

Dakkota workers: Vote NO and reject UAW-corporate blackmail! Organize rank-and-file oversight of the vote!

Dakkota Workers Rank-and-File Committee
23 August 2024

Work at Dakkota, Ford or in the auto industry? Fill out the form below to get involved with the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network at your plant.

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) is holding a meeting this Sunday, August 25, at 3:00 p.m. US Eastern Time, “For global action to defend jobs at Warren Truck and around the world!” We encourage Dakkota workers to attend. To register, [click here](#).

Brothers and sisters,

After Dakkota auto parts workers in Chicago shot down a second sellout contract pushed by the United Auto Workers bureaucracy Wednesday night, the UAW is forcing us to vote a third time, a little over 24 hours later, on a “last, best and final” offer from the company.

Let’s call this what it is: The UAW bureaucracy is trying to blackmail and threaten workers on behalf of the company. There is not a shred of “transparency,” “democracy” or legitimacy to a “vote” held under these circumstances. They are demanding we ratify a contract we haven’t even seen, in an attempt to shut down the strike by any means possible.

To prevent a betrayal of our struggle by the UAW, it is urgently necessary for rank-and-file Dakkota workers to take control of the situation and enforce their will. We cannot win this fight with a “leadership” controlled by the other side.

Thursday evening, UAW Local 3212 announced there would be a “Q&A” and third contract vote from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Friday. According to the limited information currently available to workers, the deal would include a pathetic \$2 an hour wage increase for

current workers with 48 months at the company.

We all know what the UAW’s “answers” at the Q&A tomorrow will consist of: lies and scare tactics, including threats that this is management’s last offer, and that they will bring in a mediator or our jobs will be jeopardized if we reject it. But the fact that the UAW is holding another vote so quickly must mean that Dakkota, Ford and the union bureaucracy are all increasingly desperate to shut down the strike and ramp production back up to full capacity.

In particular, the UAW apparatus wants to end this strike in order to clear the path to blocking a strike at Stellantis, where the company is carrying out thousands of job cuts and renegeing on its plan to begin reopening Belvidere Assembly this year.

Dakkota workers have not been on strike for over three weeks, sacrificing our meager paychecks, only to receive crumbs! We call on our brothers and sisters: **Vote NO on the contract and reject UAW-corporate blackmail!**

To ensure there is no tampering with the vote, **rank-and-file Dakkota workers should organize delegations tomorrow to oversee the voting process, including the ballot count.**

The entire “contract bargaining” process has been illegitimate. Both management and the UAW officials are operating on behalf of the company’s interests, with workers thus far denied real representation. Workers must reject any claims of a “yes” vote or other illicit outcome imposed by the UAW, which is acting as a bureaucratic dictatorship and denying workers their democratic rights.

The UAW apparatus has a well-known reputation for corruption, ballot rigging and vote fraud.

The current UAW President Shawn Fain, as well as several other top UAW officers, is currently under investigation by a court-appointed monitor over allegations of misconduct. Fain himself was “elected” in a national election fundamentally marred by mass disenfranchisement of workers and deliberate suppression of the vote, with hundreds of thousands of eligible UAW members never receiving a ballot.

There is a saying among veteran autoworkers: The UAW makes you vote until you get it “right.” For the past three years, workers at a series of companies—Volvo Trucks and Mack Trucks, John Deere, CNH, Dana, Lear—have repeatedly voted by overwhelming margins, often over 90 percent, to reject UAW sellout deals.

But the apparatus has not responded to these rejections by “negotiating” better contracts. Instead, they force workers to keep voting on essentially the same agreements, while starving them on inadequate strike pay and wearing them down on the picket lines.

The issue is not that Fain and other top UAW officials are “too focused” on the Big Three and have somehow forgotten about Dakkota and auto parts workers. At every workplace, the UAW bureaucracy is laser-focused on enforcing the demands of the employers and suppressing the struggles of workers.

Contrary to all the claims of “historic” contracts at the Big Three last year, they were sellout agreements, forced through with the UAW’s bogus “stand-up strikes,” which kept the majority of workers on the job. Since the contracts were passed, thousands of Stellantis, Ford and GM workers have been laid off or fired.

Stellantis announced last week that it would be permanently laying off 2,450 workers at the Warren Truck Assembly Plant near Detroit. These are part of a global assault on autoworkers jobs, with layoffs also being carried out by Stellantis in Italy, GM in China and Ford in Europe.

Fain and UAW executives have responded to these cuts by seeking to blame “foreigners,” using once again nationalist, divide-and-conquer tactics.

The reality is that workers all over the world are in a struggle against the same companies and for their common class interests. Workers are connected in a vast network of international production, a source of immense power if it is effectively leveraged. On

Sunday, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees will be holding a meeting of workers in the US and internationally to discuss a global strategy to fight job cuts and low wages.

Dakkota workers can both win this fight and make it the rallying point for a long overdue counteroffensive against the corporations. But for that to happen, we need a new strategy and workers’ control of our struggle.

- The UAW’s latest sellout Friday must be voted down. But the **UAW officials who “negotiated” these deals no longer have any authority to speak for workers, and must be kicked out and replaced with workers elected from the shop floor**, the most trusted and militant, organized in rank-and-file committees. These bodies of workers self-determination will lay out demands based on our nonnegotiable needs, including a 50 percent wage increase.

- **We call on our brothers and sisters at Ford Chicago to take matters into their own hands and take collective action to stop handling scab parts**, and urge our fellow workers at Dakkota to send delegations to Ford Chicago to appeal for support. This fight is not just about wages at Dakkota—workers at Flex-N-Gate, Tower, Lear, as well as CAP are all suffering under UAW-imposed low wages, brutally long hours, and miserable working conditions.

The passage of this deal will be used by the companies at Dakkota and elsewhere to step up their attacks on jobs and speed up production. But a rejection of the deal will send a signal that workers will not bow to corporate threats and will encourage workers to take a stand for their interests.

We therefore appeal to our fellow workers at Dakkota to join the rank-and-file committee and for autoworkers throughout the region and beyond to stand with us and expand this fight.



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