“We cannot be contained—the rebellion is real”: Autoworkers welcome nomination of Will Lehman for UAW president

Our reporters
18 June 2026

Autoworkers continue to respond with enthusiasm to the nomination of Mack Trucks worker and socialist Will Lehman to run for United Auto Workers president. Lehman was nominated Wednesday by two delegates to the UAW Constitutional Convention in Detroit, which concluded on Thursday.

Lehman issued a statement thanking the delegates from Florida and Michigan who rose to nominate him and every delegate who pledged to nominate him but were denied the chance under the rule limiting nominations to two.

The statement read in part:

> I want to thank every worker who made this nomination possible—every autoworker, parts worker, academic worker, healthcare worker, casino worker and retiree who shared this campaign and contributed to it… This campaign is directed against that apparatus. It is about the fight to transfer power from the bureaucracy that has dominated this union to the rank and file—to the workers on the shop floor.

“I’m glad to hear that Will got nominated,” said Dan Aguinaga, a Stellantis Jefferson North Assembly Plant worker who ran for a delegate position at UAW Local 7 as part of Lehman’s Insurgent Slate. “This is a step in the right direction to turn the union into something that actually works for the worker and bring the UAW back to its original intention.

“It’s sad how the UAW is driven by ulterior motives when we should be looking at issues as a class thing. They try to divide us between the right and the so-called left. But the Democrats are against us too: Obama deported more people than any president before him. Biden outlawed the railroad workers’ strike. It really left a bad taste in my mouth to see Biden on the picket line with Fain during the strike in 2023.

“I ran on Will’s slate because I knew there had once been a different kind of union, not the one that has been going on for a while. What happened at Nexteer where a worker was fired to speaking out against an UAW International Servicing Rep was inexcusable. The union went to the company to get him fired. Will is going to fight to build a movement so we can defend ourselves, from the company and the apparatus.”

Also speaking out were workers from Nexteer Automotive in Saginaw, Michigan who have voted down three UAW-backed sellout agreements and overwhelmingly backed a strike, which the UAW International has refused to authorize.

“I’m happy Will was nominated!” a Nexteer worker with 20 years said. “The UAW officials don’t want anyone to stand up for the people. They say they support us, but they don’t. And I’m not the only one who feels that way.”

“Fain hasn’t done crap for us parts workers, and the same is true for the assembly workers, even though he said the ‘Stand Up Strike’ was a victory for them. The International UAW and the rest of them are paid way too much. No official should receive more than the highest paid worker in the plant. I heard they voted at the convention to raise their pay $10,000—$30,000. That’s outrageous. We are losing more with every contract, and everything is being taken away from us.

“The union at Nexteer worked with management to

© World Socialist Web Site

fire Antwiane Sanders because he is opposed to the tentative agreements, including the fourth TA. We have not even been able to vote it down because the union won't set a date. I support Will's campaign."

Another Nexteer worker said, "Will is right! We have a big fight on our hands to give the workers from the shop floor the power. I pray we get rid of Fain and his caucus. More and more workers are seeing the big picture now."

Thomas Foster, a veteran Nexteer worker who came down to the UAW convention to campaign for delegates to nominate Will said, "One of the things I like about Will is that he's an outsider. He's looking at what the union has turned into and trying to bring it back to its roots as something that actually benefited the workers on the floor.

"At the convention, they increased the level the strike fund can reach from $850 million to $1.3 billion before our union dues are lowered. They're only trying to increase the money coming into the UAW. They are keeping our wages low. I've got coworkers that are in need who can't afford to buy a car.

"I'm so glad that Will has gained the position that he's going to be on the ballot, and it gives workers like myself, who are on the outside looking in, confidence we can fight. We're not even making the same wages that our predecessors did 25, 30 years ago. So, again, congratulations to Will, but it's only the beginning. He's kicked open the door, and now we're going to have to build this grassroots movement, these rank-and-file committees.

"In our case, we're fighting more against the UAW bureaucracy than we are Nexteer, because the company is in a partnership with what they're doing. They fired Antwiane to intimidate the workers, the people they are supposed to represent. The union officials are trying to quiet any dissent. They don't want anyone who is going to rock the boat. They don't want anyone who puts the UAW hierarchy in danger. They look at the members as a people who contribute money, and that's about it. They are not looking to service our needs, our wants."

Referring to Will's call for the building of rank-and-file committees to empower workers on the shopfloor, he said, "We need to work every day to expand the process, until we encompass every department. You just can't stay within your small section. You have to start making the field bigger. We need to end up with people who voice their opinion against the apparatus and make sure they don't get terminated because they use their freedom of expression. In the United States, we still have the First Amendment, you know, Mr. Trump hasn't squashed that, but if our UAW starts using his tactics, they're no better than what the MAGA movement is."

Will also received congratulations from Kamara Bond, a Detroit area Dana worker who was victimized for speaking out over safety conditions at her plant. At the UAW Constitutional Convention, Kamara campaigned for Lehman but was denied entry to the proceedings because UAW officials claimed she was not a member in good standing.

"Just read that Will was nominated," Kamara wrote. "I totally agree. WE CANNOT BE CONTAINED. THE REBELLION IS REAL and real recognize real. Will is a real one."

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site