

UPS workers denounce “miserable” tentative agreement

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25 July 2023

Tell us what you think about the tentative agreement at UPS. All submissions will be kept anonymous.

Less than a week before some 340,000 UPS workers were slated to go on strike, joining tens of thousands of actors and writers already on the picket line, the Teamsters announced on Tuesday that a “historic” and “game-changing” tentative agreement had been reached with the company.

The full tentative agreement will not be released to members until July 31. But the details that have been released make clear it is a major sellout. It keeps starting wages at a miserable \$21 per hour for new part-timers, totally inadequate for shifts that last between 3 and 4 hours. Raises for existing workers will total \$7.50 over the life of the five-year contract, which for delivery drivers amounts to a paltry 15 percent increase.

Rejecting the sellout tentative agreement is the first step UPS workers must take in order to get the contract they deserve. However, voting ‘no’ is not enough, UPS workers must take the initiative out of the hands of the Teamsters and begin forming a new rank-and-file leadership that will carry the struggle forward in the interests of workers, not union bureaucrats, capitalist politicians, or the corporation. The UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee is prepared to assist workers in this vital task.

“This contract sets a new standard in the labor movement and raises the bar for all workers,” claimed Teamsters General President Sean O’Brien.

Joining O’Brien in hailing the “historic” agreement were dozens of Democratic Party officials, many of whom had voted last year to ban a rail strike.

“Congrats to the @Teamsters on their huge win

securing a historic UPS contract!” wrote New Jersey Representative Josh Gottheimer, one of 211 Democrats who voted to block the railroad strike. “This is HUGE news!!!” wrote Washington Representative and chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Pramila Jayapal, another strike-breaking Democrat.

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, whose maneuvering allowed the strike-breaking bill to breeze through Congress, likewise issued his “congratulations” to “Sean O’Brien and the Teamsters.”

“This is a major victory for the American working class,” wrote Sanders.

In addition to strike-breaking politicians, the Teamsters retweeted statements from several official trade union accounts congratulating them for their alleged “victory.”

The self-congratulatory tone among the union bureaucrats and anti-worker politicians contrasts sharply with the mood among UPS workers themselves, who are denouncing the “miserable” contract and calling for a “no” vote.

A UPS Worldport worker in Louisville told the WSWS, “I really want to strike. If we hold out we can get more. My pay would go up to \$23.50 when the contract is passed and I’d have to wait five years to get \$28.50. But who knows what is going to happen in the economy five years from now?”

“In 2016, nobody expected inflation would hit record levels in a five years. We aren’t getting enough hours to live and there are people here struggling to get meals. Now, they want to push part-timers to use their own cars to deliver packages during peak season. They’re offering eight hours to make it sound like

they're doing you a favor; but it's nothing but gift-wrapped BS. Are they going to pay for your car repairs?

“They are also only offering 7,500 more full time positions. So many people are being left out. My whole life I was told you could make a career at UPS, they'll take care of you. The benefits will carry you until you get a good paycheck when you roll over to full time. But the older guys can't afford to retire, and 7,500 new slots is nothing.”

The worker concluded, “I really wanted to strike. This deal is not enough. There is so much on social media about the support for UPS workers and a strike. We voted 97 percent to strike. But the Teamsters president is making \$350,000 a year and is part of the top 1 percent. The union executives have their own interests, which is so dis-aligned with what a union is supposed to be and fight for. They're answering to Biden and UPS not the workers. We have to reject this deal and fight.”

Another Worldport worker told the WSWS that “\$21 is basically what we're already getting paid,” due to market rate adjustments by management to entice enough workers. “That is a miserable agreement.”

A part-time worker in Chicago said they needed to see “some specific contract language before I feel good about anything. [There is] no mention of guaranteed hours, and the raise they gave was something that should have been done years ago. Even the ‘increase by \$7.50 over the length of contract’ thing doesn't sounds good...I don't have faith it's gonna make the difference it should be. Inflation most likely is gonna eat that up and that's not even considering we are already behind inflation as far as the pay rate goes.”

Another UPS worker said, “I still have to see the contract. I see they made some improvements, but it seems short and didn't really address some of our larger issues, but I have to wait for the official contract.”

They added that “the ‘longevity wage increase’ of \$1.50 seems low, and the building I'm working in is

already paying people \$24, off the street.” The worker noted that they “haven't seen any information on the pension. Haven't seen an information on the MRA issue...”

Seeking to clamp down on workers' anger over the sellout agreement, UPS workers have informed WSWS reporters that their comments are being censored on union- and UPS-controlled online forums such as Browncafe. UPS workers have been flocking to alternative social media outlets, such as Reddit, to freely discuss the contract and begin organizing for a “no” vote.

“I'm supposed to be happy the union did what they were supposed to last time and strike down a bunch of concessions UPS demanded of us?” wrote one worker on social media. “I'm supposed to be happy with wage increases that still leave the working class losing buying power? I'm supposed to be happy UPS offered what they were already giving part timers through out Covid-19 in bonuses for showing up to work and competing with other industries by raising their part time pay?”

“Nope, I'm good voting no. We can do better, hold them accountable.”



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