

## **A Letter from YOUR Skilled Trades Committeeman: UAW Local 1166**

Fellow Union Members,

As you know, your leadership went to Detroit on Monday, 10/15/07, to look at and vote on the tentative agreement between Chrysler and the UAW. This letter is my effort to keep you informed due to the FACT that if this agreement is ratified, we will have to live with the repercussions for years to come. The first thing I want each of you to understand is that your UAW National Negotiating Committee was not unanimous in endorsing this agreement. Bill Parker, the Chairman of the Negotiating Committee, has voted against this agreement. Prior to the announcement of the tentative agreement, the National Committee was, at first, unanimously opposed to the agreement. After a little pressure was put on, a second vote came out 6 against and 3 for the agreement, after a little more pressure was put on, the vote was 5 against and 4 in favor, and finally after more pressure from the International the final tally was 8 members of the National Negotiating team in favor and 1 opposed. Due to the fact that Chairman Parker was the only negotiator to STAND BY HIS CONVICTIONS, he then wrote a minority report, for those of us in the Chrysler Council, so that we could read and understand his reasons for voting NO on this agreement. I have attached copies of this report for you to read.

The second thing I want each of you to understand is that the vote among the Chrysler Council (the Presidents and Committeepersons from each local union) WAS NOT UNANIMOUS OR EVEN CLOSE TO OVERWHELMING IN FAVOR OF THIS AGREEMENT. The SAD truth is, we will never know the vote total, because a roll call vote was not conducted. Due to the fact that this agreement has far reaching implications for all of our members, I made a motion for a roll call vote so that we could have an EXACT count to report to our respective local memberships. According to Jim Coakley, who chaired the council meeting, my motion was defeated. Again, this vote was a total sham, due to the fact that there was no way to get an accurate count of those voting in favor or opposed and the fact that there are numerous people in the council meeting who have no voice yet they yell out their vote anyway. It is a sad shame that in matters of this importance, that a roll call vote is not mandatory. The beauty of a roll call vote is that each member has to go on record as to how he/she is voting. As dues paying members of the UAW, each of you should expect and deserve to know how your representatives voted.

The following is a speech I gave when the floor was opened for questions and discussion, at one point during my speech I was interrupted and shut down by Chair Jim Coakley because I was making a statement rather than asking a question. (I will highlight that part in red) The following is my speech:

The theme today seems to be that "Times have changed", maybe time has changed but the agenda of corporate America hasn't. Over the past 70 years, since the inception of the UAW, the corporation's goal has always been PROFIT at the expense of the workers.

Earlier, General Holiefield stated that this agreement will, "allow opportunities for the company to grow!" General is right, the company will grow, by LOWERING THE STANDARD OF LIVING FOR WORKING FAMILIES. Cutting hourly wages in half is repulsive and completely unacceptable. THIS UNION WAS FOUNDED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY AMONG THE WORKERS! Wages are a small percentage of the cost of building vehicles. General also stated that, "Chrysler inherited these problems from Daimler." Again he is right. But my contention is that CHRYSLER NEEDS TO FIX THE REAL PROBLEMS! Mismanagement has and is costing this company billions of dollars. I, along with all of you leaders, witness on a daily basis the company buying equipment of paying vendors exorbitant prices for whatever they're peddling. (At this point in my speech I was interrupted by Jim Coakley, administrative assistant to General Holiefield, and told that if I did not have a question to sit down and that this was not the time for discussion. So I was effectively shut down. After listening to 4 or 5 other people take the microphone and offer their praises to the International but not ask any questions, I again took the microphone and made the statement that, "at the beginning of each

Chrysler Council meeting, General Holiefield, always states, "I come from a hell raising local" and that we will not be treated disrespectfully and that if we disagree with an issue and don't speak up, then shame on us. A few minutes ago, you interrupted me and cut me off, yet you let 4 or 5 people give statements with no questions since they were saying what the International wanted to hear. This is one of the most critical times in the history of this union and it is imperative that every member be heard, whether you agree or not, so I ask you, is this a democratic union and are you going to allow me to finish my speech from earlier?" At that point Mr. Coakley looked at General and then said, "Go ahead.") The following is the rest of my speech. As I stated before I was interrupted, mismanagement is costing this company billions of dollars, one example of this is the fact that just recently at my plant the company paid \$20,000 more for a CNC machine because corporate required the plant to buy the machinery through an approved vendor instead of buying directly from the manufacturer. Another example in which all of you can relate is AT Kearney. These are the issues the company must address and we should address through negotiations. As long as they continue to run the business this way, whether you work for \$28 or \$14 will not matter because this corporate system is designed for failure.

As many of you know I am an officer on the Executive Committee of the Area Wide. At these monthly meetings we always discuss having an impact for our union and members, well, TODAY IS YOUR DAY! As General has stated, "IT'S UNION TIME!" It's time for us to send a message that WE WILL NOT SIT BACK AND CONTINUE TO LOWER OUR STANDARD OF LIVING DUE TO MISMANGEMENT! Today as Committeemen and Presidents you're here to speak on behalf of your men and women back home on the frontlines. It's no secret many of them think the union is dead. THEY'RE COUNTING ON YOU! TODAY IS YOUR TIME TO SEND THE MESSAGE BACK HOME, THAT THE UAW CHRYSLER DEPARTMENT IS ALIVE AND KICKING! TODAY IS YOUR TIME TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED! If you don't, then shame on you, and don't ever complain at an area wide again.

Today I ask two things of you. #1 VOTE NO ON THIS AGREEMENT, A BLOW TO ONE, IS A BLOW TO ALL! Two tier wages have no place in this union. Earlier General made the statement about some people needing to be taken out back and shot, in my opinion, if you vote for this agreement, you might as well get a gun and shoot yourself in the head because that's what you're doing.

The second thing I ask is that, due to the fact that this is one of the most critical times in the history of this union, we need to make sure we have an exact count so that there is no doubt whatsoever on the results that we take back to our respective memberships. Therefore I make a motion for a roll call weighted vote!

Later after my speech there was a heated exchange between General Holiefield and Tom Littlejohn (President of Belvidere Local) pertaining to the fact that Belvidere currently has 750 temporary workers and Mr. Littlejohn wanted them converted to full time as was done at GM. As you can see, the atmosphere at the Chrysler Council meeting was very electric. When you look at the agreement in its entirety there remains a lot of unanswered questions. The BEL language, which pertains to the Base Employment Levels at each plant, has been eliminated. Read the Chairman of the negotiating Committee's report to better familiarize yourself with these issues. I will try to communicate as much as I can, by all means, PLEASE ATTEND THE RATIFICATION MEETINGS, ASK QUESTIONS AND MAKE AN INFORMED VOTE!

In Solidarity,

Shawn Fain  
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<http://local1166.org/strikeduty.aspx>