

# Autoworkers support call for new UAW elections: “This time everybody’s vote should count”

Shannon Jones  
9 July 2024

Supporters of the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter* received strong support for the call by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) to hold new elections to remove the discredited UAW bureaucracy headed by President Shawn Fain.

The IWA-RFC issued the call following the June 25 ruling by US Judge David Lawson for the Eastern District of Michigan in favor of a lawsuit brought by rank-and-file Mack Trucks worker and socialist Will Lehman. The judge rejected the US Labor Department’s efforts to dismiss Lehman’s complaints over violations of members’ rights during the 2022 UAW election, the first direct membership vote for top officers in the history of the union.

Lehman ran for UAW president against Fain and incumbent Ray Curry. Judge Lawson ruled that the rejection of Lehman’s complaints by Biden’s Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su had been “arbitrary and capricious” and the department’s reasoning “irrational.” Only 9 percent of the more than 1 million eligible UAW active and retired members voted in the election.

Fain is the target of a renewed investigation by the court-appointed UAW monitor put in place following the years-long federal corruption investigation that sent two former UAW presidents to prison. On Monday, the monitor revealed that he is investigating allegations that Fain retaliated against UAW Vice President Rich Boyer for refusing to take actions “that would have benefitted (Fain’s) domestic partner and her sister.” According to the *Detroit News*, Fain’s partner is a financial analyst at the UAW-Chrysler National Training Center (NTC).

The NTC was the center of corporate bribe payments to UAW bureaucrats, designed to make them “fat, dumb and happy,” according to statements by Fiat Chrysler officials. After working under several officials directly involved in taking bribes, Fain was appointed co-director of the NTC as part of the UAW bureaucracy’s damage control efforts.

The monitor has accused Fain and other top UAW officers of interfering with the investigation by refusing to hand over thousands of documents the monitor has requested.

Referring to Fain, one Warren Truck worker told WSWs campaigners, “He shouldn’t just be thrown out, he should be thrown in jail.” Another worker said, “Yes, we need a new election, the last one was so corrupt.”

Workers at Warren Truck were hit last week with the layoff of the second shift, affecting 1,600 workers. They have been told the layoffs will last at least through the month of July. This follows the mass firing of temporary workers, also known as supplemental employees (SEs), by Stellantis earlier this year including 171 at Warren Truck. In order to obtain ratification of the sellout 2023 national auto contract, Fain and Boyer had promised that all SEs with more than nine months would be promoted to full-time positions.

“We need a new election, and this time everybody’s vote should count,” another Warren Truck worker said. “That way there will be a fair chance for everybody. I didn’t vote in the first election, and I’m pretty sure a lot of people didn’t either. So, a lot of those numbers were inaccurate. So whose votes really mattered?”

Her co-worker added, “I didn’t vote either. I think a new UAW election is a great idea. That’s what we need, with the shift cutting. At first, I thought the stand-up strike was right,” she said referring to the UAW’s tactic of keeping most workers on the job while only a few workers went on strike. “But when it came to the SEs, they did them terribly. They used their votes to get elected. They used their votes to get this contract passed.

“We could have gotten so much more had Fain pulled us all out. The SEs work harder than some of the full-timers. Some of them were here for three years. And it’s been non-stop, they’ve been firing them, and the turnover rate is ridiculous. People have bills and families to take care of. The workers on the shop floor should be the ones with the power; we are the ones who are putting the money in the pot.”

**“Workers are tired of the UAW from the top president down to the stewards”**

A veteran Warren Truck worker told the *Autoworker Newsletter*, “Workers are tired of the UAW from the top president down to the shop steward. Fain said: ‘I want to get money for you guys.’ But they accepted a new policy on attendance,” he said referring to the new, more punitive system implemented in the 2023 contract. “You can’t take a vacation day on a Monday or Friday, you have

to take the whole week. Second, if you are sick, or you try to use a PA (Personal Absence) day and the supervisor doesn't approve it, you get two points.

