

## **For immediate release**

“Autoworker Speakout” – Autoworkers Respond to the Conditions of Work Imposed Since the 2009 Bailout

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**What:** Autoworkers’ Speakout

**Who:** Sponsored by Autoworker Caravan, for Rank-and-file autoworkers, retirees, and concerned community members, free and open to the public

**When:** Sunday, September 9th, 2:00 PM

**Where:** St. John the Baptist Church, 2371 Woodstock Drive, Detroit 48203

(One block south of W. 8 Mile, off southbound Woodward Avenue)

**Why:** Often we read and hear in the news media about the “rebound” of the Detroit automakers, with the plants “pushed to capacity.” This is supposed to be “good news for autoworkers, “who are earning more overtime than they have seen in years.” (Detroit News, 8/28/12) The truth is that autoworkers are being pushed beyond their endurance. There is a lot of anger on the shop floor. The many issues include:

- Unsafe and unsanitary conditions;
- Excessive mandatory overtime
- “Alternative work schedules” that force workers to work two different shifts in the same workweek 10-12 hrs/day, all at straight time,
- Line speedups;
- Discrimination, harassment and favoritism;
- Outside contractors doing what used to be UAW members’ work;
- Harsh attendance procedures;
- Repeated plant transfers and loss of seniority each time;
- The abolishing and combining of classifications;
- Unbearable hot temperatures; and
- Unequal and divisive two-tier pay and benefits.

According to Martha Grevatt, a tool and die maker at the Chrysler Stamping Plant in Warren, MI and co-organizer of the event, “We are forever being told by the company, and too often our own union reps, that we should be thankful we have a job (or a pension). The media touts the “turnarounds” of GM, Chrysler and Ford as huge success stories. What isn’t mentioned is that the big profits and bonuses for stockholders and executives —the 1% — come at the expense of workers on the shop floor, their families, and retirees. The companies are socking it to us.”

In 2011, the Autoworker Caravan helped build a campaign around “no two-tier,” “reinstatement of COLA,” and other demands. Autoworkers’ voices were heard. Second-tier workers got a raise of almost \$4/hour. We did not get COLA but got bonuses we might not have gotten if we’d kept quiet.

“That’s what we need to do now,” according to Scott Houldieson, Secretary Treasurer of Ford Local 551 in a Chicago suburb. “If we want better working conditions, safe jobs and more respect at work, it’s up to us to speak out—not by ourselves, but together. That’s why we’re holding another speakout—to meet, compare experiences and discuss ways we can fight back to make our jobs better and safer, and build solidarity. That’s how we can rebuild our power!”