

UAW President Shawn Fain unveils “Stand Up Slate” for 2026 election: new label, same bureaucracy

Jerry White
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As the United Auto Workers heads into its 2026 national officer elections at the 39th Constitutional Convention on June 15–18, UAW President Shawn Fain has unveiled a so-called “Stand Up Slate” of 13 candidates: Fain (President), Brandon Campbell (Secretary-Treasurer), Laura Dickerson, Kevin Gotinsky and Ryan Hiestand (Vice Presidents), and regional directors LaShawn English, Mark DePaoli, Scott Zuckschwerdt, David Green, Lucas DeSpain, Mike Miller, Tim Smith and Brandon Mancilla.

The composition of the slate exposes, at a glance, the fraud of the “reform” narrative promoted by Fain and his backers in the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). Far from representing a break with the corrupt, pro-corporate apparatus, the slate is a merger of the same bureaucratic factions that have spent decades collaborating with management to impose concessions, with the direct incorporation of the DSA.

Four of the 13—Dickerson, Campbell, Miller and Smith—ran on Ray Curry’s Solidarity Team slate in 2022–23, which Fain himself denounced for having “sold out members with tiers, concessions, and plant closures,” for “Partner with Management,” for having “14 UAW leaders guilty of corruption,” and for having “fought against one member, one vote.” A fifth, Scott Zuckschwerdt, served under Curry-aligned Region 1D Director Steve Dawes, long associated with concessions at General Motors, Delphi and other companies.

At the same time, the slate excludes Secretary Treasurer Margaret Mock and Vice President Rich Boyer, both of whom ran with Fain in 2022 and backed the 2023 sellout contracts at the Detroit Three automakers. The two were pushed aside amid factional infighting over power, patronage and control of union dues. What is presented as a renewal of the union is, in reality, a cynical reshuffling within the apparatus.

Will Lehman, a rank-and-file Mack Trucks assembly worker and a socialist, is running for UAW president. According to his website, Lehman is leading a movement whose aim is “building new structures of rank-and-file power at every workplace and abolishing the UAW bureaucratic apparatus.”

A rogue’s gallery of pro-company candidates

Fain himself is a longtime functionary of this apparatus. He backed the Obama administration’s 2009 restructuring of GM and Chrysler, which destroyed tens of thousands of jobs, institutionalized the two-tier wage system and gutted working conditions. He later served under Norwood Jewell, who was jailed for taking bribes tied to the 2015 concessions

contract.

Promoted by the DSA as a “union reformer,” Fain has combined militant-sounding rhetoric with three years of collaboration with the corporations and both the Biden and Trump administrations in the attack on workers’ jobs, living standards, working conditions and democratic rights.

Among the other figures on the slate:

- Brandon Campbell, now Fain’s candidate for Secretary-Treasurer, oversaw the betrayal of the nine-month CNH Industrial strike by 1,200 workers in Racine, Wisconsin, and Burlington, Iowa in 2022–23. Workers were kept on just \$400 a week in strike pay while the UAW sat on a strike fund of more than \$800 million. Workers twice rejected sellout contracts before the apparatus forced through a near-identical agreement under threat of permanent replacement. The Burlington plant is now slated for closure. Campbell also photographed supporters of rank-and-file UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman at a picket line, falsely claiming they violated election rules—an act of intimidation itself.

- Kevin Gotinsky, UAW-Stellantis Department Director and vice-presidential candidate, earns nearly \$199,000 a year and has functioned as an enforcer of corporate interests. On April 7, 2025, Ronald Adams Sr., a 63-year-old skilled tradesman at the Dundee Engine Complex, was crushed to death by a robotic gantry. The UAW’s only public response—a joint video featuring Gotinsky and two Stellantis executives—praised their “joint efforts” for safety and implied accidents result from workers cutting corners. Gotinsky did not mention Adams by name. Production resumed with full UAW approval.

- Laura Dickerson, UAW-Ford Department Director and vice-presidential candidate, a long time UAW Local 600 official at the Ford Rouge Complex in Dearborn, Michigan. In 2011, she agreed to deep concessions as a member of the UAW-Ford negotiating committee. Since being installed on the UAW International Executive Board, she has done nothing to oppose job cuts at the Rouge Complex and at Ford EV battery plants in Michigan, Kentucky and Tennessee.

- David Green, Region 2B Director, helped impose GM’s “Super Competitive Operating Agreement” at Lordstown in 2018, eliminating thousands of jobs in the name of “saving the plant.” The plant closed anyway after the sellout of the 2019 GM strike. In 2023, Green authored two consecutive contracts at the Clarios battery plant rejected by workers by 98 percent and 76 percent, while the UAW sanctioned the use of scab-produced batteries, isolating strikers. He has done nothing to oppose layoffs at the Lordstown EV battery plant this year.

- Region 1 Director LaShawn English backed Fain’s fraudulent Stand Up strike strategy and the concessions that followed, while opposing no layoffs in the Detroit area, including job cuts at Stellantis Warren Truck and GM Factory Zero. In 2015, she supported the Chrysler contract

workers rejected by a 2-to-1 margin for maintaining the hated two-tier system and expanding lower-paid classifications.

• Brandon Mancilla, Region 9A Director and DSA member, earning more than \$200,000, led Harvard graduate workers to a contract that amounted to a real wage cut. Earlier this year, when Columbia University student workers voted 91.5 percent to strike—raising demands including protection from ICE, an end to surveillance and divestment from military contractors—Mancilla’s region has refused to authorize a strike and threatened receivership if those demands were not dropped.

