

Nexteer worker fired for opposing UAW sellout

Sheila Brehm, Jerry White
11 June 2026

Antwiane Sanders, a worker at the Nexteer Automotive plant in Saginaw, Michigan with more than 10 years on the job, was terminated this week after speaking out against the fourth Tentative Agreement (TA4) at a contract “roll-out” meeting held on company premises. His firing, carried out through the direct collaboration of a UAW International Representative and plant management, has provoked outrage among workers at the Saginaw facility and drawn attention to the increasingly authoritarian methods the UAW bureaucracy is employing to push through a contract that the membership has already rejected three times.

Sanders’s termination is a political act—a deliberate warning to every worker at Nexteer who has voted “no,” spoken out in a meeting, or refused to go along with what the bureaucracy and the company have negotiated behind closed doors. It must be reversed immediately.

What Happened

The roll-out meeting at which Sanders was targeted was itself a departure from established practice. Traditionally, meetings to discuss tentative agreements have been held at UAW Local 699’s union hall, away from the prying eyes of management. This meeting, like those held for the third TA before it, was conducted inside the Nexteer plant, in a company conference room, with management in close proximity. The roll-outs are also being conducted in small groups of approximately 30 at a time—a format that limits workers’ ability to see the full extent of opposition to the contract and coordinate with one another.

At the meeting, Sanders—a committed “no” voter and an outspoken critic of TA4—reportedly called Jason Tuck, the UAW International Representative conducting the roll-out alongside Local 699 Bargaining Chairman Carl McKee, a “bum.” He then left or was removed from the meeting and went to the break area to wait for his work group, which was still inside.

Sanders himself described what happened in a post addressed to his coworkers: “I know I did what anyone else would have

did and most did—cause some people didn’t even go to the meeting. I went to the break area till everybody else came back and went right to work.”

An HR manager was summoned and Sanders was escorted from the plant and fired. A Nexteer worker who spoke to the WSWS confirmed the sequence of events: “He was ejected from the meeting and went to a break room and waited for everyone else to return. The management came and escorted him from the plant and fired him.”

Word circulating on the shop floor is that someone on the UAW Bargaining Committee reported Sanders to management. The WSWS has not been able to independently confirm this and workers with direct knowledge of what occurred are encouraged to come forward. What is not in dispute is the central fact: a UAW representative facilitated the termination of a worker for opposing the contract he was there to sell.

US consumer prices jump as workers pay for American imperialism’s war on Iran

A Nexteer rank-and-file worker contacted by the WSWS was unequivocal: “It’s collusion. Since when does a union rep go to management and report someone and get this person fired? They are not behind us. If they get away with this, you or me could be next. What are they going to do next? Go after everyone who votes no? This has to be stopped.”

The bureaucracy’s function is not to represent workers. It is to police them—to manage discontent, suppress opposition, and deliver a compliant workforce to the corporations. The firing of Antwiane Sanders is that function in its most naked form. This is the same apparatus that has ignored an 86 percent strike authorization vote, repeatedly extended contracts behind workers’ backs and done everything possible to pit workers against each other to ram through a contract that will leave workers with a poverty wage of \$27 an hour after four years.

Workers have described the fourth tentative agreement as nearly identical to the previous three they rejected. Having failed to push the contract through with signing bonuses,

upfront raises for young workers who will be the first to face layoffs as the company consolidates, the apparatus has turned to intimidation. Tuck is no stranger to this. At at May 17 meeting at the union hall, he cursed workers and threatened them with a plant closure if they voted down the deal. Failing to intimidate workers, he stormed out of the meeting. Tuck, who was rewarded with an UAW International position and a \$148,000 salary for ramming through a 2021 sellout deal when he was a UAW Local 699 official, has not been held accountable for “behavior unbecoming of a union member,” an action that is in violation of the UAW Constitution.

The conditions workers are forced to endure at Nexteer further underscore what the bureaucracy’s collaboration with management means in practice. On Thursday, June 11, an ambulance was called to Plant 3 at approximately 3:30 in the afternoon. EMTs brought a gurney into the facility for a female worker suffering from chest pains and vomiting—symptoms workers attributed to heat exhaustion, with temperatures inside the plant reportedly approaching 100 degrees. Approximately 50 yards away, in a shaded gazebo in front of the company offices, management was holding a party with guests enjoying cool drinks. The contrast of an ambulance hauling a worker out of a sweltering plant while executives drink in the shade fifty yards away says everything about the literal sweatshop conditions that the UAW enforces for management. This is the daily reality that Antwiane Sanders, a 10-year worker at that plant, was fired for daring to protest.

Democratic rights on the shop floor

Calling a union representative a bum is not a firing offense. It is free speech—the expression of a worker’s legitimate frustration with an official whose record has thoroughly earned him that characterization. A member of the Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee told the WSWS that the firing was aimed squarely at the broader workforce. “This was an act aimed at intimidating all the workers in the plant,” he said. “They are planning to hold the vote in the plant too so management can see workers—so workers can’t openly campaign against it, or face being fired. Antwiane has the right to speak out, just like anyone else. Management, the UAW and Donald Trump may not think we have freedom of speech, but we don’t live under a dictatorship yet.”

The firing of Sanders is part of a pattern in which the UAW apparatus functions as an enforcement arm of a broader effort to strip workers of their democratic rights on the shop floor. At Ford’s River Rouge complex in January 2026, worker Thomas “TJ” Sabula was suspended without pay after calling President Trump a “pedophile protector” during a plant visit. It was an outpouring of solidarity from workers and the broader

public—not any action by the UAW—that ultimately forced his reinstatement.

Co-workers say Sanders was working seven days a week, sometimes twelve hours a day, to make ends meet. He attended a meeting he had every right to attend, said what he had every right to say, and attempted to return to work. As the rank-and-file committee member put it: “There is an old principle that earlier generations of workers believed in—that an injury to one is an injury to all. We should demand that he get his job back immediately and not accept any contract until he’s back to work.”

The repression at Nexteer is taking place within a broader effort by the UAW apparatus to extinguish rank-and-file resistance across the auto parts sector before the UAW Constitutional Convention opens in Detroit on Monday. The UAW has reached a tentative agreement with American Axle (Dauch Corp.) and is rushing to end the 10-day strike in Three Rivers, Michigan before it leads to major disruptions for GM and other automakers.

The same dynamic is playing out at Dana Incorporated, whose workers in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Missouri have rejected UAW-backed contracts by margins exceeding 90 percent.

Earlier this week, the Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee, which is actively campaigning to defeat the fourth sellout agreement, issued an open letter to the striking American Axle workers. It said in part:

“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.”



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact