

# 'Neutron Jack' the job killer

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 17, 2020



[Few tears were shed in Schenectady, N.Y.](#), when former General Electric CEO Jack Welch croaked on March 1. Why should there have been? Welch destroyed 22,000 jobs in GE's hometown in the 1980s.

Welch got rid of 7,000 jobs in Lynn, Mass. and 8,000 jobs in Pittsfield, Mass. Six thousand jobs were axed in Erie, Pa., while 4,000 jobs were eliminated in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Thousands of workers were also fired at Louisville's 900-acre Appliance Park Complex, now owned by Haier. Around 112,000 workers were fired during Welch's 20-year reign of economic terrorism from 1980 to 2000, according to Thomas F. O'Boyle, author of "At Any Cost: Jack Welch, General Electric, and the Pursuit of Profit."

GE workers called Welch "Neutron Jack" because he destroyed people's jobs while leaving the factories intact. That's what the neutron bomb was supposed to do: kill people with radiation while leaving the buildings standing.

Welch argued that, "ideally you'd have every plant you own on a barge." He wanted factories that could be moved to wherever the lowest wages and the least environmental regulations could be found.

Welch fought against cleaning up the Hudson River after GE poured 1.3 million pounds of cancer-causing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) into it. On Earth Day in 1998, Welch declared to stockholders that ["PCBs do not pose adverse health risks."](#)

Like his friend Donald Trump, Jack Welch was a sexist pig. According to O'Boyle, a former Wall Street Journal reporter, Welch asked a woman being interviewed for a job at GE Plastics in 1973, "Would you f — k a customer for a million-dollar order?"

Instead of being prosecuted, Welch in retirement had a \$750 million fortune. (Boston Magazine, May 15, 2006) His corpse should be sharing a jail cell with Harvey Weinstein.

Welch's viciousness made him a role model for other executives like ["Chainsaw Al" Dunlap](#), who fired 11,000 workers in 1995 at Scott Paper and then attempted to get rid of half of the workers at Sunbeam.

Fortune magazine named Jack Welch ["manager of the century."](#) Welch got a \$7 million advance for his memoirs, which were elegantly titled ["Jack, Straight From](#)

[the Gut."](#)

Donald Trump was a big admirer of Jack Welch, who had a crib in Manhattan's Trump Tower. Both thought that capitalist climate change was a hoax. Welch called global warming "a mass neurosis" that was "an attack on capitalism" on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" program. (July 2, 2008.)

After Jack Welch departed for the big electric toaster in the sky, his best buddy in the White House said ["there was no corporate leader like 'Neutron Jack.'"](#)

### **Welch the gravedigger**

The same year that Jack Welch became GE's CEO, Ronald Reagan was selected U.S. president. Both criminals waged war against the world working class.

Reagan busted the PATCO union of air traffic controllers, slashed social services, waged a dirty war against Nicaragua and invaded Grenada. Welch fired over 100,000 workers and super exploited at least as many in Asia and Latin America.

Welch strove to reap monopoly profits by GE remaining only in those industries where it held the first or second position. Any other product lines — and the workers employed there — were ruthlessly discarded.

Welch also turned GE into a bank. By 2007, 55 percent of GE's profit came from its loan sharking arm, GE Capital. (Fortune, May 24, 2018) But none of these methods could save GE from the anarchy of the capitalist marketplace.

Chickens came home to roost during the 2008 capitalist economic crisis. GE was bailed out by the Federal Reserve with a \$139 billion cheap loan.

Five million homeowners who were foreclosed weren't so lucky.

Two years ago, GE was kicked off the Dow Jones Industrial Average. From trading at

\$60 per share in 2000, GE's stock fell to \$8.21 on March 11.

Many stock speculators now consider GE to be toast. From being called "the manager of the century," Jack Welch became another fallen idol to study in the business schools. But it was workers and their families who paid for Welch's crimes.



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# **California graduate students expand strike for cost-of-living adjustment**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
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If you go on the [website](#) of University of California graduate student workers who are now fighting for a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to manage extremely high rents, you will see daily updates like this:

“UC Wide Blackout – today, March 5. At UCSC, both entrances to campus have been closed since 5:30 a.m. No class, no work! Come to the picket for food and community. Wear black! ...

