

Details of second UAW-USW contract with Dana Inc. reveal massive sellout

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According to multiple sources, the second tentative agreement (TA) the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the United Steelworkers (USW) have reached with Dana Inc. is substantially the same as the first pro-company contract and meets none of workers' demands. Although the UAW and USW continue to withhold details of its agreement, some workers with knowledge of the deal told the *World Socialist Web Site* that the TA retains mandated overtime and contains a massive wage cut when accounting for inflation.

According to the agreement, workers would still max out at only \$22.50 per hour, just \$0.50 more than under the first tentative agreement. Initial reports show workers with more than five years will make \$21 in the first year of the contract, with an increase of just \$0.25 per hour every year until they hit \$22.

The deal is an insult to Dana workers. Nearly two months ago, workers voted "no" by 90 percent against sweatshop conditions, low wages, the 84-hour work week and 12-hour day, unsafe conditions with old machines, poor air quality and lack of air conditioning. Now, in the midst of a global strike wave involving John Deere workers, nurses, teachers, parents of schoolchildren and metal workers, the UAW and USW responded by keeping Dana workers in the dark for two months before agreeing to essentially the same contract workers rejected overwhelmingly.

Workers responded to the second TA with anger and insisted on strike action.

"This is going to be a big fat 'no' from me," said a worker from Dana's Fort Wayne, Indiana plant. "Once again Dana is slapping the people in the face that make them their money. The workers *are* Dana. Without us there is no Dana and its time they realize this. We deserve better not just for us but for our families. It's time we hit back and strike."

A worker at the Warren, Michigan plant said, "I don't

like it. \$22 is below inflation. We have to take a stand now and strike."

Another worker said, "Oh my, that's BS. The \$22 isn't very helpful to those of us that only have a year in, what about our pay raise?? I think it's BS that they are not touching [overtime] mandates. Starting pay should be \$22 with top pay of \$35. If we are going to strike, now is the perfect time to do so."

Inflation rose 5.4 percent from September 2020 to September 2021. If inflation remains constant over the five years of the contract, a \$22.00/hour wage in 2026 will be worth about \$17.00 in today's dollars. A \$0.25 per year raise for a worker making \$21.00 an hour equals just a 1 percent increase, far below inflation. With a five-year contract, Dana is preparing itself for the likelihood that inflation will be even higher, and that a \$22.00 an hour wage will be worth as little as \$15 in real terms by the end of the contract. But workers will not be able to do anything about falling further and further behind because the UAW and USW will have locked them into a contract until 2026 with a "no-strike pledge."

Does any worker think that Dana CEO James Kamsickas (salary \$10 million plus) or top "negotiators" UAW Vice President Cindy Estrada (2020 salary \$220,506) and USW District 7 Director Mike Millsap (\$153,498) are going to accept a cut in real pay over the next five years?

Workers require significant raises just to stay afloat. A gallon of gas cost \$1.77 in April 2020 now costs \$3.08—a 76 percent increase. From July 2020 to July 2021, rent rose 10.3 percent for the average family. From August 2020 to August 2021, the cost of meat, poultry, fish and eggs rose 5.9 percent. The cost of these staple food items is 15.7 percent higher than in 2019.

Wages are rising across the world as corporations face a scarcity of workers. Supply chains are breaking down, making companies like Dana ever more reliant on

exploiting workers' labor to churn out massive profits. Workers have labored for a year and a half in a deadly pandemic that has killed some Dana workers and hospitalized many. Meanwhile, Dana's executives and wealthy shareholders pocket millions in salaries and dividends.

Under the second tentative agreement, Dana workers would remain years behind the national average in terms of wages. In August 2021, information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows average nonsupervisory hourly manufacturing wages reached \$24.01, up from \$22.87 in July 2020 and up from \$20.55 from August 2016, just five years ago.

The UAW and USW are trying to exploit the economic desperation they have caused by waving a signing bonus, reportedly in the area of \$3,000, in front of workers. But after taxes, workers will see just over half this amount, which will be gone after a few of trips to the grocery store.

After ignoring the demands of workers for strike action to win a contract with substantial improvements, the USW and UAW bureaucrats are conspiring to ram the second tentative agreement through. Even though workers have been told nothing about the contract through official channels, workers report that the UAW has already scheduled a ratification vote for October 24 at Dana's plant in Paris, Tennessee. A vote is scheduled at Warren, Michigan on October 25, but an announcement by UAW Local 155 implies workers will not even be given the full contract before voting. One worker said, "It's easy to commit fraud if people are in the dark."

The UAW and USW are also trying to pit workers against each other based on seniority to undermine the unity of workers. But workers have seen these underhanded schemes before and in the last vote they told the union officials to take the contract and stuff it. They should do the same with the repackaged sellout deal.

Dana, the USW and UAW are desperate to get this contract through because the corporation is highly vulnerable at present to a work stoppage. Dana workers have never been in a stronger position not only to reverse decades of union-backed concessions but to win substantial gains for themselves and future generations.

A massive "no" vote is needed, along with the launching of an immediate strike. Dana workers should join the over 10,000 John Deere workers who walked out last week after rejecting a UAW-backed contract by 90 percent; the thousands of nurses on strike in New York, Massachusetts and other states; the 1,400 Kellogg's

workers and many others. Wall Street analysts are warning that this strike wave is threatening to reverse the "economic environment" of the last half century, where "revenues flow away from workers toward capital (i.e., investors)."

Rather than leading a fight, the UAW and USW are acting as strikebreakers, forcing Dana workers to produce parts that scabs at Deere are using to manufacture farm equipment behind picket lines. Dana workers confirmed that they make parts for Deere at least in plants at Danville, Kentucky and St. Clair, Michigan.

The conduct of this fight must be taken out of the hands of the company stooges in the UAW and the USW. On Friday, the Dana Workers' Rank-and-File Committee (DWRFC) published a statement titled "Dana workers: We should be on strike!" which outlined the demands that Dana workers must fight for. They include:

- Massive wage increases, especially considering rising inflation and hikes to gas prices, rent and the cost of living.
- An 8-hour-day and 40-hour-week
- Workers' control over COVID safety, with full pay for any shutdowns
- Workers' control of line speed, with no speedups
- New, clean machines, safety training and air quality
- Adequate air conditioning in all plants

The DWRFC statement concluded:

"We're only going to win what we need by fighting for it. We can only unlock our strong position in global supply lines by taking the initiative ourselves... This means developing rank-and-file strike committees with the following aims: To organize strike action *now* and join our brothers and sisters at Deere, to open lines of communication between workers in all departments on all shifts in each plant, to establish connections between the plants, with John Deere workers, Big Three assembly workers and workers internationally to fight for democratic discussion and unity in action."

To contact us for advice and assistance, email us at DanaWRFC@gmail.com or text (248) 602-0936.



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