

# Teamsters claim ratification of Costco sellout contract

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On Friday, without releasing any details on voter turnout or final results, the Teamsters announced the ratification of a new Costco contract. The announcement has been met with widespread anger, disappointment and resentment among the 18,000 unionized workers at the warehouse store.

Despite the union's portrayal of the agreement as a victory, it is the latest betrayal by the Teamsters bureaucracy, which pushed through a 2023 UPS contract being used for mass layoffs, and is cozying up with the Trump administration. It underscores the urgent need for workers to organize to fight the control of the bureaucracy and establish rank-and-file control.

In its announcement, the union touted benefits such as “higher” wages, a 22 percent increase in pension contributions, and over 40 “critical” language improvements. Teamsters publicized dubious enhancements in seniority rights, minimally expanded vacation benefits, alleged protections against surveillance, and strengthened rights for shop stewards. Beneath these claims lies a reality that many workers recognized and find deeply troubling.

The wage adjustments outlined in the contract are alarmingly inadequate. Workers at the top pay scale are set to receive a mere \$1/hour raise each year over the next three years, while those at the bottom will see only a \$0.50/hour annual increase. Given the current economic climate, with inflation and living costs continually rising, these increments fail to ensure that workers' earnings keep pace with their expenses. This effectively translates to a pay cut in real terms, exacerbating financial strains on employees and their families.

The contract proposes a modest pension contribution increase of \$0.45 per hour, bringing total contributions to \$2.56 per hour. Such a minimal enhancement does

little to secure a stable and dignified retirement for workers who have dedicated years, if not decades, to the company. This token gesture points directly to the union's failure to advocate for the long-term welfare of its members.

Notably, the agreement introduces higher pay premiums for select specialized roles and supervisors, including a \$3 per hour premium for pharmacy technicians and a \$2 per hour premium for supervisors. While specialized skills are important, this selective approach fosters division among the workforce and neglects the majority who continue to toil with utterly inadequate compensation.

Most concerning is the inclusion of a “Labor Peace Agreement” provision within the contract, aimed at facilitating the unionization of non-union warehouses—a move that ensures increased dues for the bureaucracy. In exchange, the union has pledged to maintain “peace,” effectively relinquishing workers' right to strike. This concession further cements the union's role as an enforcer of corporate interests rather than a defender of its members.

The union's preventing of the strike and handling of the contract negotiations, as well as its ratification and vote count has been shrouded in secrecy from the beginning.

Outside of the Costco Workers Rank-and-File Committee, meaningful discussion and scrutiny were prevented, if not reprimanded. This lack of transparency is a deliberate tactic to suppress dissent and push through a contract that serves the interests of the union bureaucracy and corporate management, rather than the workers it purports to represent.

The discontent among workers is palpable, as evidenced by the flood of outraged comments on the Teamsters' social media platforms. A Costco worker

succinctly captured the essence of the betrayal: “This is disappointing.”

Another worker drew a parallel with past sellouts: “That’s how I felt about the UPS contract too.”

Many recognized the financial squeeze being imposed on them despite the so-called raise. One worker explained the grim reality of it representing a pay cut: “I’m not happy with it, doesn’t keep us up with the raised prices, so it’s the equivalent to making less money, and I keep hearing Teamsters wants to raise our union dues too... if the next contract is garbage like this one, I’m opting out of the union, especially if it doesn’t catch us back up to the ever-raising prices or Teamsters decide to raise union dues again.”

A sense of historical decline weighed heavily on another veteran worker, who lamented the erosion of previous gains: “I feel these contracts get worse every round of negotiations. I’m very disappointed this got voted in.”

Frustration mounted as workers confronted the stark reality of increasing union dues. “Very disappointed in the results and now our monthly dues money goes up too. What am I paying them for if non-union buildings are getting the same for free?” one worker questioned, highlighting the injustice of being forced to fund a union bureaucracy that fails to deliver.

Workers called the new contract what it is: a sellout. One worker issued a scathing statement that summarizes the attitude of many: “And you sold out the entire labor union movement... go to hell.”

The betrayal was felt coast to coast, with East Coast Teamsters pointing out their additional losses: “Not only did all of the East Coast lose two holidays when joining the national contract, we did as well in Norfolk when we joined the national after unionizing. I’d be a lot more happy if they had gotten the holidays back. At the end of the day, I only got a \$0.50 raise.”

Doubts over the legitimacy of the ratification vote itself were rampant, as workers found it hard to believe that a contract so widely condemned had truly passed: “Sold out their members. Think someone should count the votes who are neither side.”

Perhaps the most damning indictment came from a 30-year veteran who had witnessed firsthand the deterioration of union representation: “Should have been a hell of a lot better... very, very disappointing.

I’ve been here 30 years. This is the worst contract.”

These sentiments reflect a broader disillusionment with the union’s bureaucracy. The pattern of inadequate contracts, lack of transparency and collusion with corporate interests has led many to question the very purpose of paying union dues when their interests are continually compromised.

Adding to the concerns over Teamsters President Sean O’Brien’s courting of Trump and his fascist allies, one worker pointed to the danger of such political alliances in light of Trump ending collective bargaining for 50,000 TSA officers: “All the union leaders who supported Trump (like Sean O’Brien) should have to answer some painful questions about Trump rescinding collective bargaining rights for TSA agents.”

The Costco sellout is yet another reminder that workers cannot rely on the Teamsters or any other bureaucratic apparatus to defend their rights. It is imperative for workers to fight the entrenched union bureaucracy and build the Costco Workers Rank-and-File Committee in order to transfer power from the well-paid bureaucrats to the shop floor.



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