

They're Holding Our Grievance Money Hostage

The "Equity of Sacrifice" grievance is scheduled for arbitration September 15. But many people believe that the money for the grievance will be put into our new contract.

But why the hell should it be part of the new contract? The grievance was to get back concessions that Ford workers gave up in the last contract. It was written over a year and a half ago, after Ford gave back money to the salaried workers and to management and to Alan "I'm Fine Where I'm At" Mulally.

If this grievance is settled as part of the new contract, it can only be for one reason. It will be to pressure us and threaten us into voting for a contract that we don't want.

This is like blackmail. And we all know that if you give into blackmail, it just encourages the blackmailer into coming back again and again.

If they dare try to do this to us, it will show that they didn't learn anything from the last "No" vote. We may have to show them again.

How much did we give up in concessions? How much do they owe us?

--Dec., '05.- Lost a 3% raise, lost some COLA -- lost \$2,000/year (about \$10,000 total).

--Sept., '07. - Lost more COLA, (up to 50 cents/hour). Increased health care costs for prescriptions, office visits and other co-pays.

--Feb., '09. - Lost 2 Performance Bonuses (about \$5,000 total); 2 Christmas bonuses (\$1,200 total); COLA eliminated; no overtime after 8 hours; Easter Monday holiday taken away; reduced SUB ; no pay-in-lieu.

It is estimated we lost about \$30,000 in money alone. But that's only a small part of it.

--Two-tier wages. New hires lose over \$25,000 a year. Two-tier wages make it harder for first tier to get a raise and threatens to bring us all down to 2nd tier.

--The VEBA. Health care for retirees is no longer guaranteed. How much money will we have to pay out of pocket when we retire?

--Lost break time and alternative work schedules. It makes our working conditions much harder. It may take weeks, months or years off our lives. What price do you put on that?

This is part of a letter that I received from a 2nd-tier Ford worker:

"I and my co-workers only want to work hard, live comfortably & secure a future for ourselves & our families. \$14/ hour can't help one to do much more than pay bills & show up to work week after week with empty pockets & no hope for tomorrow. The modest pay that I receive does not cover car repairs or insurance. My pay cannot support rent/mortgage & a car note/lease. I may have to wait 15 years before I can buy one of the vehicles that I helped make. The check that I receive every week does not have enough room for frivolities like haircuts, school supplies for four children, a full tank of gas (to take said children to school & me to work), on time payment of utilities or rent, or food (groceries are not a luxury). The pressure of being underpaid drains people physically, emotionally & spiritually (some people lose faith). We wake up with our backs against the wall & leave work feeling like we were in a stick fight & everyone had a stick except us! I don't mind hard work but all of this is for half pay. "

Gary Walkowicz
(313) 737-3166

Bargaining Committeeman, Dearborn Truck Plant, Local 600.
gwalk32@att.net
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