

Stellantis threatens more job cuts at Warren Truck in wake of mass firings

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After Stellantis terminated 171 temporary workers at its Warren Truck Assembly Plant in suburban Detroit, management is “surveying the plant for downsizing,” according to United Auto Workers Local 140.

In a letter dated February 8, Local 140 President Randall Pearson wrote that the facility will be going from “300,000 units per year down to 89,000 units per year” following the projected end of production of the Dodge Ram pickup truck this year. The only vehicle slated to be built at the plant after this will be the Jeep Wagoneer and Grand Wagoneer, which have much lower sales volume.

In the same letter, Local 140 also announced the start of a new attendance policy where workers must call in at least one hour before the start of their shift to report a personal day, an absence or a tardy. Workers are angry that they are also now being forced to use vacation days and personal days before taking time off under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which allows up to 12 unpaid weeks of medical leave per year for issues such as sickness or childbirth.

The announcement of more cuts has further enraged workers at Warren Truck, as it sheds more light on the depth of the betrayal carried out by the UAW apparatus in pushing through the “historic” 2023 national auto contract. In fact the only thing “historic” is the cynicism of the UAW leadership.

One of management’s goals is to more easily force out older, higher-seniority workers through buyouts or early retirement in order to bring in low seniority and temporary workers (known at Stellantis as “supplemental employees,” or SEs) that can be more efficiently exploited.

The cuts at Warren Truck are part of a broader wave of layoffs and mass terminations by Stellantis and the other carmakers in the wake of the signing of the

national UAW-Big Three contracts. The UAW had claimed that the deals would entail the conversion of thousands of SEs to full-time employment status. These lies have been quickly exposed.

In recent weeks, Stellantis announced mass job cuts, including the summary firing on January 12 of 539 SEs in the Metro Detroit area and Kokomo, Indiana. Soon after, the UAW revealed that up to 1,600 additional Stellantis SEs would be fired across the US.

On February 2, Stellantis laid off 2,245 workers at the Stellantis Detroit Assembly Complex-Mack plant, including 700 SEs, with the elimination of the third shift.

A SE with six months at the Mack assembly plant said, “They released me a few days ago. They gave no real reason. They terminated a lot of people. We were under the impression we would get full time based on seniority. People who had many years got terminated.

“They have done a whole lot of bad things. They set people up so they didn’t receive a signing bonus or profit-sharing. They said it was part of their new efficiency program and to raise productivity by firing a multitude of people. I am sure the union knew what was going on.”

In an attempt to put a sugar-coating on the job cuts, on Friday Stellantis announced it was converting 184 SEs to full-time status at Warren Truck.

“The workers being rolled over are getting emails and robocalls this week for instructions,” said a SE at Warren Truck. “They have not yet been told if they are staying at Warren Truck or being sent to another plant.”

“They said we might lose the Ram and do all Wagoneers. If that happens, we will be knocked down to one shift and people will be laid off then.

“A lot people are protesting the absence policy; it starts Monday. They think it’s wrong that they are

going to be forced to take 50 percent of PA [personal absence] days and all vacation days before using FMLA days. They are looking at whether Stellantis can actually do that legally. FMLA is a federal law. There are a lot of angry people.

“The attendance thing is huge, it is boiling the blood of a lot of full-timers. Temporary part-timer workers only get six points and they are out. They are really going to go by that. What if you are in a car accident? Do you get a point for calling in? It is not clear.”

On Friday supporters of the *World Socialist Web Site* distributed a copy of an open letter issued by the newly formed Rank-and-File Committee to Fight Job Cuts that was established in the wake of the mass firings of SE workers last month. The open letter called for a united fight by temp workers and full-time workers to rescind the firings and to defend all jobs by instituting a shorter work week at no loss in pay.

It stated, “Collectively, we can defend our means of livelihood. Since we have been repeatedly deceived by the UAW bureaucrats, from International down to the local level, we, the shop floor workers, are organizing this fight.”

The letter exposed the claims by the UAW that it was blindsided by the layoffs, stating, “[UAW President] Fain must think we are fools. He and the other high-paid union officials saw the contract before any of us did—it was negotiated by them! They knew these job cuts were coming and they concealed them from us to get our votes.”

Workers at Warren Truck expressed support for the call for a fight to unite SEs and full-time workers. One full-time worker said, “We knew this was coming. They lied to us just to get our votes on the contract. Now they are laying off the supplementals.”

Another worker said, “Fain really showed us his hand with that bits and pieces ‘stand-up’ strike.”

A full-time worker and member of the Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee said, “I just read the open letter. It was great. Very factual and to the point. I don’t like the way they played the SEs that they fired.

“The working class has to band together and stop this. If we don’t, they are going to continue doing what they have been doing for years. Everyone is fed up with all the lies and misleading information. It is time to take a stand and to stop messing us over and us just taking it. I am willing to fight.

“I totally disagree with the way they terminated the SEs. You are going to fire me with a text message a couple of days before I am fired and I will only have medical for a week? That’s BS.

“I saw where Fain said ready to go to war. He is a snake in the grass, Biden’s right-hand man and they are here to destroy the working class, line their pockets off our backs.

“There is a target on everyone’s back because they want to push us all out.”

She said she was encouraged by the strike being waged by Stellantis workers at the Mirafiori plant in Turin, Italy. Last week Stellantis CEO Carlos Taveres announced that the Mirafiori and Pomigliano d’Arco plants in Italy are at risk of being shut down. The workers are being used as pawns by the union bureaucracy and Stellantis in a battle to extract more government EV subsidies.

“Good for them standing up for what they believe in,” the Warren Truck worker said. “It is an uphill battle, but I tell you there is power in numbers. If they continue to fight the fight, they will get the results they need. It’s not an overnight thing. I am sure the company feels it, they walked out not just a few people but hundreds of people.”



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