

Six UAW locals approve charges against President Fain as bitter infighting erupts within union bureaucracy

Jerry White
8 August 2025

A virtual civil war has erupted within the United Auto Workers bureaucracy. Six UAW locals have approved internal charges under Article 30 of the union's constitution against President Shawn Fain, initiating a disciplinary process that could remove him before next year's election.

The charges—brought by officials who until recently stood firmly behind Fain—include dereliction of duty, financial misconduct, retaliation, improper hiring practices, and violations of the UAW's consent decree with the US Justice Department. Resolutions were passed at five Stellantis plants: Locals 723 (Dundee Engine), 1700 (Sterling Heights Assembly), 140 (Warren Truck), 1248 (Warren Stamping), 7 (Jefferson North). Also passing the resolution was Local 94 (John Deere in Iowa). Six local resolutions are required to trigger the process.

Fain's administration quickly denounced the charges as "politically motivated," blaming UAW Secretary-Treasurer Margaret Mock, Vice President Rich Boyer, and Stellantis worker and 2022 UAW presidential candidate Brian Keller. In an open letter published last week, the administration called for members to back Fain and "resolve political disputes through elections," ignoring that Fain himself was installed with the votes of just 6 percent of the membership in a grossly undemocratic process marred by voter suppression.

There are more than enough reasons for rank-and-file workers to throw Fain out. The bogus 2023 "stand-up strikes" at the Big Three were a deliberate betrayal that ended in pro-corporate contracts, mass firings, and deadly working conditions. Among the dead are Stellantis workers Antonio Gaston and Ronald Adams Sr.—victims of unsafe conditions sanctioned by the UAW.

Fain's populist rhetoric about "union democracy"—endlessly promoted by his inner circle of Democratic Socialists of America supporters and the now-defunct "Unite All Workers for Democracy" (UAWD) caucus—was a fraud. The court-appointed UAW monitor recently cited reports that Fain threatened to "slit the f***ing throats" of those who opposed his leadership. Fain has suppressed dissent, backed Trump's trade war policies, and helped prepare the UAW's alignment with imperialist war, austerity, and repression.

"There is totally legitimate hatred of Fain and his crimes against the rank and file," said Will Lehman, a Mack Trucks worker and socialist who ran against Fain in 2022. "But a bureaucratic

maneuver will not resolve the issue or create democratic control. Only a rank-and-file rebellion to abolish the bureaucracy and transfer power to workers will."

The effort to remove Fain is no democratic revolt from below. It is a cynical factional maneuver by officials who share full responsibility for Fain's crimes. Mock and Boyer both ran with Fain on the "Members United"/UAWD slate in 2022 and supported every betrayal. Keller, who lost in the first round of the 2022 elections, promptly endorsed Fain and lobbied for a leadership position. All now posture as defenders of "the membership" to cover for their complicity and reposition themselves for power.

They are joined by a layer of corrupt local officials fearful of a growing rebellion from below. This includes officials at UAW Local 723 at the Dundee Engine Complex, where 63-year-old skilled tradesman Ronald Adams Sr. was killed on April 7 when a gantry arm crushed him. Despite clear safety violations, both Local 723 and Fain's administration have conspired to protect Stellantis and cover up the truth.

The hypocrisy extends to the votes approving the charges. At Sterling Heights, only 63 workers participated out of over 6,000; just 80 voted at Warren Truck, which employs roughly 3,000. Most workers were unaware a vote even took place.

The UAW was put under federal oversight in 2021 after the exposure of widespread corruption led to the jailing of nearly a dozen UAW officers, including two past presidents, for embezzling dues money and taking corporate bribes.

To head off a revolt by the rank and file, the first-ever election of top officers was held in 2022-23, but the bureaucracy did everything it could to suppress the vote, especially after Lehman entered the race. Refusing to act on the widespread evidence of voter suppression presented by Lehman, the UAW monitor sanctioned Fain's election, in what was the lowest turnout of any union election in US history.

The current infighting erupted when Fain, under growing pressure, scapegoated Boyer for fallout from the 2023 contracts. After removing Boyer from overseeing Stellantis, Fain accused him of surrendering to the company. Boyer responded with a damning letter confirming that the entire UAW leadership had knowingly deceived workers about temporary supplemental employees (SEs).

“The company told us during bargaining that they were not going to convert all 5,500 SEs,” Boyer wrote, “and we ensured that we communicated to you that they would only convert 3,200 after ratification.”

