

After third contract rejection, Nexteer workers denounce UAW-management collusion: "What are we paying the union for?"

By our reporter
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Workers at parts maker Nexteer Automotive in Saginaw, Michigan are taking stock after voting down the third United Auto Workers-backed contract in a row. The vote was 55-45 percent to reject, with 59 percent of production workers voting “no” on May 28 and 29.

There is growing anger over the evident collusion between the UAW and corporate management to brush aside workers’ basic demands and impose management’s agenda.

The contract terms were only slightly modified from two previous tentative agreements pushed by the UAW, except that wage increases had been front-loaded to the beginning of the four-and-a-half year deal as a carrot to hard-pressed workers.

The latest sellout deal, brought in defiance of an overwhelming strike vote, has made clear that no amount of pressure will force UAW officials to wage a genuine fight on behalf of workers.

Despite the contract rejection, the UAW is still refusing to call a strike. Workers report that UAW officials are spreading rumors that an emergency meeting will be held this weekend and that an arbitrator could impose an agreement.

Warning against any “unauthorized” job action by the workers, a letter issued by UAW Local 699 bargaining committee after the vote insisted, “Any decision regarding a strike or work stoppage can only come through official union authorization.” Speaking like the enforcers for management they are, the letter continued,

“Until such direction is issued, all members are expected to continue working as scheduled.”

A worker with 16 years seniority told the WSWS, “I am glad the third TA was voted down. If we do strike, we stay until we vote to come back in—not like they did the last time [in 2025] that lasted only 12 hours.

“When you actually look at our last offer, it’s a five-year contract with only a \$3.00 raise! It’s a slap in the face. We have to work 40-50 hours a week to survive and we shouldn’t have to. It can cost \$60-\$80 and more for gas. We are drastically affected by high inflation. We’re not able to provide for our families. This company is making billions. This is why people are very irritated!”

Another young worker said, “I’m surprised the third one got rolled down, because they were really trying to bring all the bells and whistles off to try to get the newer hires to vote for it.”

He said that management was stepping up its harassment in the wake of the contract rejections. “The climate at work is completely different now, there’s a lot of different people coming in and out now. They had a bunch of news stations out here today, and a lot of different union higher ups.” He reported that UAW International Rep Jason Tuck and other top UAW officials were supposed to visit the plant Monday.

“They were trying to rush this contract before we saw what American Axle was getting,” he said, referring to the Sunday night contract deadline at the plant in western Michigan where workers have already voted massively to authorize a strike. “So it’s going to be an interesting next couple of days. There’s so much going

on behind closed doors. [UAW Local 699 Shop Chairman] Carl McKee and his people were in the plant today and people are frustrated with them. Nothing we ask for is really being done, and now the company is abusing us because we voted ‘no.’”

He said the UAW was allowing the company to violate the terms of the contract. “They’re abusing the ninth hour language. We’re only supposed to do an extra hour when the company really needs it. We hit 600 parts yesterday and got out after eight hours. Today, we hit 670 and they made us work nine hours. That’s a clear-cut example of them abusing the language just because we voted ‘no.’ And what are we paying the union for, if they let management do that?”

“What is so hard to understand about people wanting to live again? No one in there is really living. Everyone in there is surviving. There are a lot of younger workers—19-, 20-, 21-years old—and for some that’s good enough. They don’t realize that there’s so much more we could get. I know there is more because workers raised their kids on these jobs, so I know what you’re capable of doing if you’re getting paid enough.

“What is so hard about you paying me equal to the work I’m doing so I can live? I don’t want to come in here just to make enough money to pay bills. I want to take my kids on vacation.

“I want to take trips, have vacation time off without having to work all types of overtime to pay the bills. It’s just like you’re making it be a job where it’s just about surviving, when it used to mean so much more.

“The union officials say they’re doing what they can, that they’re listening to us. No, they’re not. If they were, this wouldn’t even be a conversation. It shouldn’t take this much for them to do the job we’re paying them to do. But they’re useless. A lot of them know they’re getting voted out. It’s about that time because this is just terrible, and many of us are working for \$18 an hour right now.”

A Nexteer worker with 20 years commented, “The Local 699 officials are trying to lay bull crap on us again. First, they tell us to vote ‘yes’—three times, and now they tell us after we voted three times against the TAs, to keep working!

“I’m so proud of the production workers for voting this down! It wasn’t enough, and I’m sick of it! It has to stop, and we have to stop it.

“I want to walk out with the American Axle workers.

That’s what we should do. A strike would shut down GM and Stellantis for sure. That’s what we should do. American Axle and Nexteer workers can open the path for other workers. Enough is enough.”



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