

# 9,000 Stellantis workers in Canada vote overwhelmingly for strike against layoffs and threatened plant selloff

Carl Bronski, Roger Jordan  
20 October 2026

More than 9,000 workers across Stellantis' operations in Canada have voted by 97.3 percent for strike action to fight layoffs and the automaker's plan to sell off the Brampton Assembly Plant to a producer of military vehicles.

Pictures and worker reports confirmed a massive turnout at Caesars Colosseum in Windsor, where the 6,400 workers employed at the Windsor Assembly Plant got a negotiations update before casting their strike-vote ballots. Workers at the shuttered Brampton Assembly Plant and the casting plant in Etobicoke also voted last weekend to give Unifor a strike mandate.

Given the opportunity to express their determination to fight job cuts and eroding living standards, autoworkers filled the 5,000-seat auditorium to near capacity and cast an almost unanimous vote to strike. The huge turnout of rank-and-file workers stands in sharp contrast to the boycott of the United Auto Workers election across the border in the US where nine out of 10 workers abstained from the vote.

UAW President Shawn Fain, a vocal advocate of Trump's "America First" tariffs, was "re-elected" with the votes of just 6 percent of the membership. This was not due to "apathy" but the broad hostility of rank-and-file workers to the UAW apparatus, which has colluded with the attack on their jobs and living standards. Opposed to a common fight by workers across the borders, the UAW has not informed workers in the US about the strike vote in Canada.

For its part, the Unifor bureaucracy, like the UAW in the US, is committed to blocking any industrial action at all costs. In announcing the results of the vote, Unifor officials declared that a strike would only be the "last resort" and that outstanding issues with Stellantis could be resolved at the "bargaining table."

Even though the three-year contract for Stellantis workers expired a month ago on September 21, Unifor has yet to file a request for a "no board" report, a government-imposed requirement before any legal strike action can be taken. It would take 17 days after a conciliator issues such a report before Stellantis workers would be legally entitled to strike, meaning that the earliest they could walk off the job would be the second week of November.

None of the issues that motivated Stellantis workers to vote for a strike can be resolved within the framework of a collective bargaining struggle. That requires the waging of an industrial and

political counteroffensive against the global restructuring of the auto industry being carried out by the Detroit Three and their competitors, and the class war agenda of the ruling elites across North America. The push to boost corporate profits amid the transition to electric vehicles and to convert vast swathes of civilian production to manufacturing armaments for war confront autoworkers with the prospect of job losses, real wage cuts and worsening conditions in the plants. Opposing this requires mobilizing autoworkers in the US, Canada and Mexico—as well as other manufacturing workers in steel and related industries—in a common fight against the global corporations and the capitalist governments that defend them.

The strike vote is all the more significant in the face of Stellantis' systematic campaign to intimidate workers with the threat of losing their jobs or extended layoff. It imposed a two-week layoff at its Windsor operations at the end of September. After workers briefly returned to the job earlier this month, the company announced that a new three-week layoff would begin on October 19, the same day of Unifor's announcement of the strike vote result.

Unifor President Lana Payne initially set September 11 as the deadline to reach agreement with Stellantis on the concessionary pattern-contract already rammed through at Ford and GM operations in Canada, which cover about 8,000 workers.

Payne has insisted that no deal will be signed with Stellantis until it outlines a plan to bring a new production model to the idled Brampton Assembly Plant in the foreseeable future. Some 2,200 workers there have been on layoff since 2023, following repeated extensions to a shutdown that was initially justified by the company as necessary for the transition to EV production.

Stellantis is currently planning to sell the Brampton plant to "combat-proven" armoured vehicle producer Roshel, which expects to cash in on the Carney Liberal government's massive rearmament program that aims to spend 5 percent of Canada's GDP on war and war-related infrastructure by 2035.

Stellantis management has also refused to rule out layoffs on the third shift at its giant Windsor assembly plant, and rejected providing a guarantee for job numbers at its small casting facility in Etobicoke.