Boyer has accused Fain of removing him from his post because he rejected the UAW president’s efforts to get favors for his “domestic partner and her sister that would have violated the UAW Ethical Practices Codes’ Financial Practices.” Fain’s fiancée works at the UAW-Chrysler National Training Center (NTC).

Secretary-Treasurer Margaret Mock says Fain stripped her of key assignments because she refused to approve improper expenditures.

The UAW Monitor is investigating the charges and in his most recent filings with the federal court pointed to the continuing “culture of fear of retaliation” within the UAW apparatus.

Despite this, the Article 30 petition whitewashes the collective betrayal. It accuses Fain of “not knowing” what was in the Stellantis contract regarding SE layoffs—an absurd evasion. The promise of full-time conversion was a deliberate lie, used to ram through the sellout deal. Boyer and his allies are not objecting to the betrayal but to being held accountable for it.

Similarly, the petition criticizes Fain for “selling a contract he didn’t understand” at Mack Trucks. In fact, Fain and other UAW leaders made it clear to striking workers they they would be replaced by scabs and abandoned to their fate if they did not vote to ratify a sellout deal they had previously rejected.

Crucially, the Article 30 process remains under the total control of the bureaucracy. Once charges are filed by six locals, they are submitted to Secretary-Treasurer Mock and the federal UAW Monitor. The UAW International Executive Board appoints a 12-member “trial committee” from delegates to the last convention. Both sides can strike names—a process rife with backroom deals, bribery and threats.

If two-thirds of the committee vote to find Fain guilty, they can recommend penalties ranging from a reprimand to removal from office. If he is acquitted, the committee decides whether the charges were brought in good faith or with “malicious intent”—potentially punishing the accusers as well. It is a closed loop, designed to exclude the rank-and-file.

Lehman emphasized that Fain’s accusers—Mock, Boyer, Keller—were architects of the betrayals now being blamed on Fain alone. “They backed the ‘stand up’ strike and contracts that led to mass layoffs. They defended the use of scabs at Mack Trucks and remained silent about the deaths of Daulton Simmers, Antonio Gaston, Ronald Adams and others.”

The factional war is driven by fear of growing worker opposition, not principle. As Lehman put it, “When it comes to defending capitalism, promoting anti-Mexican and anti-Chinese nationalism, and tying workers to the two-party system, they all agree.”

The *Detroit Free Press*, a mouthpiece for the union, has now cast Boyer in a sympathetic light. In an interview, Boyer claimed, “My sole responsibility is to represent the membership... not the best interest of the International Executive Board.” In reality, his main concern is that infighting is paralyzing the bureaucracy as it

attempts to contain rank-and-file opposition and head off growing anger toward Trump’s austerity and war policies.

“We haven’t sat down and talked about this Big, Beautiful Bill and what it’s going to do to Medicare and Medicaid,” Boyer lamented, referring to Trump’s latest social spending cuts. “We have no idea what direction we’re going in.” This is not concern for workers, but anxiety that the union cannot fulfill its political function of corralling opposition back into the Democratic Party before the 2026 midterms.

There are no fundamental political differences between Fain and those backing this bureaucratic maneuver. All support economic nationalism, corporatism, and the pro-imperialist Democratic Party, if not the fascist president Trump himself. All accept the UAW’s integration into the US war machine. None support the international unity of the working class.

The entire conflict is a desperate attempt to restore control over massive assets and a union that is collapsing under the weight of its own betrayals. The rank and file must not choose between rival factions of the bureaucracy but strike out on an independent course.

“The way forward is through the initiative of workers themselves,” Lehman said. “We need rank-and-file committees in every plant, controlled by workers—not staffers or party operatives. These committees must fight for what workers actually need—safe jobs, full-time employment, and an end to tiers—not what management and the union say is ‘realistic.’”

“Fain and the rest of the UAW bureaucrats say the enemy is China. But the real enemy is here: at Stellantis, in UAW headquarters, and on Wall Street. Workers must reject nationalism and unite internationally. We have more in common with Mexican, Canadian and Chinese workers than with any billionaire or bureaucrat.”

Lehman said the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) is organizing a strategy to turn this growing anger into conscious political action.

The conflict wracking the UAW is not a sign of renewal, but a symptom of its collapse. What is needed is not reform, but revolution—the abolition of the UAW bureaucracy and the transfer of power to the working class itself.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact