

# On second day of UAW convention Fain apparatus blocks debate, rams through anti-democratic motions

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On the second day of the UAW Constitutional Convention in Detroit, the administration of UAW President Shawn Fain stepped up its efforts to bureaucratically stifle debate while ramming through a series of amendments to the constitution aimed at strengthening the income and salaries of the highly paid officials staffing the union apparatus.

In between self-congratulatory and vacuous speeches by a series of officials in Fain's circle, the UAW apparatus used underhanded maneuvers to force through amendments expanding the income and salaries of the already lavishly compensated international officers and staff.

The methods employed by the Fain apparatus to control the convention went beyond even the strong arm tactics used in the past, demonstrating the fraud of the claim by the Fain administration and corporate media of a "reform" administration.

In an attack on democratic rights and in violation of normal parliamentary procedure, the UAW rammed through a change in the rules to allow only one speaker in favor and one opposed per region for resolutions. The apparatus appointed a resolution committee to arbitrarily exclude all but five of the 74 resolutions voted on and submitted by locals, but allowed all 35 resolutions introduced by International officers.

After thus bureaucratically limiting debate, the UAW apparatus secured passage of a constitutional amendment to raise the cap on the strike fund that triggers an automatic dues reduction from the current \$850 million to \$1.3 billion. Under current language any time the strike fund exceeds the cap, monthly dues must be decreased from 2 ½ hours pay to 2 hours.

This provocative move, aimed at keeping dues money flowing uninterrupted to the apparatus, triggered

significant opposition from the floor. However, the UAW leadership quickly shut down debate and rammed through passage. A counter resolution calling for a lowering of the cap was blocked from coming to the floor.

After this heist of members dues, the IEB secured passage of another amendment raising the salaries of Shawn Fain and other top union officers by around \$30,000 each.

Another amendment raised the amount of money the IEB can withdraw directly from the strike fund from \$60 million to \$100 million. The constitution already allows for the diversion of a percentage of interest income from the strike fund, giving the apparatus a direct financial incentive to suppress strikes. The apparatus bureaucratically scuttled a demand for a roll call vote that would have forced delegates to go on record supporting the diversion.

Another amendment mandates that when oversight by the federally appointed UAW Monitor ends, an Election Advisory Council, election supervisor and adjudications officer hand picked by the apparatus will oversee elections. The Council will formulate election rules and the Election Supervisor will have final say on all appeals. Such a procedure guarantees that "oversight" of the rights of members to vote will be conducted by the bureaucracy itself.

Sue Pratt, a nurse and president of UAW Local 2213 in Toledo, which represents 900 nurses at St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center in Toledo, tried to bring a resolution to the floor after gaining the necessary delegate support but was arbitrarily blocked for not being able to cite the exact page number in the convention resolution book.

Delegates interviewed by the *World Socialist Web Site* commented on their firsthand experience with the undemocratic methods utilized by the apparatus. Heather,

a delegate from UAW Local 1243 in Whitehall, Michigan at a small aerospace shop said that despite a 100 percent membership vote during contract negotiations, the UAW International would not grant strike authorization. “To vote to strike and not strike was disappointing. We were told our contract was a good one and we had to take it,” she said.

“We shouldn’t have union workers making scraps. I make less money every year. I am a single earner household. Every wage increase is eaten up by insurance.

“We average \$1.25 a year raise, but everything else goes up, so we are not really seeing a raise. Everyone is struggling and we are considered the better paid workers. It’s got to be better. The new people don’t want to deal with the rules and the pay isn’t great. In a month they are gone.”

Referring to the struggle by auto parts workers at Dana and Nexteer who decisively rejected contracts she said, “If these people are voting down their contracts numerous times there’s definitely an issue.”

Speaking about Fain’s backing of Trump’s tariffs. “That’s what I want to hear. When I heard Fain speak last time, he seemed to agree with some things with Trump, which I heartily disagree with.”

“It doesn’t make sense to me he could be a Trump supporter; it doesn’t align in my mind.”

Tom, a worker at parts supplier Nexteer in Saginaw, who came down to observe the convention, explained how workers had voted down three contracts brought back by the local but UAW officials had blocked a strike despite an overwhelming strike authorization vote.

He spoke on the firing of Antwiane Sanders, a co-worker at Nexteer who was targeted by the UAW after speaking out against the fourth sellout contract at a roll-out meeting on company property. “We would like to see him back on his job with back pay before we vote on our next contract. They are trying to intimidate members who speak out against any former authority, they are supposed to listen. They are trying to quiet us. They are trying to eliminate any dissent. They are trying to remove us from the facility if we do speak out.

“The apparatus does not want to change its ways. They were caught in the corruption scandal. We had two international presidents who served jail time. What they are doing today smacks of total suppression of opposition. It reminds me of what Trump is doing.”

Kamara Bond, a Toledo Dana Driveline worker who was victimized and unjustly terminated for reporting unsafe conditions, told the WSWS that she tried to get

into the convention as an observer but was refused entry because the UAW claimed she was not a member in good standing.

After the session, Sue Pratt, who is also an activist in the opposition Unite All Workers, spoke with the *World Socialist Web Site*.

“Fain says he is for reform and he is not. If you make all these rules you are not for reform. The mainstream media gives them (Fain administration) good press, but that is not what is really going on.

“Our local submitted three resolutions. A lot of effort went into these resolutions but they were all killed in committee. If it is not accepted by the resolutions committee it takes 128 delegates to bring it to the floor, which I got. They told me they wouldn’t accept it because I didn’t know the page number. They created havoc with the resolution books. In fact we were never notified if our resolution was accepted or not.

“Only one person from each region can speak for or against. No amendments are allowed. They cut off debate over lifting the dues cap after only four regions spoke.” Pratt said she had specifically wanted to raise a point about the way the money diverted from the strike fund was being spent, or rather wasted.

Speaking on the diversion of strike fund money to the international she said, “If they stopped taking money out we would have a strong strike fund. Instead they are getting exponential salaries. That extra half hour dues make a difference. We have workers in our unit who don’t even have money for gas or lunch. Lowering the dues would make a difference for them. No union official should be making more than a worker.”

Pratt said she opposed the refusal of the UAW to grant press credentials to the WSWS, noting that the WSWS was the only media that covered their bitter strike against St Vincent Mercy Hospital in 2019, a strike that was betrayed and shut down by the UAW International on management’s terms. “We were essentially fighting on two fronts” (management and the International), she noted.



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