

“We need to join hands in a common fight!”: Open letter from Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee to our brothers and sisters on strike at American Axle

Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee
7 June 2026

The following is an open letter to the 1,000 workers on strike at American Axle in Three Rivers, Michigan from the Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee in Saginaw, Michigan. Workers at the Nexteer Automotive plant in Saginaw, Michigan have rejected three United Auto Workers-backed contracts and are fighting to join the American Axle workers in a common strike. Contact the Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee at nexteerworkersrfc@gmail.com or text (947) 622-2198.

The Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee sends you our sincerest solidarity. When you walked out, workers at our plant were ready to join you on that picket line. That is exactly what hundreds of Nexteer workers have been saying since the moment your strike began.

But UAW President Shawn Fain, Region 1D Director Steve Dawes and the rest of Solidarity House have not allowed us to strike. Instead, they have brought back four contracts based not on our demands, but those of Nexteer’s management. We voted down the first tentative agreement by 96 percent on April 1-2. We voted down the second by 73 percent on May 14-15. We voted down the third on May 28-29 by 55 percent.

We forced the UAW to hold a strike authorization vote and voted May 20-21 to strike by 86 percent. The UAW International responded by ignoring our vote, repeatedly extending our contract without consulting us, and declaring any walkout “illegal.” UAW Servicing Rep Jason Tuck, who makes \$148,476 a year, came to a membership meeting, swore and threatened us with plant closure for rejecting the second deal. When he saw we were not intimidated, Tuck stormed out.

Region 1D Director Steve Dawes, who collects over \$229,813 a year in salary and expenses, went on TV to

call the fourth TA “a great agreement.”

That is another lie.

Starting pay remains at \$19.50 an hour. Top pay reaches \$27, but not until 2030. That is the same wage workers earned at the former GM Saginaw Steering plant in 2005, worth \$45.65 in today’s dollars. This means that by 2030 we would still be earning 40 percent less in real terms than a quarter century ago. The tier system remains intact with a 48-month progression for new hires. The only difference is the signing bonus bumped from \$2,500 to \$3,000. There are zero protections against layoffs, while as many as 400 workers face job elimination through automation and plant consolidation.

We intend to throw the latest TA into the garbage like we did the last three.

We tell you this because the greatest solidarity we can offer is not photo-ops or social media posts. It is telling you the truth about what you face, from our own experience.

The carnival con

The UAW bureaucracy’s strategy is a carnival con. You know the booth where you throw a baseball to knock over a bowling pin. The carney controls which pin gets set up. For the crowd, he puts up the light pin, and it goes down easy. When it’s your turn, he swaps in the heavy pin, and no matter how hard you throw, you can’t knock it down.

UAW officials set up the light pin when they called your strike. Before the walkout, the UAW allowed CEO

David Dauch to run the factory at full speed to stockpile axles for GM. The strike was timed to end before the UAW's 39th Constitutional Convention, which opens June 15 in Detroit, with politicians like Governor Whitmer, Christopher Swanson, Abdul Al-Sayed and other Democrats using your picket line as a campaign backdrop. Solidarity House does not want a real strike capable of overturning decades of wage cuts. They want a controlled walkout that they can shut down on schedule and parade as a "victory" before UAW delegates.

If you persist and demand what is rightfully yours, you will get the heavy pin. UAW officials will tell you: "Don't demand wages that offset inflation, don't fight forced overtime, don't call for other parts workers to join you. Push for any of that and Dauch will move production to Mexico or Poland." They put that heavy pin in front of us too: ignoring our strike mandate, extending contracts behind our backs, and threatening binding arbitration if we kept rejecting their trash. Different tactics, same pin.

But we didn't fall for it and you shouldn't either. After all, it's our lives and our families at stake in this fight, not the bank accounts and cushy jobs of Fain, Dawes and their underlings. That is why we must have the final say.

Build your committee and coordinate with us

After being sold out again and again, we were convinced we had to take the conduct of our struggle into our own hands, and you will see you have to do the same. Build your own rank-and-file committee, independent of the UAW apparatus, accountable only to your membership. Demand open negotiations—no more "highlights" packages concealing what is being surrendered. Set non-negotiable demands: wages that recover what was stolen in 2008, real cost-of-living protections, elimination of all tiers and protection against automation-driven layoffs.

Our fates have long been connected. Both of our companies sprang from GM in the 1990s after it spun off its parts division to impose wage cuts. Both of us have suffered under a UAW bureaucracy that, in the name of "saving jobs," allowed the destruction of our wages, pensions and thousands of jobs. Now auto parts workers from Three Rivers and Saginaw to Bridgewater and Dana are demanding what was robbed from us.

We have the real power. A common strike across parts

suppliers would bring the whole industry to its knees. Just-in-time delivery means assembly lines run dry within days. If we appeal to Big Three workers and they refuse to handle scab parts, our movement would be a tsunami capable of knocking down every heavy pin the bureaucrats and politicians put in our way.

We want what you want: raises that compensate for increases in fuel, food and living expenses; COLA pegged to the real rate of inflation; fully paid medical and retirement benefits; an end to forced overtime and speedup; protections against automation-driven job cuts; and substantially closing the wage gap with Big Three workers.

One last point: Dawes and other union bureaucrats have told workers not to listen to "misinformation" from "unauthorized channels" and "social media." By this they mean statements from the Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee and reports from the *World Socialist Web Site*, the only news outlet that has honestly covered our struggle and allowed us to voice our concerns.

According to Solidarity House, we are supposed to believe every golden word that comes out of the mouths of UAW bureaucrats and forget what we've seen with our own eyes. Well, Mr. Dawes, we weren't born yesterday, and neither were the American Axle workers. We will continue to tell the truth and fight to unify auto and auto parts workers to win back everything you and the rest of the company stooges in the UAW apparatus have taken from us.

In solidarity,
The Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File
Committee—Saginaw, Michigan



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact