

Workers walk out of ratification meeting as IAM bureaucrats push through sellout to end Pratt & Whitney strike

Mike Ingram
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Organize a fight against the sellout IAM bureaucrats by forming a Pratt & Whitney Workers Rank-and-File Committee! Fill out the form below for more information.

After 23 days on strike, 3,000 workers at Pratt & Whitney in Connecticut are set to return to work Thursday after the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) pushed through a sellout contract that does nothing to meet their demands.

Pratt & Whitney, a subsidiary of Raytheon Technologies (RTX), is a leading aerospace and defense contractor, producing a wide range of advanced propulsion systems at two facilities in East Hartford and Middletown, Connecticut. The company reported a \$580 million profit in the first quarter of 2025, a 41 percent increase over 2024.

The strike at Pratt & Whitney has been ended in similar fashion to that of the New Jersey Transit engineers, who were sent back to work by officials from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) without even having seen the new contract. In the run-up to the vote at Pratt & Whitney, workers were raising questions on Facebook about the mysterious agreement being hidden from strikers. On the morning of Tuesday, May 27, workers were given a handout of the “highlights” of the agreement, which solicited the immediate disgust of many workers.

Strikers met Tuesday morning to vote on the contract with the multi-billion-dollar company. The *World Socialist Web Site* distributed a statement outside the meeting calling for a “no” vote and spoke to many workers who expressed their opposition to the new agreement.

That statement called for workers to

kick out the bargaining committee which is attempting to violate their will by forcing the contract past them sight unseen, and replace them with a new one elected solely from the rank and file, not union officials.

It continued:

The development of rank-and-file strike committees is necessary not only to prevent another betrayal and impose the democratic will of workers but to expand the strike and adopt a strategy for victory.

The *Hartford Courant* reported, “Michael Lamoureux, the head of the strike committee for Local 700, said half of the Pratt & Whitney workers stormed out in the first five minutes, similar to what occurred at the May 4 vote” on the company’s first offer, which had launched the strike.

According to the *Courant*, the vote was 1,508 to 561, or 74 percent in favor. This means that only 53.6 percent of the workforce of 3,000 workers voted to approve the contract. Based on what has been released on the contract, it is no surprise that there was angry and vocal opposition to the deal.

The union’s announcement of the deal’s passage on Facebook met with widespread anger and skepticism, with one worker commenting: “I call [BS]. 50% stormed out calling [BS]. I think there was some faulty counting.” Another added, “I agree. Everyone in my section was showing their vote as no and on the way out everyone was saying they voted no. Only know one person who said they voted yes.”

According to the IAM website, the union agreed to extend the contract from three to four years, with a 6 percent increase in the first year that “includes \$0.57 cost-of-living adjustment added to base pay, 2% special adjustment, and 4% general wage increase.” The previous offer of a \$5,000 signing bonus, added previously by the company to sweeten the deal, was withdrawn. In addition to the 6 percent increase in 2025, the contract contains increases of only 3.5

percent in 2026 and 3 percent in both 2027 and 2028.

This will likely amount to a cut in real wages. The current official US inflation rate set by the Federal Reserve is in the target range of 4.25 to 4.50 percent. Hartford, Connecticut, has a cost-of-living index of 104, meaning it is 4 percent higher than the national average. Connecticut has a cost-of-living index of 112.3, making it more expensive than the average US state.

One worker commented on Facebook:

How is this a win? Added a 5% wage increase and a year to the contract. This is smallest GWI [General Wage Increase] of the industry in the last 2 or 3 years.

One striker told the WSWS that after working more than nine years at Pratt & Whitney, he could still not afford to buy a home.

The union claims the deal protects job security, claiming it guarantees “continued operations in East Hartford and Middletown facilities through 2029.” The basis of this claim is the “new agreement regarding job protections for turbine airfoil production and a voluntary separation program.” The so-called “voluntary separation” provision is aimed at destroying future jobs by pitting older and younger workers against each other.

The new contract sanctions the move from a pension to a 401k-type plan. Contributions by the company to the pension fund will end December 31, 2028, to be replaced with a “Savings Plan,” to which workers can contribute, with a 100 percent match by the company. Moving over to a savings plan means that if a worker cannot afford to pay into it, the company is not required to contribute anything.

The WSWS warned that the speed with which the union agreed to the contract and presented it to the membership could only result in a miserable sellout. It took less than 24 hours after the company returned to the negotiating table—after cutting off employee health and other benefits—for the IAM bureaucrats to accept a rotten deal.

The end of the strike was not due to a lack of determination by workers. There was immense potential for broadening the strike and uniting with other workers in the defense industry, under conditions where the American oligarchy is determined to gear up for around-the-clock military production as it intensifies the drive to disastrous new wars alongside bumper profits for defense contractors.

More than 900 workers at Lockheed Martin facilities in Orlando, Florida, and Denver, Colorado, members of the United Auto Workers, have been on strike since May 1.

Around 2,500 General Dynamics Electric Boat workers in Groton, Connecticut, who produce submarines for the US Navy, had been set to strike on May 18, but the UAW announced a last-minute deal, thus preventing simultaneous strikes at General Dynamics, Pratt & Whitney and Lockheed Martin.

The IAM shut down the strike because it threatened the war policies of both parties in Washington, who are openly discussing launching new wars in the Middle East and against China. While workers in the defense plants work for low pay, the new spending bill in Congress contains the largest military budget in US history, to be paid for by massive cuts in social programs and ramping up the exploitation of defense and other workers.

Meanwhile, Democratic politicians, who have enabled the Trump administration’s fascistic attacks on immigrants and democratic rights, walked the picket with Pratt & Whitney strikers in an effort to boost their own profile and to back the union bureaucracy.

The IAM bureaucracy was desperate to settle the strike at Pratt & Whitney as quickly as possible under conditions of an increasing upsurge in the working class that is creating the possibility for a conscious rebellion of the rank and file against the union apparatus.

The many workers who are hostile to the IAM bureaucracy must transform their anger into a conscious struggle to overthrow the bureaucratic dictatorship in the IAM and return power to the shop floor. This means the building of rank-and-file committees, independent of the union apparatus.

These committees, organized as part of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), will facilitate workers uniting with their allies in the working class across the US and internationally to fight economic exploitation, war and the drive to dictatorship.



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