A LETTER TO DELEGATES AND ALL UAW MEMBERS ON THE EVE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION



BY WILL LEHMAN
Mack Trucks worker and rank-and-file candidate for UAW president

The following letter was sent to a list of 300,000 UAW members maintained by the UAW Monitor on June 9, 2026.

The UAW Constitutional Convention opens in Detroit on June 15. Among the first orders of business will be nominations for executive office. I am running for UAW President and asking for your support.

I work at Mack Trucks in Macungie, Pennsylvania, and I will continue to work there if elected. I will not be moving to Solidarity House. The aim of my campaign is not to swap one official for another. It is to organize a rebellion against the dictatorship of the UAW apparatus and restore power where it belongs: the rank and file on the shop floor.

To every delegate: nominate me on the convention floor on a program of rank-and-file power. **To every UAW member:** press the delegates from your local to do exactly that, and join this movement. Contact me at willforuawpresident.org or write to willforUAWpresident@gmail.com.

WE CONFRONT AN ENTRENCHED APPARATUS

The convention is being held amidst an absolutely desperate situation. Inflation is accelerating, driven by the criminal war against Iran, while workers across this union are locked into multi-year contracts that erode living standards. The auto companies are using AI and other advanced technologies to carry out a jobs bloodbath.

At the auto plants, younger workers start at or below poverty wages; tiers have been renamed but not abolished. Health care workers face chronic understaffing, mandatory overtime, and wages that cannot keep pace with housing costs. Academic workers are paid stipends that don't cover rent in their own university towns. Educators face overcrowded classrooms and eroded benefits. Retirees have been sold out again and again, with defined-benefit pensions frozen as Social Security and Medicare are under relentless assault.

The bureaucracy has neither a strategy, nor any intention of carrying out a real fight. It must be stated plainly. There are two forces in the UAW: the rank-and-file workers who work every day and pay dues, and a bloated bureaucracy of highly paid officials who work against our interests at every turn. This has not changed under the Fain administration. It has only gotten worse.

American Axle workers are now on strike in Three Rivers, Michigan, but the apparatus is deliberately isolating them after allowing the company to stockpile parts for weeks. Less than 200 miles north in Saginaw, 1,700 Nexteer workers have rejected three UAW-backed tentative agreements and voted 86 percent to authorize a strike. The apparatus has told them, in essence: shut up and do what we tell you.

At Dana, the apparatus has extended contracts, deferred strike action, and announced a deal workers have not seen. At Harvard, the UAW shut down a 41-day graduate student strike without a contract or any meaningful concession.

Fain's "stand-up strike" in 2023 kept the majority of Big Three workers on the job while a handful of plants struck, producing agreements wiped out within months by inflation, layoffs, and broken promises. Three UAW brothers — Antonio Gaston, Ronald Adams Sr., and Gregory Knopf — have been killed at Stellantis and Ford since then. The federal monitor's reports have documented the same pattern of corruption, retaliation, and abuse of power that produced the criminal convictions of the last decade.

The UAW as presently constituted is a union in name only. It is controlled by a bureaucratic layer holding $1.1 billion in assets. Of roughly 1,000 International employees, nearly 470 take home over $100,000 a year. Fain earns $270,000; Secretary-Treasurer Margaret Mock, $247,000; the three vice presidents average $235,000; the nine regional directors, $220,000.

Below them sit 500 to 600 "International Representatives," paid $140,000 to $160,000 to function as industrial police, enforcing leadership decisions and suppressing rank-and-file dissent. One of these, Jason Tuck (income $148,476), cursed and denounced Nexteer workers after they voted down the second TA, then stormed out of the Local 699 membership meeting when workers refused to be intimidated.

Those who control this union live in another world. They don't have to face the problem of putting food on the table. They don't worry about speed-up and unsafe conditions. In exchange for their bloated salaries, they police the workforce on behalf of management and make sure strikes do not take place.

WHAT THE APPARATUS WANTS FROM THIS CONVENTION

The apparatus wants this convention to be a coronation that will rubber-stamp Fain's "Stand Up" slate — a rogues' gallery of Fain and former Curry supporters — with no accounting for the last four years and no opening for a genuine rank-and-file candidate.

The 2022 election, the first direct election in UAW history, forced on the bureaucracy by a federal corruption probe and a membership referendum, was held behind the backs of the membership, with outdated mailing addresses and little or no notice to the members. Turnout was 9 percent, the lowest of any national union election in this country.

The nearly 5,000 votes my campaign received under those conditions expressed a growing demand for rank-and-file power. Rule changes for this election are designed specifically to make it harder for workers like me to run. One member, one vote only has meaning if workers can vote for a candidate who is independent of the apparatus. Delegates have the power to take that stand. I am asking you to use it.

THE PROGRAM

My campaign proposes:

Abolish the bureaucracy and transfer power to workers on the shop floor. Place the union's $1.1 billion in assets under democratic rank-and-file control. End the system of highly paid International Representatives whose job is to police the membership and replace it with a network of rank-and-file committees elected by and answerable to shop floor workers.

End corporate collaboration. Replace 45 years of "labor-management partnership" and concessions with a strategy of class struggle. Restore wages, pensions, and retiree health care. Adopt a zero-layoff policy. Reassert the demand for a 30-hour week at no loss in pay. Establish rank-and-file control over line speed, staffing, and safety.

Build international solidarity. Reject the chauvinism and trade-war politics of the bureaucracy and both big-business parties. Unite American, Canadian, and Mexican autoworkers against the transnational corporations. Defend immigrant workers, our class brothers and sisters, against Trump's ICE gestapo.

Defend democratic rights and oppose war. Mobilize the industrial power of this union against police-state attacks on workers and against escalating global war.

This program will not be carried out by any official in Solidarity House. It will be carried out through rank-and-file committees in every workplace, accountable to the workers who elect them.

We are approaching the 90th anniversary of the Flint Sit-Down strike and the insurrectionary battles of the rank and file that led to the formation of the UAW. Whatever gains autoworkers and the entire working class have won were won through the rebellion of the rank and file. This is the challenge we confront today.

A CALL TO YOU

To every delegate: Take the side of the rank and file. Nominate me on the floor of the convention. Talk with your fellow delegates, and contact me directly before and during the convention.

To every UAW member: call, message, or meet with your local's delegates. Demand to know whether they will nominate a rank-and-file candidate or rubber-stamp the apparatus. Talk to your coworkers. Build a rank-and-file committee in your workplace, independent of the bureaucracy.

Reach the campaign at willforuawpresident.org or willforuawpresident@gmail.com. I will speak with any delegate or member who wants to talk.

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR WORKERS' POWER!

Get involved with the rank-and-file campaign in the UAW elections.

willforuawpresident.org/get-involved