The continuity of the apparatus was underscored by praise for the slate from Justin “JJ” Jewell, son of Fain’s former boss Norwood Jewell, who called 2023 “a very awesome practice run” and declared the new slate “absolutely historic.”

Since his election, Fain has overseen a string of betrayals and concessions. All claims of “historic gains” from the 2023 “stand up” strike, for which the slate is named, collapse on contact with reality. The strike kept the overwhelming majority of autoworkers on the job while a rotating minority walked out—a strategy designed to minimize pressure on the companies and coordinated with the Biden administration. Within weeks of ratification, more than 2,000 Stellantis temporary workers were permanently fired, despite promises they would be made full-time.

At Allison Transmission, a “historic” contract abolished the eight-hour workday. At Rolls-Royce Indianapolis, where workers voted 99.5 percent to strike, a last-minute deal prevented the walkout and was declared “life-changing.” At Mack Trucks, workers who rejected a contract were threatened with replacement. Across the Big Three, new hires still start at roughly 70 percent of base pay, and second-tier workers remain without fully paid pensions.

The deaths of Antonio Gaston at Toledo Jeep and Ronald Adams Sr. at Dundee, along with an epidemic of injuries across the industry, are the real legacy of these agreements. These tragedies are the inevitable result of speedup, understaffing and the subordination of safety to profit.

Fain claims he established union democracy. In reality, he was installed through an election in which roughly 90 percent of eligible members did not vote—the lowest turnout in a national union election in US history—amid widespread voter suppression. This process was upheld by the Labor Departments of both the Biden and Trump administrations despite a federal court ruling that it had acted “arbitrarily and capriciously” in dismissing Will Lehman’s complaint.

Having called Donald Trump a “scab” at the 2024 Democratic National Convention, Fain quickly pivoted following Trump’s return, praising tariff policies and pledging to make the UAW “a partner in rebuilding American industry” and wartime production. The slate boasts it has “used the UAW’s political muscle to fix broken trade policies, protecting our work in the Heavy Truck and Automotive sectors.”

This is the same economic nationalism that has resulted in decades of betrayals by the UAW bureaucracy. Job losses are not the result of “broken trade policies” but of the capitalist system itself. Faced with the globalization of production in the 1980s and 1990s, the unions abandoned even limited resistance and aligned themselves with corporate profitability in the name of “competitiveness.”

The results have been catastrophic. UAW membership has fallen from 1.5 million in 1979 to roughly 400,000 today. Entire cities have been devastated, while the bureaucracy has enriched itself through joint programs, corporate funding and six-figure salaries. Meanwhile, corporations are carrying out a new wave of layoffs tied to automation, electric vehicle restructuring and artificial intelligence.

Most significantly, the Stand Up Slate is silent on the issues that define life-and-death conditions for workers: ICE raids targeting immigrant workers, including UAW members; the killings of workers such as Rene Good and Alex Pretti; imperialist wars financed through austerity at home; and the growing threat of authoritarian rule. Its claim—“We aren’t

loyal to political parties, only union members”—is exposed as a fraud by its alignment with both Democratic and Republican administrations.

Will Lehman, a Mack Trucks worker and rank-and-file candidate for UAW president in 2026, issued a statement denouncing Fain’s slate.

Workers should reject the Stand Up Slate for what it is: a merger of bureaucratic factions that have collaborated with the auto bosses to destroy jobs, wages and working conditions. Shawn Fain was not democratically elected—he was installed through a rigged process that excluded 90 percent of members. He promised historic gains and delivered layoffs, preserved tiers, abolished the eight-hour day at Allison and covered up the deaths of workers. The rhetoric about a “member-driven” union has been exposed as a marketing campaign for the same apparatus. Fain mouths phrases about “eating the rich” while serving as a reliable instrument of the rich against the working class.

Lehman rejected the economic nationalism promoted by Fain, warning that it divides workers internationally and serves corporate interests:

When Fain says American workers can only have jobs if workers in Canada, Mexico, Germany, and South Korea lose theirs, he is doing the corporations’ work for them. The auto industry is global. The workers at Stellantis Windsor, GM Silao, and Ford Cologne are not our enemies—they are our brothers and sisters. Divide-and-conquer nationalism is the oldest weapon in the bosses’ arsenal, and the Fain administration wields it on their behalf.

The Stand Up Slate says nothing about the ICE roundups terrorizing immigrant autoworkers—many of them UAW members like University of Washington academic worker Kennedy Orwa. Fain’s slate says nothing about the wars being financed by the austerity now being prepared for the working class. Nothing about the march toward authoritarian rule. Nothing about workers killed on the job. That silence is not an oversight. It is a program—the program of a bureaucracy that has fully integrated itself into the corporate and state apparatus.

The bureaucracy cannot be reformed. It must be abolished. The hundreds of officials drawing six-figure salaries off workers’ dues must be removed, and the resources of the union placed under the democratic control of workers on the shop floor through a network of rank-and-file committees—elected by workers, accountable to workers, and answerable to no one at Solidarity House.

Workers in the UAW are part of an international working class rising against exploitation, austerity and war. “Our struggle must be global.”

Lehman calls for building the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees to unite workers across borders in a common fight against capitalism, war and dictatorship.



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