“We are disappointed that UCSC administration, UCOP, and the UC Regents have consistently refused to negotiate in good faith in order to find an amicable solution to the needs of UC students and workers, instead choosing to retaliate against precarious community members and prolong strike activity.”

Those graduate student workers at U.C. Santa Cruz, members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2865, representing 19,000 student workers at the U.C. system, began a wildcat strike in December after unfruitful negotiations with administrators. They are demanding a \$1,412 per month COLA to meet skyrocketing rents in the area.



That militance reflected the anger at the news last Friday that U.C. Santa Cruz had issued termination letters to 54 [graduate students](#) and the frustration of student workers across the U.C. campuses who pay well over 50 percent of their salary on rents, leaving little for food, health care and transportation, especially if they have children.

Veronica Hamilton, vice president of U.C. Santa Cruz's graduate student association and chair of the campus unit of UAW Local 2865, was quoted in the Los Angeles Times on Feb. 28 regarding the challenges of workers: "Housing is expensive in Santa Cruz, and student workers have a difficult time living on the typical stipend of \$2,400 a month before taxes.

According to the [Cost of Living Adjustment White Paper](#) done by U.C. graduate students, a one bedroom apartment in the city of Santa Cruz costs over \$1,800 per month, eating up 75 percent of that \$2,400 stipend.

And it's not just Santa Cruz that has extraordinarily high rents. Workers at the Berkeley campus suffer from area rents costing over \$1,700 per month for a one bedroom apartment.

Instead of negotiating in good faith, the U.C. administration reportedly decided to spend an exorbitant amount of money in one week — money which could have been used to pay a liveable wage — on riot police bussed in from other campuses to intimidate and terrorize striking students and their supporters.

Yulia Gilichinskaya, a fourth-year Ph.D. student in Film & Digital Media who has insider knowledge of meetings with administrators, told [Salon on Feb. 25](#) that the university spent \$300,000 per day on cops.

Students were beaten with batons and arrested. And this police violence occurred on other U.C. campuses as well.

The work done by graduate students with regard to academic achievement, according to faculty, is irreplaceable. In fact, of great concern to the faculty is how the hostile tone of the U.C. administrators, especially U.C. President Janet Napolitano — who threatened the workers with firing early on — could possibly help contribute to getting the work of the faculty done.

“Napolitano never addressed who would replace grad workers,” James Sirigotis, a fifth-year Ph.D. student in Sociology, told Salon in that same article.

Sirigotis, who was one of the protesters physically injured by the expensive terrorist police force, noted that faculty members understand this contradiction: “What was the plan if they were willing to fire these TAs? How do you expect us to be able to teach? How do you expect the university to operate?” he continued.

The strike has now expanded to other U.C. campuses. On Feb. 27, U.C. Santa Barbara and U.C. Davis graduate students joined the strike.

After receiving news about the fired student workers many more grad student workers joined the strike and pledged to not accept any of those newly opened positions. According to the grad students’ website:

“About 80 grad students withheld Fall grades and, as of Feb. 28, are out of a job next quarter. [Fifty-four](#) had already received Spring appointments and were [dismissed](#), and the rest simply won’t get hired (they received notice that they [“will no longer be considered”](#) for these appointments). But the fight isn’t over! More TAs will withhold Winter grades, and [559 grads have pledged](#) to refuse TAships vacated by dismissed grads. The strike continues. Together, we win! See you on the picket.”

The U.C. administration, in an attempt to break the strike and solidarity, offered \$2,500 for one year, amounting to about \$200 per month instead of the \$1,412 requested. The money goes to all Master of Fine Arts and Ph.D. students at U.C.

Santa Cruz only, excluding other master's programs and applies to graduate students in general, not to graduate student workers, allowing the offer to not fall under a union contract.

In a statement regarding that offer, UAW Local 2865 President Kavitha Iyengar writes:

“While we are glad to hear this news [of the \$2,500 stipend offer], it is not enough, for three reasons: first, because it is not under the framework of a union contract and thus not legally enforceable, it is not guaranteed. Second, it is limited to workers at Santa Cruz. As our framework for a COLA demonstrates, workers at every single campus are rent burdened and need this relief. And third, even with these funds, student workers are still rent burdened.”

To get caught up on the strike, you can visit the various social media sites for the nine U.C. campuses participating, found on the website <https://payusmoreucsc.com/>.





# Trump's war on unions: Stand with federal workers!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 17, 2020

On Feb. 21, the Federal Register published a disgraceful [anti-worker memo](#) issued by President Donald Trump attacking union rights for civilian workers in the Department of Defense. The memo effectively gives Secretary of Defense Mark Esper the right to unilaterally strip all 750,000 DOD civilian workers of their collective bargaining rights and union representation.

This memo is the latest step in an [escalating war](#) by Trump and his big business allies on federal labor unions.

Since 1962, DOD workers have had the right to form unions and collectively bargain. The importance of union representation to the federal workforce cannot be overstated. For decades, federal unions have fought to strengthen benefits for civilian workers and protect them from unwarranted terminations, suspensions and other disciplinary actions.

The rationale behind Trump's memo is that unionized DOD workers threaten U.S. "national security." This is simply an excuse to justify an all-out attack on the rights of one of the more blue collar sectors of the federal workforce.

Many civilian DOD workers, especially those more active in unions, are paid at the "wage grade" scale. Essentially, wage grade jobs are more likely to be paid on an hourly basis and involve physical labor or clerical work.

"The substance of [Trump's] memorandum is unprecedented and is clearly meant not as an effort to protect national security, but as an instruction to carry out the

administration's ongoing effort to undermine federal sector collective bargaining," the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) said in a [letter to members of Congress](#).

The hypocrisy behind Trump's memo is appalling. He and other imperialist politicians simultaneously declare themselves to be allies of veterans and then attempt to worsen the working conditions of hundreds of thousands of civilian DOD employees, many of whom are veterans.

The entire working class and progressive movement must fight against Trump's anti-worker agenda and stand in solidarity with federal workers under attack!



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## **‘Cancel Spectrum’s franchise!’**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
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New York, Dec. 23 — Striking Spectrum cable workers and their supporters gathered on the steps of City Hall today to demand the New York City Council kick the union-busting outfit out of town. The day before marked the 1,000th day that the 1,800 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local

3 had been on strike.

Workers sang altered Christmas carols to mock Spectrum's strikebreaking. "Joy to the world when scabs are gone, let's bring back Local 3! Give us back our pensions, give us back our health care," they sang.

While strikers struggle to pay for their families' food, housing and medical care, Spectrum/Charter's CEO, Tom Rutledge, [got a pay package of \\$8.1 million](#) last year. That's actually a big cut from 2016, when this union-buster received \$98.5 million for gobbling up Time Warner Cable.

Billionaire John Malone is the [company's largest stockholder](#), owning 27 percent of the shares. This rich pig gave \$250,000 to help pay for Trump's inauguration.

At least a thousand strikebreakers have been hired by Spectrum to install and repair cable service. That's an enormous expense. Why doesn't Rutledge sign a union contract instead?

This isn't a normal work stoppage. It's political strikebreaking by finance capital against one of the most powerful union locals in the United States. The wealthy and powerful want to show the millions who work at Walmart, Amazon and McDonald's that any attempts to unionize will be crushed.

Spectrum/Charter took on [\\$27 billion dollars in debt](#) to finance the takeover of Time Warner's cable operations. The banks that lent this money are demanding the union be broken.

Union members and elected officials at the rally spoke of revoking Spectrum's franchise when it comes up for renewal in July 2020. That's over six months away

If the capitalists can crush these members of IBEW Local 3, they'll come after every construction union in New York. Isn't it time to call a one-day labor holiday to shut

down every construction site in the Big Apple?

That's the only language the billionaire class understands.

*The writer is a retired member of the American Train Dispatchers Association and the Transportation Communications International Union.*



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# **‘What do we want? Justice! Boycott Wendy’s!’**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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New York, Nov. 18 — Hundreds of Immokalee farmworkers and supporters took over the block outside Wendy’s headquarters this afternoon. Inside the upscale Manhattan offices at 280 Park Avenue were several of Wendy’s board of directors.

The fast food giant refuses to pay the workers that pick their tomatoes a penny more per pound.

Showing a colorful display of signs, flags and banners, this very multinational and youth-led rally had speakers and music. They exposed the Wendy's bosses for refusing to support human rights protections for Florida farmworkers who harvest tomatoes.

Wendy's management refuses to agree to worker-led monitoring that has ended sexual harassment, forced labor and other longstanding abusive violations.

Militant supporters chanted, "Down, down, exploitation! Up, up, fair food nation!" at this lively, bilingual rally. Religious leaders voiced support.

Hundreds stepped into the streets. Marching for blocks, the Immokalee worker-led protest drew more support.

New York is a union town and should stand strong against the Wendy's bosses. Until they comply with the fair food program, "Boycott Wendy's!" is the message of the day.



# Chicago teachers fight ‘for the common good’

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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After 11 days on strike, delegates of Chicago Teachers Union have suspended the Chicago teachers’ walkout and members are headed back to their classrooms.

A tentative agreement has been reached with Chicago Public Schools that appears to have secured a good deal for the workers on “bread and butter” issues, and victories on items the union had pressed for that would improve conditions for their students and for the community. A vote by the full membership is imminent.

Seventy-five-hundred education support workers in SEIU Local 73 struck along with CTU and accepted an agreement last Sunday. The wage increases range between 17 percent and 40 percent over five years, nearly doubled sick days for some staff and restrictions on the use of private contractors. In a show of solidarity, Local 73 continued to walk the picket lines along with their 25,000 teacher co-workers.

There were many other acts of solidarity with CTU during the strike. A fantastic video/music recognition of the progressive demands that the strike leaders made was [posted on Facebook by musical legend Rebel Diaz](#).

Teamsters Local 705 Secretary-Treasurer Juan Campos announced that no Teamsters would cross the picket line. On Oct. 29, the Latino Caucus of the Chicago City Council publicly urged Mayor Lori Lightfoot to settle. Their support was important in majority Black and Brown Chicago, 47 percent of Chicago’s student population are Latinx.

At that point, CTU leadership said they were within \$38 million of a settlement. The



administration said the gap was actually \$100 million. The difference is due to sleight of hand by the administration. When the new city budget was written in April, teacher pensions — some \$60 million — were shifted to the separate budget of Chicago Public Schools. All other public workers' pensions remained in the city's budget. The shift was meant for leverage during the negotiations with CTU that the administration knew would happen later in 2019.

As the city administration cried poverty and deceived the public about the availability of the \$38 million needed to settle the strike, CTU members rallied at Lincoln Yards — the site of a huge high-end apartment complex being built by developer Sterling Bay. The real estate corporation had been gifted more than \$1 billion in taxpayers' money by the city to incentivize the project.

The city's intransigence finally crumbled. During what was described as a raucous meeting on Oct. 30, about 700 delegates in the CTU decided in a very close vote to bring the school district's latest offer to the full membership. There was a great deal of pressure, the negotiations had been tough, and the non-elected Chicago school board was on the verge of cutting off health insurance.

The settlement seems a big improvement over the previous strike in 2012. It guarantees all members a 16 percent raise over the five-year life of the contract, while the CTU had initially asked for a 15 percent increase over 3 years. The city raised its offer for class size support to \$35 million. Every school will have a nurse and a social worker by 2023. And 120 new "equity positions" will be added for highest need schools such as counselors, restorative justice coordinators, librarians and additional staffing in bilingual and special education.

## **School strikes in 2018**

In 2018, teachers and other education workers in five different states carried out a series of strikes that showed people across the country the real conditions for

teachers. Suddenly people could see the reality of underpaid teachers that used their own money for school supplies, who had to teach oversized classes with not enough books, in crumbling buildings, with no medical staff, no librarians, and no counselors.

