

Live Bait & Ammo #135: All Rights are Protected by One Rule

It's typical of Ron Gettelfinger to see pattern bargaining as a device to help Ford lower union standards. The Gettelfinger approach to pattern bargaining is fundamentally anti union. We aren't the dissidents. Bob King and Ron Gettelfinger are the ones breaking with the ranks and defying union tradition.

Ford-UAW members should set the benchmark for the next round of pattern bargaining. UAW officers have a sworn duty to raise the standard not lower the standard. That's what real unionism is all about. [Article 2 Sec 1: UAW Constitution]

Gettelfinger's contention that concessions save jobs is a verifiable boondoggle. After thirty years of Concession Caucus malarkey (one million UAW members lost since 1979), you'd think he'd be embarrassed to wave that dead bait — "job security". But embarrassment would be a sign of conscience and after he slipped the VEBA through in 2005 with less than 50.5% of the vote at Ford, we know better. Gettelfinger will do anything it takes to help the company. Anything.

Democrats in the Michigan State legislature have proposed: (1) to cut legislators' pay each time local schools are sent a letter cutting their funding; (2) to end taxpayer-funded, lifetime health care benefits for legislators; (3) and to reduce the salaries of legislators who miss sessions.

Representative Robert Dean, a Democrat from Grand Rapids, said, "We need to be an example. People in our state are hurting and making sacrifices. We need to be setting the pace." [Grand Rapids Press, 10-27-09]

But Gettelfinger and King are not making any sacrifices themselves and they don't plan to cut the perks that the corps offer local union officials in exchange for promoting anti union contracts that hurt working people. Not once has Gettelfinger said, "We need to be an example."

In Canada workers caught GM promoting union negotiators to a classification that they agreed to eliminate, thereby increasing their wages by \$3.50 an hour and adding \$500 a month to their pensions. [www.wsws.org 10-14-09]

Think it doesn't happen in the States? Hell, we taught them how to do it. Negotiators at Local 594 in Pontiac prolonged a local strike in 1997 until the company agreed to "settle grievances" awarding negotiators lump sum payments between \$20,000 and \$40,000. How's that for a signing bonus? Plus, they coerced GM into hiring friends and relatives, including UAW VP Dick Shoemaker's son, for positions they weren't qualified for. How's that for job security? [www.labornotes.org/node/1228]

Many UAW members have written soldiers of solidarity asking how they can ensure that the Con Caucus won't stuff the ballot box. Fact is, the UAW Constitution does not have any rules governing ratification procedures. The negligence is not accidental. For years rank and file members have submitted amendments to the Constitution that would protect union members from ratification fraud, but the Con Caucus won't bring their amendments to a vote at the Convention because they prefer to control the process and rubber stamp their kickback clad giveaways.

If rank and file members want to make sure the ballot box isn't stuffed, they need to bring a gang to the rat count — a gang too big to be kicked out and intimidated by union offs because there is no law protecting us. It's like Deadwood, man.

There is no law and there is no sheriff. You want justice? Get a gang and defend your selves. Workers' rights are protected by one rule: struggle. If you want to stop the Concession Train, get your gang together and make sure the rat vote is on the up and up. Cause Gettelfinger and his company man, King, will stop at nothing to win concessions for their team.

sos, Gregg Shotwell

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