

# UAW calls off bogus strike vote over subcontracting at Stellantis Sterling Heights Assembly as grueling 7-day schedule continues

Shannon Jones  
12 May 2026

The United Auto Workers called off a strike vote at the Stellantis Sterling Heights Assembly Plant (SHAP) just as balloting was set to begin last Thursday, announcing a settlement with management over the question of the outsourcing of skilled trades jobs at the plant in the north Detroit suburbs.

The 6,000 workers at the plant, who assemble the highly profitable Dodge Ram 1500 light truck, have been working a grueling 7-day schedule for weeks, made mandatory under provisions inserted by the UAW into the 2023 national contract. The forced overtime takes place as thousands of other Stellantis workers remain on indefinite layoff.

According to a video statement by Local 1700 President Mike Spencer sent to members on May 7, “The company has come to us, we’ve had multiple discussions, and we’ve come to a resolution to resolve those grievances (for which) we were going to initially take that strike authorization vote.” Spencer said the company had agreed to let the union “bid” on the skilled trades work that Stellantis wanted to outsource as stipulated in the national contract without stating any jobs had been actually saved. The right to “bid” means that tradesmen must offer to work cheaper and more cost effectively than subcontractors, essentially pitting workers against each other in a race to the bottom.

This kind of phony theatrics by the UAW is well-known to workers. First, the union announces it is in intense talks with management, it threatens strike action, then quickly calls it off, announcing a “historic victory.” Inevitably, this turns out to be a sellout dictated on management’s terms.

This shabby maneuver takes place as anger is simmering in the plant over deteriorating working conditions, the mounting cost-of-living crisis escalated by the Iran war and the ever present threat to jobs. The strike vote coincided with the election of delegates for SHAP Local 1700 to the upcoming UAW Constitutional Convention in June, raising suspicions in the minds of many workers that it was timed to boost the fortunes of candidates backing the re-election of UAW President Shawn Fain in the upcoming national officers election.

A worker, leaving the plant after the end of day shift, spoke to WSWS reporters following the calling off of the strike vote. “We only heard about it at lunch. It may have been to try to get people out to vote. Normally not many people vote in the delegate elections.”

A second worker spoke out angrily about the forced overtime that the UAW allows. “They are working us seven days a week. They won’t even give us Mother’s Day off.”

Another expressed disgust, suggesting that holding the strike vote alongside the delegate election was simply posturing by the UAW, that a deal had already been worked out. “That’s what they always do. The union and the company work together.”

Thomas, a SHAP worker, told the WSWS, “They said they came to an agreement, but we haven’t gotten any information about it. What was the agreement? Did they address the grievances? My perspective on the strike vote is that the International UAW appears to be leveraging pre-existing local union issues as a strategic campaign tool and presenting an inaccurate portrayal of

what happened.

“All of Fain’s people were elected in the local elections, and anyone opposing them was kept out. The local president made the decision to have a strike vote. But Fain and his Stand Up slate used it for their campaign.”

The attempt by the local officials to posture as champions of skilled trades workers is a transparent fraud.

The UAW has collaborated with the auto companies to impose multiskilling and cross training of the trades in order to help promote “efficiency,” that is, help management cut costs, undermining safety and job security for workers at the same time.

It has been over a year since the death of Stellantis skilled trades worker Ronald Adams Sr., who was crushed to death when an overhead gantry crane suddenly activated in an industrial accident at the Dundee Engine Complex in southeast Michigan, and the UAW has still done nothing to hold management accountable. His family has received no official explanation of what happened, in what appears to have been a breakdown of lockout/tagout procedures, which are supposed to be enforced by the UAW.

In 2020, Stellantis and the UAW worked together to impose a 12-hour, 7-day schedule on skilled trades workers at SHAP under the terms of contract language slipped into the 2019 national agreement. The schedule went into effect despite an outpouring of rank-and-file opposition.

The maneuver by the Local 1700 apparatus takes place amid signs of growing militant rank-and-file opposition. On Monday, workers at the American Axle plant in Three Rivers, Michigan, voted by 98 percent to authorize a strike if no agreement is reached before the current contract expires on May 31. This follows the 96 percent contract rejection vote of a UAW-backed concessions contract by workers at parts supplier Nexteer in Saginaw, Michigan. There is huge opposition to a second sellout deal, which workers on voting on this week.

Meanwhile, workers at key parts suppliers Dana, Bridgewater Interiors and other parts suppliers are facing contract expirations later this month and are determined to overcome a legacy of UAW betrayals that have saddled parts workers with near poverty wages, victimizations and unsafe working conditions.

As the UAW convention approaches, an insurgent slate led by rank-and-file Mack Trucks autoworker Will Lehman, who is running for UAW president, is winning wide support. Lehman is calling for the abolition of the corrupt UAW apparatus and placing power in the rank and file through the building of a network of rank-and-file committees as part of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC).

In a statement issued in response to the announcement of the strike vote, Lehman advised:

If workers want to defend their jobs, they need to take matters into their own hands. That means organizing independently, uniting across all divisions in the US and internationally, and preparing to fight on their own terms—not waiting for approval from a bureaucracy that is already preparing the next sellout.

This means building rank-and-file committees controlled democratically by workers ourselves. We should be the ones who decide when to strike and what demands to raise. Any other strategy can only lead to workers being betrayed once again. It requires a collective struggle led by the rank and file, not just at SHAP but across Stellantis and the auto industry, with our working class brothers and sisters internationally.

*Fill out the form below to join the fight for rank-and-file committees.*



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**