Through the strikes the lies that had been propagated by anti-union forces for decades were exposed. It became clear that teachers are as concerned about their students as they are about their own livelihoods. Each strike included demands that promoted the well-being of their students and their communities. For example, in the leadup to the third teachers strike of 2018 in Arizona, when teachers were offered a 20 percent pay raise, they turned it down because it was at the expense of social service programs in the state budget. This was an example of a revived awareness on the part of union leaders of how important the natural alliance between community and unions is.

This trend mushroomed when the educators' strike wave hit the diverse cities of Los Angeles in January 2019 and then Chicago in November – the second and third largest school districts in the country respectively. In both struggles union leadership raised and won at least partial victories on the issue of sanctuary for the thousands of undocumented students. They attacked the notion of public schools being patrolled by armed police who frequently arrest children. They demanded less of the testing that has been weaponized against students of color.

At the beginning of the Chicago strike they even demanded from the city more money for low income housing. In [an article on educationdive.com](https://www.educationdive.com), United Teachers Los Angeles President Alex Caputo-Pearl referred to the approach in both strikes as “bargaining for the common good.”

“The current Chicago strike,” Caputo-Pearl says, “is a powerful continuation of this movement, transforming education and the labor movement, fighting for common sense demands like more nurses, counselors and social workers, fighting for those

against Republicans and Democrats.”



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# **Transit workers rally in NYC. To hell with Pat Fraud!**

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New York, Oct. 30 — Ten thousand transit workers jammed Manhattan’s lower tip tonight to say “No!” to the Mass Transit Administration’s giveback demands. MTA chairman Pat Foye — also known as “Pat Fraud” — is demanding workers pay much more money for health insurance.

The 41,000 members of Transit Workers Union Local 100 move New York City. A trillion dollars worth of real estate would be worthless without their labor.

Yet the big business media has been running a hate campaign against TWU members, many of whom work in dangerous conditions underground in the subways and above the streets on elevated lines.

These capitalist mouthpieces scream about overtime pay but don't point out that the MTA refuses to hire enough workers. TWU members are sick of these lies.

The union shared videos of TWU founder Mike Quill tearing up an anti-strike injunction and saying "the judge can drop dead in his black robes." Quill also once demanded the transit fare be free.

Mike Quill was sent to jail for leading a twelve-day strike in 1966. He died in jail but the TWU won the strike. Forty years later then TWU Local 100 president Roger Toussaint was also jailed. Public workers in New York State are shackled by the Taylor law that make strikes illegal.

Local 100 President Tony Utano reminded workers that billionaire mayor Mike Bloomberg called transit workers "thugs" while mayor Ed Koch called the union members "whackos." TWU international president John Samuelson also spoke at the rally.

Like teachers in Chicago, transit workers in New York City are angry as hell and won't take it anymore.



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# Chicago teachers strike continues

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 17, 2020

Chicago, Oct. 21 — The joint strike by the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) and SEIU Local 73 continued October 18 and through the weekend as the office of Mayor Lori Lightfoot continued to refuse to meet the strikers' demands.

The teachers and school workers are on strike for “the schools our students deserve”: smaller class sizes, genuine sanctuary schools, and a nurse and librarian in every school. Among their demands are political demands, or what the CTU calls “bargaining for the common good.” These include the demand for affordable housing for working-class Chicagoans, something that the mayor refuses to put into the language of the contract but which the teachers say is a key issue to resolve before they can return to work.

On October 18, the second day of the strike, tens of thousands of teachers, school workers and supporters marched through downtown Chicago once again. Before that, the strikers had been picketing at every public school in the city. It was on these picket lines that anyone could see the broad support the strike has among the

public.

Sean Orr, a UPS driver in the city, said that the support was unprecedented. “This entire week, there has not been a single block I have delivered on where at least one house didn’t have a ‘I support Chicago teachers’ sign in the window,” Orr said. “Every picket line I’ve seen is greeted by horn honks and people stopping the picketers to ask for a selfie with them. It’s incredible.”

