

An Open Letter To UAW President Bob King RE: Hyundai & UAW Solidarity

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TheGMSource - Earlier this year Bob King was named the President of the UAW after Union rules forced Ron Gettelfinger into retirement. Since King has come onboard as UAW President the Union has seen quite a few disruptions. One of which is UAW members picketing its own Solidarity house in Michigan to dispute two-tier wages agreed upon at GM's Lake Orion plant that will produce the next-generation Chevrolet Aveo and other small cars.

Today though, the UAW and Bob King may have just outdone themselves with their intention to support temporary Hyundai employees who are on strike in Korea. I find it not only ridiculous or wrong, but outright angering.

A little over two years ago I went to work at General Motors Powertrain in Livonia, Michigan. My father had worked for GM and retired after 33.3 years of service to the automaker. Before he left, he was given the opportunity to refer one person to work for GM and that was me. I passed several written, phone and physical tests and was eventually given a call by the company in August 2008.

I went to work classified as a temporary employee of GM. That's how everybody starts at the company these days. There are no direct-hires. You start as a temporary employee and eventually get hired in as fulltime as positions open up. I saw a few layoffs here and there during my time at the company but was always given a call to come back.

I paid Union dues, even signed a Union card. My Union initiation fee was \$40 paid one time. My dues were equal of two hours of work per month for the Union. I made \$14.65, so \$29.30 a month was going to the UAW. Only there's one problem: I wasn't part of the Union and I had no Union representation. I was a temporary employee who paid dues, even a \$40 fee, but was never part of an organized labor group that I had to pay in order to work in my plant.

I was laid off last December when the UAW brokered a deal to bring laid-off employees from Pontiac Truck & Bus back to work because their plant had closed. Out on the street I was with no help from the UAW. No support, no "thanks for your hardwork", no "we'll get you back to work", and no "thanks for paying us \$29.30 a month for nothing."

My plant closed earlier this year and much to my surprise all employees that were "temporary" at my plant are now on permanent layoff. My name (and others) are not associated with any other GM plant for being recalled back to work. In Lake Orion, employee referrals from current employees will be taken to fill new second-tier wage jobs. Same with Lansing, and I'm assuming Detroit-Hamtramck as well once they add a second shift to produce the Volt.

I'm out on the street with no UAW support but Bob King feels the need to stand up and defend temporary Hyundai workers in Korea. His reasoning: "Bosses around the world, even at tremendously profitable corporations like Hyundai, are trying to reduce the number of permanent workers and expand the number of temporary workers, weakening the middle class," King has said. "We want permanent, middle-class standard of living jobs for every person working in the world."

Mr. King my question to you is this. How can I be forced to pay Union dues, never miss a day of work and do an outstanding job, but be allowed to be discarded without so much as a fight from the UAW to save my job? How can you stand up for temporary Hyundai employees who are on strike in a country thousands of miles away while I'm left to wonder if I'll ever be able to find a decent paying job here at home in Michigan.

I'm not asking for much. The friends I made in Livonia who have kids aren't asking for much. We're just wondering how the Union can justify turning their backs on us, but support a movement by striking Hyundai employees.

Where's the UAW solidarity?

Freep: [UAW rallies for Hyundai strikers in Korea](#)

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