IN LETTER TO UAW MONITOR, WILL LEHMAN DEMANDS RESPONSE TO PROTEST OVER FRAUDULENT UAW ELECTION



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

The following letter was sent by UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman to the court-appointed Monitor overseeing the UAW presidential elections.

On December 19, Lehman filed an official protest over the conduct and results of the first round of the election.

Dear Mr. Barofsky,

On December 19, I filed a protest with your office over the entrenched UAW leadership's systematic effort to suppress the vote in the first round of the national officer election. With the help of over 100 UAW members from over 50 locals from every region, I compiled overwhelming evidence that the UAW bureaucracy deliberately refused to give notice to the rank and file about the election in order to deprive us of a chance to kick the bureaucracy out of power.

Three weeks have gone by, and your office has not responded to my protest. Instead, you are proceeding to conduct the second round between Shawn Fain and Ray Curry, two candidates who each failed to receive the votes of 4 percent of the membership in the fraudulent first round. Yesterday, you held a debate between these two candidates, without inviting any of the other presidential candidates to participate, even though the first round has still not been certified. You have also begun sending out ballots in the run-off election.

This is typical of your firm's conduct of the election as a whole, in which you have ignored and overridden rank-and-file worker concerns in order to clear the way for officers who come from within the bureaucracy. It is becoming clearer to the rank and file why the UAW's corrupt leadership proposed your firm to oversee the election in the first place.

Here are 10 of the most important facts that my protest revealed:

1. The 9 percent turnout is among the lowest—perhaps *the*lowest—in the history of direct elections for national union officers.
2. The country with the lowest turnout in a national election in the world had double the turnout of the first round (Haiti, 18 percent).
3. Rank-and-file turnout was closer to 6 percent because tens of thousands of votes were cast by UAW officials and former officials, not actual worker-members.
4. There were more ballots marked "return to sender" (110,000) than there were ballots cast (104,000).
5. The UAW bureaucracy used an internal bureaucratic system (Local Union Information System) to inform the apparatus about the vote but not the membership.
6. Only about 10 percent of locals posted about the election on Facebook or their websites.
7. The UAW sent out mailer after mailer telling workers to vote for Democrats in the midterm election but decided not to send any notice about the UAW election.

8. Graduate student locals on the West Coast comprised of roughly 70,000 members saw turnout between 0 percent and 3 percent. Among 11,000 California State University members, just 29 votes were cast; among 9,000 University of Washington students, just 72 votes were cast, and among 48,000 University of California workers (who were on strike), turnout was 2.6 percent.
9. The UAW bureaucracy lied to temporary part-time (TPT) workers by telling them they could not vote.
10. The UAW.org's "member news" page did not make any reference to the election between July 29 and November 29, the four months before the election.

It is clear based on these and other facts in my protest that the first round of the election was not legitimate. As a result, no "run off" can be conducted unless it involves all of the candidates who ran in the first round as well. I have been excluded from the second round, as have all of the other independent candidates, including Brian Keller and Mark Gibson.

In my protest, I demanded there be a re-vote with all the candidates' names on the ballot, combined with a genuine notice to the entire membership. I wrote:

> ***This election was characterized by a deliberate suppression of the vote of the rank and file by the entrenched UAW leadership. The union intentionally failed to provide adequate notice to the rank and file, who are not accustomed to direct elections and would not ordinarily expect to receive ballots. This fact is confirmed by the extremely low 9 percent turnout. Hundreds of thousands of members were simply unaware that an election was taking place and did not vote. In some locals representing tens of thousands of younger academic workers, turnout was less than one percent… Under these conditions, the election results cannot be certified. Instead, ballots should be re-issued and a new election should be held. In the alternative, the names of all candidates should be added to the 'runoff.' In either case, this time adequate measures must be taken to prevent the union leadership from suppressing the vote and ensure that the entire membership is aware of the election and able to vote.***

I reiterate this demand and request a prompt answer explaining your failure to adjudicate my protest and your decision to press on with the illegitimate runoff between two candidates, who between them won the votes of a tiny sliver of the membership.

Will Lehman

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willforuawpresident.org/get-involved