

SECOND TIME AROUND: HIGHLIGHTS.....AND LOWLIGHTS

We voted no overwhelmingly and when it looked like there might be a strike we were ready. We were willing to make sacrifices to end the divisive tiers and uphold basic principles of union solidarity. We destroyed the idea that the wages of tier 1 workers hired before 2007 would disappear as they retired. The membership standing together against a divisive contract resulted in a path for second-tier workers to eventually reach top pay. FCA wanted to make first tier obsolete. We stopped the \$72-million dollar man in his tracks!

By now you may have read the new contract summary and maybe had a chance to view the entire contract on line (<http://uaw.org/uaw-auto-bargaining/>). Do you think we have made “significant gains” or is it merely an improved version of “divide and conquer?” Here are some lowlights in Tentative Contract #2.

1. Tiers have not gone away. By the end of the 2015-19 contract a large number of “in progression” workers will still not make the same as those hired before 2007. When the next new contract is negotiated, how do we know an eight-year progression will not be choked off just like the disappearance of the 25% cap? The inequality of benefits and pensions—which also affects trades—has not been rectified. (pp. 255-64) The fact that one tier gets a \$4K bonus while the other gets \$3K is a slap in the face. (p.144)

Current Mopar workers “in progression” now have parity but future Mopar workers will be condemned to a different wage structure, topping out at \$25 after eight years. (p. 256) Future plant workers top out at just \$22.50 after four years. (p. 256) Axle workers have an even lower top rate, \$19.86, than the \$22.35 under the contract we just rejected. (p. 257) FCA can hire all the Temporary workers it wants; current Temporaries top out as before at \$22; future Temporaries will max out at \$19.28. That's more tiers. (p. 277)

2. They'd like us to forget that Cost Of Living Allowance (COLA) ever existed. Real wages have fallen, with workers hired before 2007 losing \$4 an hour to inflation. With an inflation rate of 2.5% a year and no COLA, even with two 3% we will be even further behind in four years. We still don't get time and a half after eight hours or on Saturday.
3. A \$5.3 billion investment does not = more jobs. (p. 293) In fact Warren Truck is projected to lose 2406 jobs with SHAP only gaining 1751. Two-tier was justified by the argument that it would allow small car production to be brought back to this country. Now that wages have been pushed down they only want us to build the vehicles that generate maximum profit. But do we want to gamble with our jobs that gas prices won't go up? With climate change a stark reality, we need new products for mass transit, not a line of gas guzzlers.
4. And the list goes on. Skilled trades consolidation is moving full steam ahead. There still are too many unanswered questions about our health care. The attendance procedure still stinks. (summary p. 11) All retirees get is a lousy car voucher. (summary p. 19) AWS isn't going anywhere. (p.173) And don't you get a warm fuzzy feeling knowing “parties will meet in 60 days to discuss other alternative schedules?” (p. 278)

As they have done for decades, our International leaders joined with the company in putting FCA's corporate bottom line ahead of our human bottom line. Why else would they target the weakest company (FCA) first?

However we vote this time, the conflict between us and the bosses does not begin and end with a ratification vote. It is 24-7. As the rank and file we must prepare for the fight that lies ahead of us: to win back for the young generation the gains that past generations won for us through struggle and sacrifice.

Read the whole contract and vote wisely. We have power.

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