

Fighting for the Future of Our Union

To Our Sister and Brother Delegates,

Our Bargaining Convention comes at a critical time in our union's history. The UAW represents workers in both the private and public sector and, either way you look, we are getting the shaft. What past UAW bargaining conventions achieved in securing a decent standard of living for our members and their families is viciously being taken away in both sectors, including the right to collectively bargain. We must reject a 'business as usual' convention, and use this important gathering to unite across every sector of our union in defense of our collective bargaining rights, and to champion a bargaining platform that lets the employers know, the UAW is fighting back!

After last June's Convention, the UAW leadership kicked off actions of 'socially conscious' unionism in solidarity with migrant workers in the U.S. and super-exploited workers overseas. We applaud these belated efforts. But here in the industrial heartland, the leadership is preaching subordination to the dictates of *GM, Chrysler, and Ford*. Without our consent, they've taken on the role of 'labor brokers' for the companies, instead of defenders of our hard-working members. Their prescription for success - a 'company union with a social conscience' - will hasten the destruction of our union, not save it. As the working class in Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana has shown, the way forward is to challenge the anti-union offensive.

In this spirit, this convention must reaffirm the core union principle of 'Equal Pay for Equal Work,' and mandate that the UAW leadership negotiate an end to the union-busting, two-tier wage structures that have ravaged our plants and sapped our union solidarity. 'Equal Pay for Equal Work' is a universally recognized human right that is embedded in the UAW Constitution. As a union we've proudly rejected pay discrimination based on race and/or sex; we must now defeat two-tier.

Autoworkers lost \$7,000 to \$30,000 in raises, COLA, performance bonuses, holidays, and overtime pay as part of the companies' restructuring—triggering a lower standard of living for *all* workers. This convention must insist that the companies, which are flush with new profits, reward our sacrifices by returning to us what we gave up under duress. We must let the companies know that their anti-solidarity 'profit sharing' and 'pay for performance' schemes reported in the press are no substitute.

Judging from last June's convention, these and other pressing concerns will not be heard, much less voted on, without us delegates getting organized. If this convention is anything like last year's, we can expect a much-scripted event, entirely controlled from the podium, and policed by staff reps instructed to keep us in line. This top down approach is designed to prevent us from deviating from the 'party line.' We believe the will of this convention must come from the bottom up, and must reflect the real concerns of our rank and file and our retirees. If you've got something you want to say on behalf of the workers you represent, let's get together and discuss our proposals and how we can effectively raise them on the convention floor. We invite our fellow delegates to a pre-convention

meeting on Monday, March 21st at the Anchor Bar, 450 Fort Street, at 6pm. The Anchor is located a few blocks away from Cobo Hall.

On Tuesday, March 22nd we will have a discussion at 4:30pm, after the conclusion of the first day of the convention, at Cobo, Room xxx. (We are asking UAW for a room, and should know within a day or two.) Delegates and all UAW members are invited to attend.

In Solidarity,

Cathy Abney, Local 600

Al Benchich, Local 909

Frank Hammer, Local 909

Wendy Thompson, Local 22

Gary Walkowicz, Local 600