Polls consistently show that the striking teachers have a greater share of public support than the mayor in these negotiations. It is time that the mayor’s office meets the CTU/SEIU demands and give Chicago the school system that its children deserve.

Source: [FightBack! News](#)



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**‘You have to stand for something’:**



# GM workers speak out

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Nearly 50,000 members of the United Auto Workers are in the fifth week on their nationwide strike against General Motors. Key issues for the union include ending the company's use of tiered wage plans that pay less to new hires; ending the company's reliance on temporary workers and creating permanent jobs for thousands of long-term temps; and pushing back GM's attempt to saddle workers with more health care costs.

<https://www.facebook.com/strugglelalucha/videos/518688925563913/>

Struggle-La Lucha visited UAW members in White Marsh, Md., northeast of Baltimore. Over 250 workers were forced to retire or relocate to out-of-state plants when GM ceased production at the 19-year-old White Marsh plant in May 2019. Today a handful of workers who remain employed at the plant are walking the picket

line, along with forced retirees.

**Sylvia Heith, former GM worker and UAW member:**

GM always wants to take so much from the worker, and without the workers, GM wouldn't have a product. We work hard for this product. This GM here in Baltimore has been here a long time and we fought to keep it here and they're taking that. So eventually you have to stand for something.

It's been generations of families here that have given and given and given and it's time to stop. We all have to stand together. We are a union and the purpose of having a union is solidarity.

**Carlos Hernandez, former White Marsh worker, retired due to shutdown**

I didn't see my children grow up because I had to transfer from Tarrytown, N.Y., to Maryland. It's tough to live apart from your family. Tarrytown is about three hours away. Every week, I would drive three hours back and forth.

I hope the strike will convince GM to keep this product here and appreciate people's work more. I want to work, that's the thing. I just want fairness, job opportunities and job security.

**Guy White, shop chairperson of UAW Local 239**

I'm proud to say that we're standing up for social justice. Our biggest issue is GM's treatment of temporary workers. Take that issue out of these contract negotiations and we're back to work. I went to a conference a year and a half ago and they had the UAW from Ford, Chrysler and General Motors all under the same roof. They said, "Write down your top three issues and turn them in." And by far the top issue concerning everybody in the Big Three were temporary workers. We wanted to do away with temporary workers or at least get some kind of justice for them.

The temporary worker stands right next to someone performing the same job and makes roughly half as much money. ... And the thing is, they're not technically temporary. I call them permanent temps because they've been here two or three years. It's a crock. How do you say that they're temporary? Hiring temporary workers is a mechanism for cheap labor. It's a way that GM and the Big Three can reduce their labor costs. And that's what they do.

As a committee person here and as a shop chairman, you know a lot of members think a grievance will solve everything. And you know a grievance doesn't. Filing grievances is one tactic, but hitting their pocket is what grabs GM's whole and undivided attention. When I would write grievances, I would always tie money to it. I had a manager who asked, "Why do you do that?" I said, "To get your attention." If I just write it on the principle of the issue, then nothing will happen. I gotta put money on it or else he won't pay attention.

**SLL:** *Last November, the White Marsh plant was put on unallocated status. In May, everybody was informed that they'd be laid off.*

GM doesn't want to call it a shutdown. "Unallocated" means the plant is "idle." The verbiage in our contract says that they won't close, idle or shut down the plant. The contract with GM basically says we'll be building a product for the duration of the contract and GM violated that. In my opinion, we should have struck back when they made the announcement because we had some leverage since they wanted these transmissions for one of their cash cows — Flint Assembly and Arlington are their two big, big cash cows and we could have shut Flint down.

We made heavy duty truck transmissions. Allison A-1000 transmission. This automatic transmission is the only option you have for heavy duty pickup trucks. It's the benchmark for the industry. It's a bullet-proof, heavy-duty truck transmission. We also made electric motors.

In May, we had 250-260 hourly workers. And now there's seven of us. The reason the seven of us are here is so they can say they didn't close. I firmly believe that's the only reason we're here.

