

Reject Boeing's blackmail threats! Mobilize all workers to win our strike!

Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee
24 September 2024

The following statement was issued by the Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee. To get more information or to join the committee, text (406) 414-7648, email boeingworkersrfc@gmail.com or fill out the form at the end of this article.

Brothers and sisters,

The “Best and Final Contract Offer” Boeing sent us Monday morning is a provocation by management. With our strike costing them \$50 million a day, it is clear the Boeing executives are only interested in getting us back on the line on their terms. The proposal is no better than the first one brought back by the IAM leadership, which we voted down nearly unanimously.

Boeing management, and behind them the wealthy shareholders, have no intention of giving up another dime without a fight. They hope they can divide the membership and dangle their signing bonus to get us to accept a deal that will only lead to years more of declining living standards, exhausting hours and no pension at the end of the road.

After Boeing released its “proposal” Monday morning, IAM District 751 officials waited nine hours before responding publicly. The Union Negotiating Committee claimed they were not involved in negotiating the new proposal and that the company was attempting to “go around and bypass your Union negotiating committee.”

There is no reason to accept this on face value. IAM officials were involved in closed door talks with Boeing and the federal mediator and did not provide any new information to the membership. Instead, we were told that “no meaningful progress” was made before talks broke down—the same thing Holden & Co. said before they suddenly reached a deal the last time. While IAM officials kept the membership in the dark, the news media, including the *Wall Street Journal*, reported that IAM officials were ready to “compromise” on our demand for the restoration of pensions.

The carefully worded statement from the Union Negotiating Committee said, “we will not be voting on the 27th.” It did not say if it would bring the deal to a vote afterwards. The only complaint union officials had was that Boeing’s Friday deadline “does not give us enough time to present details to the membership or even secure all voting locations.” But organizing snap votes without providing us the details of the agreements has never bothered the IAM bureaucracy before.

A far more believable explanation is that Boeing and IAM officials have floated a trial balloon with this offer and waited to see if we would bite. When the IAM social media pages were flooded with comments denouncing the deal and pledging to reject it, the Negotiating Committee decided to distance itself from the offer and announce that it would not be brought up for a vote Friday.

On Tuesday, Boeing said it would accommodate the IAM and give it more time to organize a vote. This only underscores the fact that both parties are conspiring against rank-and-file workers.

We’ve made our demands clear: our wages must be made whole after years of contract extensions and our pensions that the company took restored. We voted to strike because we knew this would be a battle and because we know that, in order to live, we can’t accept anything less.

The IAM officials never wanted this strike and are just as anxious as management to shut it down as quickly as possible. No one should forget that Holden told us we could not get anything better with a strike. But, lo and behold, after less than two weeks on strike the company improved its offer. Imagine what could we win if we really hit them hard?

But this requires a new strategy.

First, we need the resources for a prolonged battle. Boeing is one of the largest corporations in the world, backed to the hilt by both political parties, and we cannot

let them starve us out.

The Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee demands that strike pay be increased to \$750 a week. The \$300 million in assets controlled by the IAM belong to the members. That money should not be used to pay high salaries to union bureaucrats, to fund the campaigns of politicians who are stooges for Boeing, or to pay for new union headquarters.

We would suggest that the salaries of the top IAM officials immediately be reduced to what striking workers receive. This includes: IAM International President Robert Martinez (reported \$668,000 salary in 2023) and Holden's \$225,000 salary. In addition, the IAM is able to use its hundreds of millions of dollars in real estate holdings and stock market investments as collateral to borrow enough to pay us what we need.

Second, we must directly communicate with other workers engaged in similar struggles and organize mass demonstrations and joint job actions. This includes Alaska Airlines flight attendants who voted to reject the contract brought back by their union last month, striking Textron Aviation workers in Kansas who voted down an IAM-backed contract like ours, railroad workers fighting the elimination of jobs and one-man crews, and Seattle teachers fighting school closures. Dockworkers in Seattle and Tacoma want to stop handling containers with Boeing parts, and 45,000 East Coast dockers have a contract expiring on September 30.

The unification of all workers will not be done by the union bureaucrats but by rank-and-file workers, networking with each other, sending informational pickets to each other's workplaces, and building a powerful movement to fight to win what we need to survive. We should take a page out of history of the labor movement by looking at what workers in Seattle did in 1919, when 65,000 workers in the city went out on strike to defend 35,000 shipbuilding workers fighting to restore wages lost to wartime pay cuts.

A warning must be made: the move by Boeing to declare its "best and final" offer is designed to set the groundwork for a direct intervention by the Biden-Harris administration. If the IAM bureaucrats are unable to impose management's will, the federal government plans to intervene with a back-to-work order based on "national security" grounds.

No one should forget that two years ago, Biden and both parties in Congress outlawed a strike by 110,000 railroaders and forced them to accept a contract they had voted down. At the time they claimed that a railroad strike

would threaten the economy and "national interests."

Boeing is a major exporter and military contractor, and our strike is seen as a major threat to the shipment of weapons to Israel, Ukraine and other countries. The corporate rulers also fear that our strike will inspire broader sections of workers, like the East Coast dockworkers, to resist the sabotage of the union bureaucrats and defy any government back-to-work order.

That is why we cannot fight this battle alone, and we urge all workers to mobilize their strength to support us.

Finally, the Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee demands an end to all closed-door discussion, the election of a committee of trusted militants to oversee all talks and regularly report to membership, and rank-and-file supervision of any contract vote.

As we wrote in our previous statement, our committee proposes that workers should accept nothing less than:

- An inflation-busting 50 percent pay increase, plus COLA retroactive to 2014, tied to prices in the Seattle area.
- The restoration of the fully company-paid pension for all workers.
- No probationary clause for employees, which gives Boeing the ability to hire and fire new workers at will.
- No mandatory overtime.
- Sharply reduced health insurance premiums.
- Rank-and-file control of production standards, quality and safety.

*Join the Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee by
texting (406) 414-7648,
emailing boeingworkersrffc@gmail.com or filling out the
form below.*



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