

Fired Stellantis supplemental workers protest at UAW headquarters in Detroit

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A group of recently terminated Stellantis temporary supplemental employees held a spirited protest Saturday outside the United Auto Workers Solidarity House headquarters in Detroit. The workers demanded the rehiring of hundreds of supplemental employees also known as SEs, who have been fired after promises that they would be converted to full-time positions under the supposedly “historic” contract signed by UAW President Shawn Fain last fall.

Protesters, who included terminated SEs at Stellantis Warren Truck and Detroit Assembly-Jefferson, GM’s Flint Assembly Plant and other plants, marched in front of the Solidarity House headquarters as vehicles driving by honked their horns in support.

The marchers carried signs saying, “TPTs [Temporary Part-Time workers] Matter,” “Sellout Contract” and “No Representation, No Work!” As they marched, the workers chanted, “The UAW lied to us, Stellantis fired us,” “SEs and Full-Timers Unite, We’re all in the same fight,” “Fain, Fain, you can’t hide, we’re here to tell the world that you lied,” and “Workers of the world, unite!”

The protest was endorsed by the newly formed Rank-and-File Committee to Fight Job Cuts (RFC-FJC), which is seeking to unite autoworkers with workers across all industries and borders to fight the global attack on jobs. The committee is organizing workers independently of and in opposition to the union bureaucracies, which are collaborating with the corporate assault on workers’ jobs and livelihoods.

Socialist Equality Party vice presidential candidate Jerry White also joined the protest and issued a statement of solidarity from SEP presidential candidate Joseph Kishore and himself.

After marching, recently terminated Stellantis Warren Truck worker, Ashley Wilmoth, a spokesperson for the group, read a prepared statement explaining the purpose of the protest. “Brothers and Sisters, we have gathered here to stand up and speak out about 2024 sellout contract. We were all deceived by our union leadership. We were told to keep coming to work, that this contract would change our lives and that it is one of the best contracts the UAW leadership has ever seen. We now know this is not true.”

While workers were led to believe they would have job

security, “thousands of union members have been terminated or laid off and left without certainty.” But this is only the beginning, she said. The auto companies had planned to destroy hundreds of thousands of jobs as they transitioned to electric vehicles, which require fewer man hours to build. The UAW “did not secure the shorter workweek with the same amount of pay for the membership,” and this “can only mean that more job cuts are coming.”

The UAW contracts were “not negotiated in good faith,” she said, and therefore were not valid. “The union leadership did not fight for the membership, and they are not currently fighting for us. We pay dues for protection and representation. Ask yourself, where is the leadership now? The company, the UAW apparatus and the government are working hand in hand to exploit workers for profits at the workers’ expense.

“The profits are there; yet the benefits, security and the representation are not. Divide and conquer only works for the rich. We must unite to fight for our brothers and sisters, fight for our futures as well as the futures of the generations to come. This contract was no ‘historic’ contract. But we have an opportunity to make history while fighting for the greater good of our membership as a whole.”

She concluded: “Stand up, speak out. Say ‘no’ to the sell-out contract! We will not be silenced. We will not cower down. We must continue to expose the truth in true solidarity. We can fight against the corruption so long as we all do our part so that no member is left behind.”

In comments to the WSW, Wilmoth discussed the fact that Stellantis was slashing jobs in Italy and France and that companies outside of the Big Three automakers, like UPS, were cutting thousands of jobs too. “This is an international struggle. There are job cuts all over the world. People are being affected every single day even outside of the Big Three. Wherever there is profit, there are going to be terminations, and, until we stand up against this together, it is going to continue and only get worse.

“There is more power in numbers, and the more of us that stand up to oppose this together, that gives us a higher chance of actually overcoming this. I don’t think anybody is coming to save us. We can’t look to the UAW. We can’t look to the government. And, we definitely can’t look to the company. So,

we have to look to each other so we can unite collectively and actually stand up against this.”

John, another fired Warren Truck worker, told the WSWs why he was protesting. “Just like anybody else who loses their job and was terminated with no type of fight-back or representation, we’re angry. They just kicked us straight out the door after using us to get this contract passed and building their trucks.

“There were times we didn’t feel well, but we couldn’t go home because we were TPTs, and we had to be there. We stuck it out to the end, and the end was kicking us out the door.”

Monique, another fired SE, said, “They would tell us, ‘We need you to stay over, we need you to work 12 hours to help second shift out.’ They told us, ‘Just come to work everyday, and you will be hired in. Pay your union dues, and you’ll get representation.’ It was all a lie. We filled out our paperwork to get rolled over to full-time, and 24 hours later, we were gone.”

John added, “They told us if they didn’t have work at Warren Truck, they would place us at other plants. They lied to us. It’s a shame that it’s happening to workers all over. People have families. They say they don’t want the population to be homeless, but they’re opening up the doors for people to be homeless. I did all I could for Warren Truck, came to work every day, on time, and this is where I’m at right now.

“This can happen to anyone, and it’s not going to stop. If we sit back and don’t say something, they are going to continue to do what they are doing—making their money and screwing the people.”

A supplemental employee from Detroit Assembly Complex-Jefferson said the UAW not only lied about promoting SEs to full-time but also that they would get profit-sharing checks. “[UAW Vice President] Rich Boyer told us straight up that supplementals would get profit sharing in 2024 at the ratification meeting. There are hundreds of witnesses. Don’t come on the stage and lie. They’re saying they are more ‘open’ and ‘transparent,’ but it’s more of the same.”

Local news station WDIV covered the protest and reached out to the UAW for a response. “We were told the UAW had no comment about the protest at this time,” a reporter stated.

Socialist Equality Party vice presidential candidate Jerry White joined the protest and made the following remarks:

I’m very proud to be with the supplementary workers from Stellantis who organized this demonstration to demand the reinstatement of more than 2,000 SE’s who have been fired unjustly. UAW President Shawn Fain claimed the SEs would be rolled over to full-time positions. He only said that in order to get the workers to vote for this pro-company contract.

Once the contract was passed, 539 workers were fired, their insurance was cut off to their families by January 31, and now thousands more workers in Indiana,

Detroit, Toledo and other locations have been fired by Stellantis with the collusion of the UAW.

The march here today was organized by rank-and-file workers. They weren’t looking to the UAW apparatus; they were speaking to their brothers and sisters who are still in the factories warning them that what happened to them can happen to these workers next.

Stellantis is firing workers in Italy and in France. Huge corporations like UPS are firing thousands and thousands of workers. The stand that these workers are taking today is really speaking for the whole working class in America and around the world.

The Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Joe Kishore and I stand 100 percent in solidarity with the fight of the Stellantis workers to win their jobs back and to organize a rank-and-file rebellion against the UAW apparatus and to fight internationally to defend the right to a job for every single worker.

The SEP candidates are calling for the expansion of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) to coordinate the struggle against job cuts across borders. In a social media post on the protest, White said, “Capitalism offers the working class nothing but poverty, war and exploitation. The right to a good-paying and secure job for all is inseparable from the fight for socialism.”

The World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter encourages Stellantis and all workers to join and build the Rank-and-File Committee to Fight Job Cuts as your independent voice. To contact the RFC-FJC, call or text 248-919-8448 or fill out the form at the end of this article.



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