The option of job transfers has always been in our national agreement and we knew that would be an option for members to transfer to other facilities. We knew that was there, but here's the thing: every contract there are signing bonuses involved, there are special attritional packages for members, there's lots of things that come up in contract negotiations, and if you know what those things are, that might weigh your decision of what you want to do.

So, If GM truly valued their workers, it would have waited until the contract was up, let the workers stay on layoff status and then get a deal hammered out so the workers could see what's in the new contract and make their decision. If we're done here, then I'll retire or I'll voluntarily transfer to wherever. But GM didn't do that. GM wanted to be able to say it placed everybody in a job and that's what it did. White Marsh was the last plant to place people and GM was placing people just two weeks before the expiration of the contract. Some of these other plants don't even need workers. GM was placing workers there just for the sake of it.

We have this whole group that were hired here in 1994. They're typically in their 50s. They're assemblers, that's what they've done for the past 25 years. At the beginning of their career, they were temporary, so that time didn't count. But they lost that time, so what do you do when you're 50 and the only thing you know how to do is be an assembler? It's too much to give up. You're put in a position where you've got to relocate.

It's just a bad deal and if they would have let these people wait until we had a new agreement, then at least you're armed with some new information and you can make a better decision.

**SLL:** *GM CEO Mary Berra made \$22 million last year. Do you think that GM has the resources to meet UAW's demands?*

**GW:** It's not just Mary Berra. She makes almost \$23 million per year counting any other stock options she has. When you look at the next level of corporate officer, they make in the tens of millions — \$16 million, \$18 million. When you look at the next level, they make single digits of millions — \$7, \$8, \$9 million. For every dollar the average auto worker makes at GM, Mary Berra is making \$280. To me that's just obscene. What justifies that?

Now where the Burnie Highway [Baltimore] assembly plant once stood—3,000 good-paying jobs—there's an Amazon warehouse where the average person is making \$15 per hour and there's a light that goes off that warns them if they're not packing fast enough and another light that goes off if you're in jeopardy of termination. It's crazy.

We've had random people come by and hand us a case of water out the window of their car. We've had people stop by and drop food off. We had a mother with a toddler and a newborn come out and walk the picket line. We've had tremendous support from other unions. Maybe something like this is what needs to happen to mobilize labor.

### **GM operations in Maryland**

- Background about “unallocating” White Marsh plant
  - 250+ workers
  - Workers had to decide whether to transfer or retire without knowing the content of their new contract
  - 19-year-old plant with high production
  - 7 workers left so GM can claim plant is not idle

- Shutdown of Burnie Highway plant
  - 3,000 jobs
  - Workers had to transfer then too
  - Now site of Amazon warehouse
- Temporary workers
  - 7-9 years at Burnie Highway, 2-3 years at White Marsh
  - Don't earn credit toward pension/retirement while temporary
  - Made roughly one-half of what permanent workers doing the same job were making

*Sharon Black and Leon Koufax contributed to this article.*



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## **Auto strikers say no more tiers**

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The national strike by 49,000 United Auto Workers (UAW) workers against General Motors that started on September 15, 2019, is the biggest strike in the country since a two-day walkout against GM by the UAW in 2007.

Workers are angry that even though the company has [made record profits](#)—\$35 billion in the last three years—it won't give an inch when it comes to workers' demand for equal pay for all auto workers.

Central to this strike is GM's multitiered employment structure that ensures new hires are paid poverty wages — roughly half the rate of more senior workers. Additionally, about 7 percent of GM's workforce are so-called temporary workers

who lack the rights and benefits of the permanent workforce. Temp workers often do the same work as traditional employees, are paid less, entitled to fewer benefits and are easier to fire.

A former GM temp worker, now in a skilled trades apprentice program, [told Michigan's public radio station](#) last week that being a temp was one of the worst times of her life. "They have a way of pitting you against a permanent employee where you feel like, if you go the extra mile, if you work a little bit more than your union brother or sister, that will give you an opportunity to eventually get hired in full time and that's not the case."

Additionally, the UAW and GM are negotiating over pay and benefits, and, crucially, whether thousands of workers might become or remain laid off due to factory closings.

