for the US military, especially to continue prosecuting the US-backed war in Ukraine and plans for war against China.

- Finally, the \$7,000 signing bonus includes the \$1,000 Christmas bonus previously withheld from workers by

management, and it will be taxed and subject to other deductions, including UAW dues payments. As workers have come to learn, moreover, the bigger the bonus, the bigger the sellout.

“Most people aren’t happy with it”

Opposition is already growing among workers to the agreement. “Most people aren’t happy with it especially the alternative work schedules,” one Allison worker told the WSWS.

Nothing that Fain, Green, Freeman or any other bureaucrat says can be taken as the truth. Fain told the workers at the Big Three that they got “record contracts” too. It was only a matter of days before these lies were exposed. Temporary workers who were promised to be converted to full-time positions have been laid off. Promises of discounted car leases, paid paternity leave, and less punitive attendance policies have never materialized. Above all, the contract has given the companies a green light to lay off thousands of workers as they convert to electric vehicle production and go on a further cost-cutting spree, more than making up for any meager pay increases in the contract.

Fain claimed the UAW “squeezed every dime” from GM, Ford and Stellantis with his bogus “stand up strike,” which kept the majority of the workers on the job producing company profits. Throughout, Fain and top UAW officials were in near-daily communication with the Biden administration.

Within days of the ratification, GM announced a record \$10 billion stock buyback program for its investors, which will cost the company more than the \$9.3 billion in additional costs for the entire four-and-a-half-year contract.

If that is the contract that the UAW produced for Big Three workers, can anybody believe Allison was forced to give up a “historic” contract without a strike?

While suppressing strike action, Local 933 Chairman Freeman claimed, “We checked nearly every box. No deal is perfect, but this one comes damn close.” The UAW bureaucracy must think workers are idiots. Their PR department churns out slick videos noting the miserable conditions workers have suffered during the pandemic, the backbreaking work schedules, lost pensions, decades-long pay freezes, and the refusal of workers to accept another pro-company contract. But the videos never say that *these are the conditions that the UAW bureaucracy accepted*, and that the rotten contract proposal that workers rejected on December 1 was negotiated by Fain, Green, Freeman & Co.

On social media workers have denounced the sellout agreement. “‘Progression’ is just another word for tiers. I’ve watched everything be given away or sold out for years and I’d love to see things get brought back that made this job one of the best places to work,” one said.

Since Allison is one of the fundamental military contractors, there is little doubt that Fain and the Biden administration are again in close discussion about pushing through another sellout agreement so as not to disrupt military production for the expanding US wars. Allison Transmission was awarded a \$51

million contract to support Abrams tank production for the US Army. The company also partners with the military for the production of Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles and the XM30 Combat Vehicle.

Vote NO on the UAW’s second sellout agreement!

For Allison Transmission workers to defend their interests, a campaign must be organized for a massive no vote on the UAW’s sellout agreement. As a seniority worker told the WSWS Autoworker Newsletter, “Absolute NO vote. Most skilled trades say no.”

However, as long as the contract process is left in the hands of the UAW bureaucracy, they will continue to bring back one pro-company contract after another, as demonstrated at Mack Trucks, Clarios, Lear, and other companies last year. Allison Transmission workers must take control out of the hands of the UAW bureaucracy and broaden this struggle to their coworkers at GM Marion, Stellantis Kokomo, GM Fort Wayne and others.

In their founding statement, the Rank-and-File Committee of Allison Transmission Workers called for:

- **Kick out the bargaining committee and Region 2B Director David Green, and replace them with a committee of trusted militants, elected by the rank and file.**

- **Hold emergency meetings of rank-and-file Allison workers to begin preparation for a strike. Workers must uphold the principle, No Contract, No Work!**

To contact the Rank-and-File Committee of Allison Transmission Workers, fill out the form below.



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