

Workers welcome 2-year suspension of UAW International organizer for death threat against Will Lehman

Our reporters
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Autoworkers and other workers across the country have responded enthusiastically to the disciplinary actions taken against a top United Auto Workers official who issued a death threat against Will Lehman, the Mack Trucks worker and socialist who is running for UAW president. On August 4, the court-appointed UAW Monitor stripped Raymond Jensen Jr., an organizer for the UAW Department of Bargaining Strategy, of his membership for two years and barred him for life from union office after ruling that his threat violated federal election rules.

On July 16, the former assistant director of Region 9—Lehman’s home region—went to the candidate’s public Facebook page and posted an AI-generated image showing Lehman bound and gagged, blood dripping from his mouth, with a masked figure pointing a rifle at his back. Jensen, whose account featured the slogan “I support Shawn Fain,” posted the threatening image under a statement Lehman had published on the criminal investigation of Fain by federal prosecutors.

Monitor Neil Barofsky found that the July 16 post violated Rule 4-4 of the 2026 election rules, which prohibits threats, intimidation, retaliation and reprisals of any kind. In an interview with the Monitor’s investigators, Jensen acknowledged that the account and the post belonged to him. Jensen—who was paid \$202,000 last year—is also barred from taking part in the campaign of any candidate this year and must apologize directly to Lehman.

The Monitor was compelled to act due to the flood of rank-and-file opposition to the gangsterism of the UAW bureaucracy. Lehman publicly denounced the attack and warned that it was aimed not only at silencing him but at every worker who opposed the apparatus’ collusion with corporate management. During a campaign visit to the Detroit area in mid-July, he spoke to workers at several Stellantis plants, the Ford Dearborn Truck Plant, Bridgewater Interiors and Nexteer Automotive in Saginaw. Condemnations were also issued by other workers in the United States, along with workers and young people in Canada, Mexico, Britain, Türkiye, Australia and New Zealand.

For two weeks, Fain and the UAW remained silent about the

threat. During the July 30 UAW presidential debate, Lehman confronted Fain, demanding that the UAW president publicly repudiate the threat from his paid UAW International organizer. Fain replied, “I don’t condone that stuff,” but quickly added, “If you’re running for president, get ready, brother, because you’ll be getting them every day,” effectively doubling down on the threat.

After the Monitor’s actions, several workers spoke with the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Thomas, a worker at the Stellantis Sterling Heights Assembly Plant (SHAP), said: “Congratulations. Will achieved a significant victory in addressing corruption, bullying and threatening behavior. This is standard practice within a compromised UAW. Many individuals have experienced this, resulting in job loss due to these actions. This has led to the loss of homes and other assets, with some individuals even experiencing homelessness. No one should have to endure such circumstances. This is within a supposedly democratic UAW, specifically from international officers. This is a victory especially [for] those who have been wrongfully terminated. These people need to get their jobs back.”

Dan, a Stellantis worker at the Detroit Assembly Complex-Jefferson plant, said, “I wholeheartedly believe that the discipline handed down to Raymond Jensen was completely appropriate. It’s one thing to attack a person’s ideas and disagree with them. It’s quite another to stimulate an attack on the person themselves, simply because they hold a differing opinion. That type of behavior is exactly how real world violence begins. There is absolutely zero room for UAW leadership to engage in that type of mentality. It’s a sad day that we need a monitor to babysit us like we’re toddlers, but yet here we are... it’s high time for a change in leadership that actually has integrity.”

A member of the Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee in Saginaw said, “Jensen got what he deserved. Although personally, I feel he should be terminated. After all, he did threaten Will’s life. This is how Fain, his cronies and his followers act. It’s good that he can’t run for office and has to go back on the floor and actually work.

“We said at the time—a threat to one is a threat to all! It was really a threat made against the rank and file. Fain and the apparatus are worried that Will could win the election. This means that a lot of workers support Will.”

A worker at the American Axle (Dauch Corporation) plant in Three Rivers, Michigan said, “Wow! I’m glad there is something being done about this. Why has the union gotten so violent with members instead of redirecting towards these companies? This only shows the public the misuse and abuse of power, that the current apparatus is weak in its stance of the opposition. This kind of behavior only shows and proves they are not in office for the people but for self-interest. Shaking your fist at someone is not going to win over the masses but push them away. If done appropriately, this headline could be used as the best example of corruption and abuse of position.”

A Stellantis worker in Kokomo, Indiana said, “Cool to hear about Jensen,” adding that the UAW bureaucrat’s effort to intimidate and silence Lehman “reminds me of supervisors laying hands on workers here.”

A Chicago autoworker commented on Jensen’s suspension, “As he should. He should be fired.” Another Chicago area UAW member said, “Congrats on your victory on the threatening post!!” A Dana worker in Pennsylvania added, “That guy who posted it got what he deserved.”

Support came from other sections of workers too.

A healthcare worker from Ohio said, “This is a tremendous victory for the militant rank-and-file UAW members, workers, campaign supporters and Will himself for putting himself on the line as a socialist worker organizer and leader. I believe that forcing the issue of the vicious threat and the obvious attempt to intimidate him and the rank and file, including during the debate, was a major factor in securing this victory.”

A leader of the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee in Springfield, Massachusetts said, “Raymond L. Jensen, Jr.’s death threat against Will Lehman shows how terrified top labor union officials have become of the very people they are supposed to defend and represent. These actions are horrific, disgusting and truly deplorable. This is tantamount to union-sanctioned violence against working people who want them to be held accountable for failing to do their jobs. Mr. Jensen seems more concerned with protecting his \$200,000 salary and is willing to go so far as to threaten human life to do so. He has no business serving in any kind of union capacity and should be forced to resign immediately.

“He should not be suspended for two years but fired. What he did was dangerous, illegal, childish and extremely unprofessional. You cannot trust someone of such character to lead; he is not a leader. He just showed the people his inner thoughts. He should be charged and held accountable for his disgusting actions, especially while holding a seat as a higher officer.”

In a statement issued Wednesday, Lehman thanked rank-and-file workers internationally and said they forced the Monitor to

take action.

I was the target, but I was never the only one. Workers face threats and intimidation from the union bureaucracies all the time. Antwiane Sanders was recently fired at Nexteer for standing up to UAW officials in his own plant. Workers are victimized, isolated and driven out of their jobs for opposing this apparatus, in plants across this country, week after week, and almost none of it is ever investigated or penalized. Most of those workers have no lawyer and no campaign behind them. That is the real climate in this union, and one finding does not change it.

Lehman warned against drawing the conclusion that workers can look to the state for protection, saying, “The Monitor’s office exists only because this apparatus stole from its own members on a scale that sent more than a dozen officials to prison, including two former presidents. It did not prevent that corruption, and it has not stopped the victimization of workers who speak out.”

He concluded:

The task of abolishing the apparatus and carrying out a fight for what we need is the task of the rank and file. So take this campaign forward. Vote for me in October, but do more than vote. Build a rank-and-file committee where you work, independent of the apparatus and answerable to no one but the workers who elect it. Link it to the committees at Nexteer, at American Axle, at Bridgewater, and to workers in Mexico and Canada and beyond. There is a rebellion already underway in this union, in the contract rejections and the strikes and the anger on every shift. Deepen it. Organize it. Make it something the apparatus cannot threaten its way out of.



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