

Support the Dakkota workers strike! Ban scab parts and launch a rank-and-file counteroffensive!

Ford Chicago Rank-and-File Committee, Dakkota Workers Rank-and-File Committee
16 August 2024

Autoworkers: Fill out the form below to get involved with the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network at your plant.

Brothers and sisters,

We, the rank-and-file autoworkers of Dakkota and Ford Chicago Assembly, are appealing for the broadest mobilization of support and solidarity for the strike at Dakkota. To prevent the strike from being defeated, we call for workers to take collective action and refuse to handle scab-made parts at Ford Chicago Assembly.

It's clear that the UAW bureaucracy is ignoring the will of the membership at Ford Chicago (CAP), which is disgusted at being ordered to work with scab parts. If there were a vote held tomorrow at CAP on whether to stop work in solidarity during the Dakkota strike, there is little doubt that it'd be overwhelmingly in favor.

The reality is that the UAW bureaucrats are working on behalf of the companies to divide us. Every day that Ford continues building SUVs, the strike at Dakkota is undermined and weakened.

Urgent action and real solidarity is needed, not just words. Dakkota is a critical battleground in the class war being waged by the corporations against the working class. While the companies are trying to suppress wages at the parts suppliers, they're simultaneously accelerating their global jobs bloodbath.

Last week, Stellantis announced it will permanently lay off 2,500 workers at Warren Truck near Detroit, nearly two-thirds of the factory's workforce. Many workers at Warren Truck had already been transferred hundreds of miles from the idled Belvidere Assembly Plant near Rockford and are once again facing unemployment.

Therefore, we have to expand the momentum of the strike at Dakkota to mount a rank-and-file counteroffensive across the entire auto industry. What is needed is a unified fight, from Dakkota, Tower, Lear, Flex-N-Gate, and Dana, to the Big Three, John Deere, Caterpillar, academic workers and beyond!

These offers are a slap in the face!

Hundreds of workers at Dakkota have been on strike since August 7 after voting by 98 percent in favor of a walkout and rejecting the sellout contract proposal brought back by the UAW leadership by 87 percent.

Dakkota and the UAW agreed on a pitiful pay package, after we have endured years of poverty wages and soaring inflation during the pandemic. The UAW 3212 leadership, with the backing of the UAW International, brought back a deal with starting wages at just \$16.80 an hour, only 60 cents above Chicago's minimum wage, and rising to \$18 by the end of the contract in 2028. Senior workers would top at \$21 this year and \$25 at the end of the contract. These wages are an insult.

Dakkota's most recent offer was the same except with an increase of the signing bonus from \$1,713 to \$2,500. The UAW didn't dare bring it to a vote because they knew it would be massively rejected.

Our strike has been sabotaged from the very beginning, from the UAW International leadership under President Shawn Fain on down. So far Fain has said nothing about the strike while he campaigns for

Kamala Harris and the Democrats, who under Obama destroyed the living standards of autoworkers after the 2009 restructuring of the auto industry. Fain and the UAW leadership are giving \$1.5 million to the Democratic National Committee instead of providing those funds to support and expand our strike.

The UAW 3212 local leadership, which negotiated the previous terrible contract that we had to work under, allowed temps to be trained by us prior to the strike, who would then go on to be used as scabs against us. The union officials dragged their feet before finally calling a strike due to the overwhelming opposition among workers.

Meanwhile, Local 551 officials have said there's nothing that can be done about the scab parts. This is a lie told on behalf of management. There is a long history of workers refusing to handle products made by strikebreakers, going back to the 1894 Pullman rail workers strike in Chicago. The class struggle in Chicago and beyond has seen no shortage of rebellions against court injunctions and the ruling class' use of all the powers of the state against workers.

What is or is not achievable will be determined in struggle.

Build the Ford Chicago and Dakkota rank-and-file committees!

There is no doubt that the UAW bureaucracy will stand in our way and seek to continue sabotaging the strike. The so-called reform candidate Shawn Fain, shortly after he was elected in an election marked by voter suppression and low turnout, quickly sold out the Clarios battery workers strike, where his administration also refused widespread calls by Big Three workers for a ban on scab-made batteries.

Fain's so-called "stand up strike" at Ford, GM, and Stellantis last year was in fact a sellout. It kept the majority of workers at the Big Three on the job, while parts workers at the few plants that were impacted by the strike, such as Lear Hammond, were refused strike pay.

In the aftermath of the so-called "historic" contract, thousands of workers have been laid off or fired across

the Big Three and the auto industry as a whole. Ford Chicago itself has long had a target on its back, with industry analysts increasingly predicting that it will not survive the transition to electric vehicles.

The fight for better jobs, wages and working conditions requires a powerful rank-and-file counteroffensive. We must unite workers at Dakkota with workers at Ford Chicago Assembly plant, along with all the other parts workers in our area, and mobilize in unity with Warren Truck workers as well.

We cannot win this fight with a UAW "leadership" that is controlled by the other side. Therefore, we call for workers to join and help build the rank-and-file committees at Ford Chicago and Dakkota. Our committees are fighting for demands that are really needed by workers, and will not bow before what the companies and the union bureaucracy claims is "affordable."

We demand:

- A 50 percent immediate starting pay increase for all Dakkota workers. We should be making no less than \$30/hour starting pay.

- We also demand at least two weeks of fully paid vacation time for all Dakkota workers as well. The company shut down period is not real vacation time.

- A ban on all scab parts at Ford Chicago Assembly Plant. The rank and file must discuss and resolve to enforce collective action to ban the use of scab parts.

We appeal to all rank-and-file workers at Dakkota and Ford Chicago to join our fight and develop the rank-and-file committees as part of a network of rank-and-file committees organized by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC).

Don't stand on the sidelines! Sign up to join the fight now!



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact