



Label Letter

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Union Label & Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Nearly Fifty Thousand UAW Members Strike at GM

The United Auto Workers' strike against General Motors Co. entered its fifth day on Sept. 20, with no end in sight. The strike of 55 GM plants began on Sunday, Sept. 15, in a wide-reaching battle over wages, health care costs, job security and seniority for temporary workers.

The strike is the union's first since before the recession. During the recession, the UAW allowed GM to hire a significant number of temporary workers and to offer slimmed down wage and benefit packages to its workforce to aid in the automaker's recovery. Since that time, the automaker has made record profits – \$35 billion in North America over the last three years. CEO Mary Barra's compensation is \$21.87 million (281 times an average GM workers' pay), all while GM closed several plants and moved more and more work to Mexico.

On the third day of the strike, GM announced it would cancel all employee health insurance immediately.

The strike is said to cost GM up to \$100 million per day and has caused temporary layoffs across the automaker's supply chain.

The economic multiplier for the motor vehicle manufacturing industry is 14.28 induced jobs for every one job in the industry. That means that the industry is taking a huge hit in addition to the hit taken by GM (source: <https://www.epi.org/publication/updated-employment-multipliers-for-the-u-s-economy/>).



UAW members began the second week of the strike on September 23. Several Democratic presidential candidates have joined them on the picket lines.

According to the Detroit News, the walkout is driven in part by the automaker's plan to move toward closing four U.S. plants — a threat GM withdrew with its plans to continue operating its Detroit-Hamtramck plant and to build a battery-cell plant in northeast Ohio.

Aside from keeping the Hamtramck plant open, a significant issue for strikers is the tiered wage system, under which some workers make significantly less than others for similar work.

Workers hired before 2007 make about \$31 an hour, and can retire with a lifelong pension. Those hired after them (now more than a third of the work force) start at about \$17 an hour and can work their way up to about \$29 an hour over eight years. They also have to rely on 401(k) retirement accounts instead of pensions.

UAW Vice President Terry Dittes, in a letter to members on Sept. 19, said "some progress has been made" in the

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ECONOMIC MULTIPLIER FOR THE MOTOR VEHICLE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

| Industry | Direct jobs | Supplier jobs* | Induced jobs** | Total, indirect |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Motor vehicle manufacturing | 100.0 | 935.8 | 492.1 | 1,428.0 |

* Supplier jobs include supplies of capital services (depreciation).

** Induced jobs include those induced by direct employment as well as employment supported in supplier industries, as well as public sector jobs supported by taxes.

TRICK OR TREAT



This Halloween, hand out these sweet treats made by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers' International Union members around the country.

The Union Label and Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO, does its best to verify products are union-made. If you find a product listed is no longer union-made, please email unionlabel@unionlabel.org. Always check the label as many products are made in both union and non-union facilities.

BCTGM MADE SWEET TREATS

- » American Licorice
- » Annabelle Candy Company
- » Bachman Company
- » Berkshire Hathaway (See's Candies)
- » Brown & Haley
- » Catterton Partners (Farley & Sathers)
- » Lindt & Sprugli (Ghirardelli)
- » Consolidated Brands (Boyer Brothers)
- » Hershey Company
- » Jelly Belly Candy Company
- » Hot Tamales
- » Just Born
- » Marshmallow Peeps
- » Mike and Ike
- » Teenee Beanee
- » Zours
- » Necco
- » Nestle USA
- » Russell Stover Candies
- » Montrose, Co.
- » Tootsie Roll Industries



Walk in My Shoes

Ray Terry Cutcher, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalman Local 49 & American Federation of Musicians Local 80



R.T. Cutcher adjusting a power switch machine, Ludlow, KY

Upon Graduating with an “industrial arts” major, the job hunt was on! I worked for a while in a body shop that bought and repaired wrecked Corvettes.

Then, one day, I was blessed with a “real job!” I had benefits that included work contracts, raises, health care, safety, retirement plans, etc.

After a while, I realized that these things don’t just happen. I received them because of my union. I decided I wanted to be a part of it.

I have since had the honor of holding the following positions:

- General Secretary-Treasurer and Local Chairman, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen Local 49
- Chairman and member, Norfolk Southern Railway Safety Committee
- Vice President, Chattanooga Area Labor Council, Tennessee, AFL-CIO
- Secretary-Treasurer/Delegate to the 100th AFM Convention, American Federation of Musicians of the USA and Canada Local 80
- AFM Local 80 Delegate to the Labor Council

It’s still a rewarding career and life after forty years with dual membership in the BRS & AFM.

United we stand, divided we fall... ■

SPOTLIGHT THE LABEL

Writers Guild of America, East



The Writers Guild of America, East is a labor union whose membership is comprised of over 4,700 writers and media professionals. Our members are the primary creators of what is seen, heard, and read across television, film, radio, and the internet.

Our members create everything from big budget movies and independent films to television dramas, sitcoms, and comedy/variety shows, from daytime television to nonfiction/reality television to broadcast, radio and digital news, from podcasts, web series, and animation to reality TV shows and documentaries.

The WGAE is run by its members. Members are represented by a Council comprised of an elected body of fellow Guild members. The Council meets monthly to review the reach and work of the union. Council elections are held annually, and all current members in active status are eligible to vote. ■

WHAT’S YOUR STORY?

In 150 words or less—accompanied by a picture of you at work...Help us walk in your shoes. We’re open to all union members, active, retired, laid off.

“We want rank and file members to help us to illustrate the rich, diverse tapestry of hard working men and women who make up the American labor movement. They are proud of their work and proud of the contributions they make to their communities,” explains Union Label Department President Richard Kline. “We want to demonstrate to American consumers and businesses that union labor gives added value in quality and reliability to products and services that are bought and sold.”

The pictures and stories we get will be published in the Label Letter and posted on the Department’s website—and perhaps in posters and other promotional materials. E-mail a Walk in Your Shoes to: union-label@unionlabel.org; or send by regular mail to:

Walk In My Shoes

c/o Union Label Dept. (AFL-CIO)
815 16th St. NW,
Washington, DC 20005 ■

UFCW Cancels All Kroger Contracts Due to ULPs by Fred Meyer

After more than a year of tense negotiations, UFCW Local 555 announced it would cancel contract extensions for CCK departments across Oregon and Southwest Washington over unfair labor practices.

UFCW 555 began negotiating with Kroger-owned Fred Meyer, QFC, and Albertsons-owned Safeway and Albertsons, about 15 months ago but negotiations stalled due to a wage dispute.

At an August 29-bargaining session, the local negotiating team said it received an offer that would have put wages below Oregon's minimum wage, which is set to rise to \$14.75 in the Portland area by 2022. When the union pointed that out, negotiators increased the offer to 10 cents above minimum.

At that same bargaining session, after Local 555 told management that its members had approved a strike the employers improved their offer slightly, but the Union says the two sides were still very far apart.

Following that meeting, in what the company calls a "contingency plan," Fred Meyer stores began advertising for temporary workers and hosting job fairs for temp workers.

In a statement issued by Local 555, the union charges that Fred Meyer "chose to intimidate, threaten and demean their employees (many of whom have given this company their life's work) by misrepresenting Union intentions and attempting to coerce workers into taking drastic measures."

The Union says that those and other actions — including seeking to pay temp workers \$15 an hour which is more than many employees currently make — taken by Fred Meyer amount to Unfair Labor

Practices. The Union has since filed a formal complaint with the National Labor Relations Board.

Local 555 says its negotiating team has consistently made two demands of the employer: Provide wages that allow workers to live and shop in the communities they serve; and Address the gender equity gap between Schedules A and B as identified by the union in May as part of the Women of 555 campaign.

According to the Union, "Fred Meyer stores, owned by the Kroger corporation, have refused so far to make a meaningful move to close the average \$3.53 gap between Schedule A and Schedule B that was published by the union in May and

reaffirmed by Olympic Analytics in August. Female workers at Fred Meyer stores are twice as likely to be funneled into lower-paying departments known collectively as "Schedule B" while men are twice as likely to be funneled into higher paying departments. Both studies find that the average woman would lose nearly a third of a million dollars over the course of a career. Employers proposals thus far would close this gap at the rate of a dime per year. UFCW Local 555 maintains that wage equity cannot wait 35 years and

continues to seek a much more substantial remedy to wage inequity for grocery workers.

"We recognize that Fred Meyer must make a profit in order to operate successfully, but it simply cannot continue to be done at the detriment of their employees... and definitely not by paying women less. Profits derived from blatant inequity run counter to everything we stand for," said Dan Clay, UFCW Local 555 President. "It is not okay for the men who run Fred Meyer to make more by paying women less." ■

"We recognize that Fred Meyer must make a profit in order to operate successfully, but it simply cannot continue to be done at the detriment of their employees...and definitely not by paying women less. Profits derived from blatant inequity run counter to everything we stand for."

**—Dan Clay,
UFCW Local 555 President**



UFCW Local 135 Rep Jon with a Ralphs' customer who promised not to cross any picket line.

Strike Averted at California Grocery Stores

In June, after months of stalled contract negotiation members at seven UFCW locals covering Central and Southern California voted to authorize a strike. UFCW Locals 770, 324, 1167, 135, 8, 1428 and 1442 represent the members at more than 500 California Ralphs, Albertsons, Vons and Pavilions grocery stores. By early September, with the strike date looming, UFCW announced that the parties had reached a tentative agreement, averting a strike.

The proposed contract outlines hourly wage increases for workers totaling \$1.55 to \$1.65 over the next three years, depending on the position. Workers also would get more money from their employers for pensions and healthcare.

Todd Walters, president of San Diego County UFCW Local 135 told the Los Angeles Times that "the contract is exceedingly good for the workers compared with previous deals."

Walters said that he had expected the union members to go on strike at Ralphs when the last-minute deal was reached in the early morning hours on September 8.



CWA Ends Historic Four-Day Strike at AT&T

On August 28, after a four-day strike, some 20,000 workers at AT&T in nine southeastern states went back to work.

In a statement issued on August 29, CWA thanked their members across District 3 for staying strong on the picket lines throughout what it called a “historic four-day unfair labor practice strike.”

“CWAers reached a handshake deal with AT&T Southeast,” read the statement.

Workers across the district walked out at midnight on August 24 citing unfair labor practices, demanding AT&T bargain in good faith. In its unfair labor practice filing, the union said that the company had not sent bargaining representatives that had the authority to make decisions.

“CWA members’ spirit and solidarity over the last four days showed the company that we would not back down until they bargained in good faith,” said CWA District

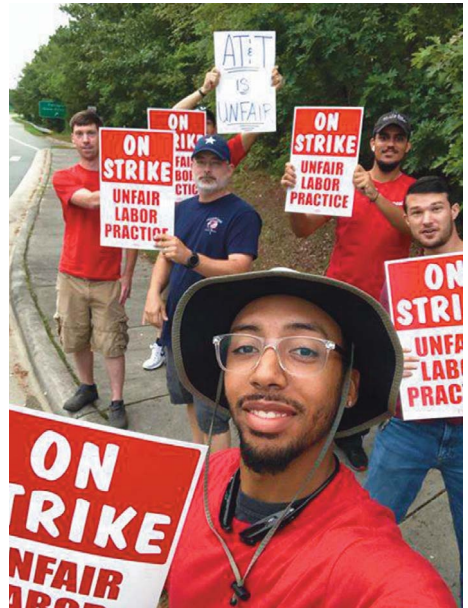
3 Vice President Richard Honeycutt. “This was a historic strike that showed the power that working people have when they join together.”

In a separate action, CWA Local 3120 members in South Florida initiated an unfair labor practice strike on August 22 after the company disciplined members for wearing union memorabilia and for participating in activities that are protected under the National Labor Relations Act.

CWA Local 3120 President Christopher Walterson said his members decided to strike “in response abusive practices by overzealous managers.”

Walterson said management’s suspension of seven members spawned action amongst his membership. He said he called an emergency union meeting after the suspensions and was surprised when more than 300 members showed up.

After discussing the company’s regressive actions, members voted to strike. ■



UAW STRIKE

FROM PAGE 1

negotiations, “but there are still many of our memberships’ issues that remain unresolved.” He said negotiators will continue talks “this weekend and beyond,” if needed.

“This strike is for all the right reasons: to raise the standard of living of our members and their families and for workers across this country, to achieve true job security, our fair share of the profits, affordable health care and a path to permanent seniority for temporary workers,” he said in the letter. ■



Photos courtesy of UAW

Advance Auto Parts Workers End Fifteen-Day Strike



Photo credit: LIUNA 1310

Nearly a year after voting to join the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA), Local 1310, 550 workers at the Advance Auto Parts warehouse in Weisenberg Township, PA, went on strike in September.

Union representatives said more than 90 percent of the Advance Auto Parts workers turned down the company’s proposal in August and voted to strike. The main sticking points were wages, healthcare, and working conditions, the union said.

“The pay is no good,” said Orlando Laboy, a 10-year employee. “The medical program is worse, and we’re trying to exercise our rights. That’s why we’re out here as a group.”

After 15 days on the picket line, the union announced on September 18 that it had reached an agreement with the company. In a Facebook posting, the Local thanked everyone for their support, including the Teamsters, who refused to cross the picket line to make their deliveries.

This is the first contract between LiUNA Local 1310 and the auto parts warehouse. ■

AFGE Sues Impasses Panel for Improperly Issuing Decisions

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), filed a lawsuit against the Federal Services Impasses Panel (FSIP) alleging that it exceeded its authority when it issued a decision imposing several anti-worker provisions in a collective bargaining agreement between AFGE and the Social Security Administration (SSA).

The suit was filed after the FSIP's recent decision to rewrite about a dozen bargaining proposals for the SSA.

The FSIP is supposed to have seven presidentially appointed members, who together serve as a component of the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA). But the FSIP has been operating with only six members since late May.

Because the panel lacks a seventh member, the FSIP doesn't have the authority to resolve an impasse, AFGE argued in its lawsuit. Specifically, the union argued that the May 29-decision the FSIP issued on the SSA's collective bargaining agreement should be invalidated.

In its argument, AFGE claims that the decisions are illegitimate and should be invalidated because:

- The statute creating the panel does not allow the panel to operate unless it has a full seven members. When the panel issued its decision in the SSA case, it only had a chairman and five members. The law contains no provision that gives the panel or its members the ability to exercise their powers during a vacancy. This contrasts with a provision creating the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA), which explicitly states that the authority can continue to exercise its powers even if it doesn't have all three members.
- The panel's members were not constitutionally appointed. Panel members are "principal officers" of the United States because they have significant authority and issue final and binding decisions that are not subject to super-

vision. Under the Appointments Clause of the United States Constitution, principal officers may only be appointed with the advice and consent of the Senate.

- In the SSA case, the panel exceeded its authority because it issued a decision that violated the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute (FSLMRS), which establishes collective bargaining rights for most federal employees.

AFGE says the panel's decision will "harm AFGE's abilities to represent its members and carry out its statutory obligations."

In 2017, President Trump discharged all FSIP members and replaced them with new appointees. After the terms of three of the members expired earlier this year, President Trump reappointed two of them leaving a vacancy.

Since then, the panel has been "rubberstamping anti-worker proposals from agencies that are similar to the provisions in Trump's executive orders, which seek to gut employees' workplace rights and destroy unions. Agencies have rushed to declare impasses during negotiations in order to send their proposals to be imposed by the panel," AFGE explains in an article on their website regarding the lawsuit.

AFGE says that the SSA proposed, and the panel approved, several provisions restricting the union's ability to represent bargaining unit members as required by law. The union argues that panel violated the FSLMRS when it imposed SSA's proposals on the parties. The union further argues that the FSLMRS "requires agencies to grant union representatives official time to perform representational duties in any amount the agency and the union agree to be reasonable, necessary, and in the public interest."

According to the Federal News Network, if AFGE is successful, the case could have a "sweeping impact over collective bargaining throughout government, as several agencies have turned to the FSIP to resolve disagreements between management and federal employee unions." ■

NLRB Rules IAM Can't Unionize Flight Line Workers at Boeing South Carolina

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled in September that flight-line workers at Boeing Co.'s North Charleston plant cannot join the International Association of Machinists (IAM) union as their own separate group.

The four-member panel's ruling voided the IAM's 2018 win at the facility.

"This decision is irresponsible and reckless. American workers are under attack from those who value corporations over working families," the IAM said in a statement. "We stand with the flight-line and all workers at Boeing South Carolina and justice will prevail when their voices are recognized."

In its ruling, the Board claimed that the proposed bargaining unit of just two job descriptions did not meet federal standards because the workers aren't distinct from the site's overall workforce of about 2,700 maintenance and production workers.

The decision drew ire from elected officials like Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) who tweeted, "NLRB's decision to deny Boeing South Carolina flight technicians from forming a union is simply wrong. I stand with the Machinists Union in their fight to bring justice and collective bargaining rights to workers at the South Carolina facility."

The NLRB's decision was issued just weeks after a regional director concluded there was merit to the IAM's charges that Boeing officials violated federal labor law when they fired workers shortly after the union won a representation election there. The director's finding advances that case to a trial in front of an administrative law judge.

The union has vowed it will "not back down at Boeing South Carolina." ■

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PERIODICALS
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TIME VALUE

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UL&STD thanks Ullico for supporting our mission.

EndNotes



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By Rich Kline, *President, UL&STD*

Labor's Popularity Grows with Worker Militancy



The popularity of unions is high. Sixty-four percent of Gallup-pollled Americans have a positive opinion of unions.

Interestingly, this rise in popularity coincides with a period of worker and labor union militancy. The strikes by teachers in West Virginia and Oklahoma had broad public support. Citizens in those states and elsewhere saw that the teachers were standing up for themselves and for the children they teach.

UFCW members threatened to strike and won a good contract from major supermarkets in California. Similarly, UFCW members in New England won after an 11-day strike against Stop & Shop markets. People, union or non-union, note when the worker wins a better deal.

CWA Members in the Southeast won a better agreement after a short strike in August.

Now the UAW has 50,000 members striking GM which earned \$13 billion last year and wants concessions from its workers. The GM workers are striking for what's right, a share of the profits, an end to the concessions granted the company when was it failing and fair treatment for all GM workers, including temps.

The public registers these events by approving the "stand up for the underdog" actions and attitudes of union members and union leadership. Many working people without union representation wish they had it.

In solidarity there is strength. That's not just a slogan, it's a call to win a better life. ■