"Everything is disgusting. If you use FMLA, you still get points. They say they are going to rotate layoffs between the first and second shifts. You hear the news that second quarter sales went down 21 percent, that's why it's affecting us. In Europe, they are having a crisis because of the war in Ukraine. They are taking our taxes and sending the money over there for war. I heard that they plan to bring in new managers from Italy; they want to start cutting jobs. Nobody likes this contract because they tricked us and screwed us, big time. Fain promised everybody, 'don't worry about the jobs,' but right now, soon this plant is going to be nothing but a warehouse."

Fain, he added, was promoting Biden who is backing Israel's wanton slaughter of the Palestinians. "We're working six and seven days a week, and workers don't have time to consider what's going on. But I tell them, the reason you can't afford healthcare, the reason why your kids can't afford college, is because the government is giving all this money to Israel."

Several former Stellantis SEs contacted by the WSWS also spoke out in favor of a new election.

An SE who was laid off from the Detroit Assembly Complex-Mack said, "I definitely would like to see a new election. Will Lehman deserves it. I just hope Will isn't up against too much corruption where he can clean house, because if he wins, I'm sure he will."

Natalie, another former Stellantis SE, said, "Only 9 percent voting? That was definitely corrupt. I understand what happened. They tried to silence Will.

"Someone has to speak up, I say let's do it [fight to rerun the election] and see what we can do.

"Everyone should be replaced. Boyer, the vice president, spoke at our contract ratification meeting. He told us that 'we are not leaving the table until we have everyone accounted for. We are not leaving the table until we stop the abuse of SEs. We are not leaving the table until we get you all profit sharing. We are not leaving the table until we make it easier for you guys to get converted over.' So, to everyone it seemed like they were working in our favor, and it turned out to be the opposite.

"I've seen the changes in the UAW. The union used to be a separate entity. The union was supposed to be for the workers and fight against the companies. Now, they have come together and merged. It should have never gotten this far.

"In my honest opinion, I think the stand-up strike was a waste of time. Nothing got resolved out of it. It was designed not to work; it was like stalling for time.

"It would have been more effective if everyone had literally just stopped work. If we stopped work, everything would collapse."

She denounced the exploitation of temp workers. "Why is it even legal to make profits off of people? That is like slave mentality. You won't give them enough to be able to live but you want them to live, work and die. You are placed in a position where you are not going to be able to stay where you work, no matter how hard you try.

"Anywhere you go in the Big 3 they pay their workers like trash.

It's horrible the way this society is being run by the top 1 percent. They are adamant about keeping things the way they are. It's 2024, everyone should be able to have a leg up. Fortunately, there is hope, especially with things like this."

A veteran Ford worker also spoke in support of a new election. "What you wrote is a clear cut case for a re-election. The UAW got caught. Then Will's lawsuit overturned what the monitor had to know were baseless reasons disallowing valid complaints.

"The monitor should have been replaced for his role in this fiasco. The law firms he used should be investigated, sanctioned and fined for their role in this."

Lyle, a retired GM worker in Michigan and supporter of Will Lehman, said, "A new election is a good idea. The last one was a setup deal. The judge basically admitted it was crooked after ruling against Will the first time. There should be a new election if every member is notified and given a ballot to make it democratic. There also have to be witnesses to count the ballots for every candidate.

"Fain sold out the workers in the auto industry. The stand-up strike kept most workers in the plants, making profits. It didn't hurt the companies. After the contracts were signed, the temps were fired. Fain is not a do-gooder and reformer. People have to organize committees in the shops. That's the only answer, the only way around the bureaucracy. Real democracy means the people that are affected have the say-so, including on how to fight.

"The Supreme Court decision giving the president immunity to violate any law that they call an 'official act' is insanity. A president could have people in the unions assassinated; he could send out the army to stop strikes and kill workers. They are leaving workers no alternative but to take matters into our own hands. Either the government gives us democracy or we will have to revolt—and the government is killing democracy all the time. The courts are against us, the laws are against us. Revolution is the only answer, in my opinion. Jefferson said the people had the right and duty to revolt if the government violated our inalienable rights. Let's get busy and revolt."



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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