

UAW tries to contain anger as Stellantis workers denied profit sharing checks

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Workers at Stellantis reacted with fury to the formal announcement by Stellantis this week that the company would not issue profit sharing checks this year due to reported negative earnings in 2025, the first time this has happened since 2011. After years of concessions and substandard pay raises, workers count on the payouts to fill gaps in their budgets. Checks have ranged from \$3,000 to as much as \$14,000 in 2024.

Workers contacted by the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter* expressed disgust with management as well as the UAW apparatus. A Jeep worker at the Toledo Assembly Complex said, “We were on emergency status, ten hours, six days a week. Then it went to critical status—seven days. We went all hard, and for what? We got no profit sharing. How much more can we give?”

He said many workers are struggling with the rising cost of living. “You walk outside for gas and food and you’ve spent \$100 without trying.”

“People count on that extra money every year,” said a worker at Stellantis Warren Truck outside Detroit. “However, if you have been following the news, this should not have come as a surprise. Corporate greed will always win, and the people actually doing the work will always lose, until we make major changes.”

Another said, “Salary Bargaining Unit here at CTC (Chrysler Tech Center) is PISSED!!! I’m well aware of the ‘bamboozle’ BS.”

United Auto Workers officials were well aware of what was coming and said nothing to prevent walkouts and other forms of resistance. After the announcement, they went into damage control mode to try to contain the fallout.

UAW President Shawn Fain issued a self-serving statement pinning all blame on management while absolving his leadership who negotiated the terms of the 2023 sellout that left workers living paycheck to paycheck. “We sounded the alarm on disgraced CEO Carlos Tavares and have been pushing the company to stop throwing money away to Wall Street and instead invest in the plants, products, and people that make this company run,” Fain said without proposing

anything to oppose this.

UAW Vice President for Stellantis Rich Boyer parroted Fain, declaring, “The company chose short-term profits over sustainability, prioritized shareholder payouts instead of investing in the future, and cut the heart and soul out of the plants to cover up the results.” Boyer said nothing of his own role in negotiating the 2023 agreement as head of the UAW Stellantis Department.

UAW officials scrambled to prevent workers from walking out over the news. According to the *Detroit News*, the president of UAW Local 1700 at Sterling Heights Assembly intervened to squelch plans for a wildcat walkout Thursday by workers also working long hours of mandatory overtime. The *News* wrote, “A letter to members from Local 1700 President Michael Spencer indicated workers were fed up. He told them they ‘will not be walking out on a wild cat strike,’ and urged them to keep building ‘the best quality vehicles possible.’”

Fueling workers anger is that Stellantis reported that a large portion of the \$26 billion global loss was due to a \$29.9 billion write-down by Stellantis due to its “strategic reset” away from electric vehicles. These largely paper losses did not prevent management from funneling over \$8 billion to shareholders and executives. The company reported that its North American operations actually produced 231,000 additional units over 2024.

Stellantis claims that, under the 2023 contract formula negotiated by the UAW, reported profits did not meet the required threshold. It is well known that companies use “creative accounting” to massage earnings numbers in line with the interests of management. Major corporations year after year pay zero taxes using various loopholes and deductions despite funneling billions to stockholders.

A veteran Warren Truck worker told the WSWs, “No one has faith in any numbers corporations give us. Chrysler made \$2.4 billion in 1993 and paid \$8,000 profit sharing to twice as many employees.”

Most fundamentally, the whole concept of “profit sharing” promoted by the UAW bureaucracy has been a fraud from

the beginning. It was introduced in contracts in the auto industry in the 1980s as the UAW adopted corporatist “union-management collaboration,” abandoned strikes and agreed to massive job and wage cuts in the name of boosting “competitiveness” and profitability. Annual improvements in pay and conditions, once a common feature in labor agreements, were converted into contingent payouts based the UAW’s collusion in lowering labor costs and enforcing ever-increasing exploitation.

Reacting to the Stellantis announcement and the UAW bureaucracy’s response, Will Lehman, a rank-and-file Mack Trucks worker in Macungie, Pennsylvania, and candidate for UAW president, stated:

The elimination of profit-sharing checks is a slap in the face to workers who have created billions in wealth through their labor. It means bills unpaid, homes at risk, cars repossessed, and plans postponed.

While UAW leaders try to shift all blame to management, they cover up their own role in negotiating the 2023 deal, which tied workers’ income to profit-sharing formulas controlled by the company.

What is needed is a real fight, not more collaboration with management. When anger at Sterling Heights threatened to spark action, Local 1700 leadership intervened to block a wildcat strike and ordered workers to keep production going and work harder building more trucks, as though they were company foreman.

Profit sharing is presented by employers and union bureaucrats as a way to “include” workers in the fruits of production. In reality, it is a political and economic device that deepens exploitation, subordinates our livelihoods to corporate management, and undermines independent class struggle. In reality, all wealth is created by the labor of workers. The corporate owners create nothing, yet they siphon off the lion’s share of the wealth created off our backs and leave us crumbs.

The reality is the corporate owners need us, but we do not need them. What workers need is not profit sharing but workers’ power and workers’ control to wrest back the concessions stolen from us and guarantee every worker a decent wage, shorter working hours and a secure retirement.

Workers can secure their needs only through organization and collective action. Power must be restored to the rank and file by building committees across plants and linking up with workers in Mexico,

Canada and internationally, so that strategy and demands are decided democratically on the shop floor.

The Big Three contracts signed by the UAW bureaucracy after Fain’s bogus “stand up” strike have led to massive job cuts of temporary part-time (TPT) and permanent employees and exhausting hours and speed-up. They also led to injuries and deaths, including Toledo Jeep worker Antonio Gaston and Stellantis Dundee Engine worker Ronald Adams Sr. in Michigan.

Commenting on the sellout deals, a Toledo Jeep worker said, “Boyer looked at us and said, ‘Vote for this contract. This is the best you can get.’ It was the threat. They lied to us. Some of the TPTs at Jeep, people with six, seven years, finally got hired. But so many others lost their jobs. Then Belvidere is still closed, they screwed over Warren, which lost a shift. A lot of Belvidere guys transferred there and got laid off again.

“I watched the video when Will [Lehman] debated the International and Fain in 2022. Everybody knows about the backroom deals and we don’t trust anybody up there. They’re cut from the same cloth. Will is from the line and wants to empower all of us.”

Commenting on Lehman’s call for the international unity of workers, he said, “We do the same work. I’m assuming the work the Mexican autoworkers are doing is even a lot rougher than what we’re doing. And what do they get? Five dollars an hour, and they’re pumping out all these cars. We’re all autoworkers and it doesn’t matter what country you’re in. If we can pull them in and unite, absolutely. It’s the same with Canada. We all should be together as one.”

Addressing the recent events in Minneapolis and Trump’s scapegoating of immigrants, he said, “It’s just terrible. We’re all humans, right? The whole ICE thing pisses me off. The killings were unjustifiable. As far as the Trump administration goes, I couldn’t care less about him. A lot of people voted for Trump because he said, ‘We’re going to save American jobs.’ What have we got?”

Responding to the increasing calls for a general strike in the wake of the rampage by the Trump administration’s immigration Gestapo, he said, “I believe in striking. We definitely should do that. It’s part of what we are, it’s what was done in history.”



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