Unifor's determination to prevent a strike flows from its Canadian nationalism and corporatism. The bureaucracy's main

concern is to retain its “partnership” with the auto bosses, and the federal Liberal and Ontario Progressive Conservative governments, with which it works closely to protect the interests of Canadian big business. Payne sits on Prime Minister Mark Carney’s Canada-US trade war Advisory Council and heads a union that is one of the loudest champions of the corporatist “Team Canada” alliance that suppresses the class struggle in the interests of corporate Canada.

This nationalist propaganda aims to subordinate the working class to the interests of Canadian capital by convincing workers that they are “in it together” in a “common struggle” with their capitalist exploiters in opposing Trump. In reality, Canada’s corporate elite has broad agreement with Trump’s social policies, including attacks on workers’ rights, massive cuts to public services and the redirection of society’s resources to waging war around the world. They merely complain that Trump’s “America First” agenda, summed up in his repeated threats to annex Canada, cuts Canadian capitalism out of profits at home and abroad.

For over four decades, Unifor has worked tirelessly to split autoworkers in Canada from their class brothers and sisters in the US. The nationalist split by the Canadian division of the UAW in 1985 to form the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), Unifor’s predecessor, was an integral element in the union bureaucracy’s trampling on all the militant traditions forged by North American autoworkers in the mass organizing struggles of the 1930s and 1940s. It set in motion a decades-long race to the bottom that was facilitated by the whipsawing of wages, benefits and jobs back and forth across the border with the complicity of both the UAW and CAW/Unifor.

In the last round of contract talks in 2023, Unifor deliberately opted for a three-year contract with the Detroit Three rather than the traditional four-year agreement to ensure that the contracts for Canadian workers would not expire simultaneously with those of their US colleagues in 2027. Three years ago, they displayed their bitter hostility to any joint action by US and Canadian autoworkers, with Payne infamously declaring that Unifor was determined to pursue its “own, Canadian course.”

In recent remarks, Payne has said the Unifor bureaucracy’s preferred solution to the impasse with Stellantis is to restore the Jeep Compass model to the Brampton plant, which would end plans to return more than 3,200 American workers from extended layoff in Belvedere, Illinois.

Rank-and-file autoworkers have consistently spoken out against this foul nationalism when given the chance. Mack Trucks worker and socialist candidate for UAW president Will Lehman’s recent statement calling for a joint struggle of US and Canadian autoworkers to stop the job cuts at Brampton Assembly was warmly received by Stellantis workers in Windsor. When a campaign team visited Windsor Assembly earlier this month to discuss Lehman’s program of abolishing the union apparatus, returning power to the shop floor, and uniting American, Canadian and Mexican autoworkers, one Stellantis worker responded, “The whole industry in North America has always been integrated. Now, throwing tariffs on, like they are a ‘Canadian product,’ it’s not fair. It’s better to be always united together, like as one supply chain and one auto manufacturer.”

Another added, “At one time US and Canadian workers were in the same union. We can’t win if we are separated. We need to get back together because the governments and companies, the big money, are destroying us.”

The powerful strike vote by Stellantis workers shows that they are determined to fight the job cuts. That sentiment must now be oriented to a program of struggle, mobilizing autoworkers across North America against the dictates of the auto bosses, their partners in the government, and the Unifor and UAW bureaucracies.

No genuine struggle in defence of jobs will take place unless Stellantis workers build rank-and-file committees in Windsor, Brampton and Etobicoke to seize control of the fight from the pro-corporate, nationalist Unifor apparatus. These committees must coordinate strike action and construct a joint movement with autoworkers in the US, Mexico and internationally through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC).

Resistance is spreading across North America. Twelve hundred workers at National Steel Car in Hamilton, North America’s principal rail car manufacturer, are now in their third month of strike action, fighting to put an end to a murderous piece-rate pay regime. Some 500 steelworkers at Stelco in Hamilton and Nanticoke face layoff, while some 23,000 workers at US Steel and Cleveland-Cliffs, which owns Stelco and is throwing the Canadian workers out of their jobs, are being forced to continue on the job on contract extensions—now more than six weeks old—agreed to by the United Steelworkers to block a strike.

The task is to mobilize workers internationally to defend all jobs, and link this to the fight for workers’ control over production and political power. Only then can society’s vast resources be deployed to obtain secure, well-paid modern industrial jobs for all, rather than to fill the pockets of the oligarchs and big shareholders.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**