

S.O.S. BULLETIN

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UAW Local 167 Says NO MORE Concessions!

Despite intense whipsawing and threats to close their plant, the members of UAW Local 167, a GM parts plant in Grand Rapids, MI. voted the concession contract down by a wide margin: 258 NO, 136 yes.

The UAW International Concession Caucus will be back, determined to enact the corporate agenda, but for now workers are staying solid. Why “vote till you get it right” when you got it right the first time?

The UAW Concession Caucus committed in the 2009 GM Addendum to negotiate competitive contracts with the “keepsites”. What they failed to do was get an agreement from the workers affected to drive their compensation below nonunion standards – and then charge them monthly dues for the service!

The decision to break the master agreement and negotiate separate contracts at each site makes individual plants more vulnerable to whipsawing. At the contract information meeting in Grand Rapids, Concession Caucus leaders promised members they would get work from other “keepsites” in Rochester, Kokomo, and Flint — if they agreed to concessions. But the plant manager, Ed DiEnno, said nothing about taking work from other UAW plants in his sales pitch the day before. That was just the Con Caucus whipsawing the crowd. Those promises were not in the contract and not in the power of UAW officials to promise. A week later, the Cons will deny saying it, but they'll leak the message to other plants so workers will feel the whip on their backs.

Workers can whip back too! We've got proof.

Overnight —after the plant manager's sales pitch met furious opposition— GM withdrew concessions on health insurance and told members their insurance would not change. It wasn't enough. Under the proposed contract, workers would lose not only a 3.75% raise that was due in January 2010, and another in January 2011, they would also lose 3% performance bonuses due in May 2010 and May 2011. That's a minimum of 4 times the \$1,000 sucker's bonus that GM offered. What a trade-off!

Each concession contract purports to make the plants “competitive”. But each year the contract is re-opened to make the plants “more competitive”. Local 167 said, “Enough is enough!”

There is no bottom in the drive to undermine the bottom line of the competition. A real union would maintain solidarity under the master agreement and adhere to the UAW Constitution, Article 19 Section 6, which forbids whipsawing. A real union would keep workers out of the competition, not whipsaw them.

Since the Concession Caucus is determined to promote the corporate agenda at all costs, it is now up to the rank and file. The rank and file has to become the real union.

If rank & file members vote these concession contracts down at all five “keepsites”, they can reverse the whipsaw and force GM to make concessions. At Local 167, activists distributed fliers. They talked the talk. They walked the walk. And together, they voted NO! to whipsawing and YES! to Solidarity.

“Tell workers at Local 167 that the Ford workers are all behind them. We are all in this together.”

— Gary Walkowicz, Bargaining Committeeman, UAW Local 600, Ford Dearborn Truck Plant.