

# “If they can do this to SEs, they can do it to full-timers”: Stellantis temporary workers appeal for support to fight UAW-backed mass firings

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*The Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network and the World Socialist Web Site are holding an emergency online meeting this Saturday, January 20, at 1 p.m. Eastern / 12 p.m. Central to discuss how to organize to stop mass layoffs in the auto industry. Register here.*

Supplemental employees (SEs) at Stellantis are appealing to full-time workers in the factories to fight the termination of hundreds of SEs last week. On January 12, with no prior notice, 539 SEs, also known as temporary workers, were permanently fired in Metro Detroit and Kokomo, Indiana, and told their medical insurance would be cut off by the end of the month.

According to reports the WSWs has received from workers, another 100 SEs were fired at the Indiana Transmission Plant in Kokomo on Tuesday with more mass firings taking place later this week.

The termination of the SEs, many of whom are younger and single-parent workers, were carried out with the full complicity of the UAW bureaucracy. UAW President Shawn Fain and Vice President Rich Boyer told these workers they would be converted to full-time status after nine months of service if their proposed labor agreement was ratified. But this was only a ruse to get the pro-company deal passed. Fain & Co. knew full well the company would fire thousands of SEs before they were rolled over.

In a January 13 letter to local union presidents, UAW Vice President Boyer admitted even more job cuts are on the way, declaring, “There will be a significant reduction of roughly 1,600 SEs that will take place within the next few months, if not in lesser time.”

There were 5,291 SEs employed by Stellantis as of November 20, 2023, according to Boyer’s letter. The company agreed to covert 1,957 company wide, plus an additional 900 at the Toledo Assembly Plant, he said.

This means the UAW gave Stellantis the green light to fire 2,434 workers, or nearly half of the SEs. To add insult to injury, the 900 Toledo SEs scheduled to be rolled over will be

immediately laid off as part of 1,200 job cuts at the plant next month, with few prospects of being recalled for months or even years.

In addition, as many as 2,465 full-time workers at the Detroit Assembly Complex-Mack are being temporarily laid off next month, although these job cuts could become permanent if the company eliminates the third shift.

**“This should be called the most deceiving contract in UAW history!”**

“The number that Stellantis admitted to as far as the number of people being laid off is way off,” a full-time worker at the MOPAR parts distribution center in the Detroit suburb of Centerline said. “They are laying off 3,800 from Toledo and Mack, on top of the SE cuts just announced there are still those laid off at Belvidere, at least 1,700, and those at Centerline that are on short work week that may happen through March. This should be called the most deceiving contract in UAW history! We still have surprises ahead!”

Underscoring the desperate conditions fired SEs face, a worker at the Warren Truck plant in suburban Detroit, where 171 SEs are being let go, told the WSWs, “I have four kids and I live in my car. I needed my job at WTAP so I can finally get us a house and it’s all over. Please help. I was hired in permanent at UPS and lost it when WTAP put me on the schedule, and I got hope to get rolled. Now I have nothing.”

The job cuts have provoked a firestorm of opposition from SEs, who have denounced Fain and other UAW officials for lying to them. A WSWs article which broke the story has been read and shared by workers on social media more than 20,000 times. Fired supplemental workers have also given interviews to local Detroit news outlets.

Hannah, a fired SE and member of the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee, told the WSWS, “The UAW had the audacity to lie and act like they were fighting for us. We were the lowest paid workers, and they took our dues every time. They took out the largest sum from our signing bonuses too. But we had no protection.

“This was a premeditated attack,” she continued, “and the union did nothing. Fain and the union reps in the shop were hyping us, telling us we were going to get rolled over to full time. You have workers doing two jobs to survive and our hopes and dreams were tied up in getting a full-time job.”

She continued, “The full-timers are not safe either. The wrath is going to be unleashed on them now that they don’t have SEs to work 12-hours, six and seven days a week. We are all in the same fight and the quicker we can unify, the quicker we can hold them accountable and get what we want.

“The ‘Stand Up’ strike was BS. It deprived us of the right to strike. We should have all been out together to hit them where it hurts. The union and the company will continue to get away with this until we stop them. Right now, there is a lot of anger, but we need to connect, unite and have the facts. Otherwise, we’re just going to sit around and be angry.”

A member of the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee told the WSWS, “These workers have families, they have medical bills, and now they’ve lost their jobs. The company did it right after the holidays, when workers build up debt and expect to work it off. If they did it to the SEs, we, the full-timers, are next.

“I remember before the contract was passed the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network warned that they were going to fire the SEs and that this was going to happen to full-timers too. It has taken only two months to show we were right.”

### **Kokomo, Indiana: “If I don’t get another job, we’ll have to sell our home”**

A fired SE at the Indiana Transmission Plant in Kokomo, Indiana, told the WSWS that as many as 100 SEs were fired in her plant on Tuesday. “I found out when I went to my employee dashboard, and I couldn’t get in. I went to Human Resources, and they said I was fired. They claimed it was either work performance or absenteeism. I have never missed a day of work and my work performance is great. I make my cycle time, which is 43 seconds. There is no way I could mess it up. A computer reads what I am doing. In fact, I’ve been asked to help on other jobs.

“My husband’s disability check is getting cut and I am only collecting unemployment of \$306 a week. If I don’t get another job, we’ll have to sell our home,” she said.

During local union meetings in Kokomo on Tuesday, UAW Local 685 officials claimed they knew nothing about the planned firings, she said, with local union officials saying the UAW International knew this was coming and got the local union official to do their “dirty work” in pushing the contract.

Asked about Fain’s phony “stand up” strike, she said, “We should have all walked out at the same time. We make between 500-600 transmissions a shift, so that’s 1,500 per day. So, two weeks into the strike, we gave them 22,500 transmissions. How is that hurting the company?”

During a Martin Luther King event in Detroit on Monday, Fain was silent on the mass firings. He joined with Democratic Congresswomen Rashida Tlaib and Debbie Dingell in praising the UAW contracts as a “historic victory” for workers, even though they pave the way for the greatest job cuts in decades as the industry converts to electric vehicle production at the expense of workers’ jobs and wages.

In a Facebook Livestream event Tuesday, Fain said, “We got the company to roll over 3,000 SEs, giving them life-changing raises and benefits” and claimed the company made the unilateral decision to fire them.

SEs posted dozens of angry comments while he spoke. A typical one said, “How can I really say we won when 550 of my supplemental brothers and sisters just got fired through no fault of their own, with more to come. I can’t possibly look one of those brothers and sisters in the face and say we won, while they’re out on the street looking for a job in this 5-10 degree weather.”

Flummoxed by the outpouring of support for the SEs, Fain angrily responded, “The company chose to lay off the workers, we did not authorize it. The union doesn’t lay people off. Boyer is working hard to address this.”

In fact, the UAW bureaucracy will do nothing to defend SEs or any other workers. That is why the network of autoworkers rank-and-file committees, including at the Warren Truck plant, must be expanded to unite SEs and full-time workers to wage a common fight to defend all jobs.



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