

S.O.S. BULLETIN

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Nexteer's Multi-tier Contract offers "Nothing" to Look Forward to.

Nothing, that is, but more concessions, more work for less pay, and more sacrifice for less reward.

The Shop Committee at UAW Local 699 was "not elected to do nothing" as they said in the *Highlights*. Indeed, the Shop Committee was elected "To improve working conditions, create a uniform system of shorter hours, higher wages, health care and pensions; to maintain and protect the interests of workers under the jurisdiction of this International Union" [UAW Constitution, Article 2, Section 1].

The Shop Committee bears responsibility but we know where the pressure to concede comes from. The UAW International has violated the UAW Constitution in both spirit and intent. The International has aborted the mission of the union. The International has betrayed the members' trust. They have delivered a contract uglier than Rosemary's Baby. They have demanded a contract that proposes we destroy the union in order to "create new employment opportunities" [page 6 of the complete contract].

Not jobs, but "opportunities". In other words, there will be more opportunities for more concessions. This contract belongs in the mop bucket with a gallon of ammonia to kill the stink.

This excuse for a union contract shatters solidarity; divides and subdivides the membership into multiple tiers and "buckets"; kicks new hires in the teeth; cuts wages; worsens working conditions; deprives the families of new hires including current temps of health care; and does "nothing" to secure jobs.

There is no language in this contract to prevent outsourcing or subcontracting.

"The sourcing of this new business is dependent on the competitiveness of the site...." [page 5]. That's not a guarantee of new work. That's a guarantee of new concessions. History is our evidence.

The company has failed to deliver on its promises over and over. We can't live on promises. If all the International can do is sell us out with "buy downs", they should all be removed from office.

We don't want more tiers and more divisions and more anti solidarity bucket lickers leading our union down a path of self-destruction.

Temporary workers are understandably enticed by the promise of permanent status, but the price of the privilege is a wage cut and health insurance that doesn't cover their families. They were looking for a leg up. Instead they got a boot on the neck and a knee in the groin. God forbid a child gets sick.

What kind of union negotiates health care that doesn't cover the worker's family? Is this an indication of Bob King's version of Single Payer? It only covers one single person? Tell the kids to get their own job?

The International says this contract will make us more attractive to buyers as if we were hog futures. As if we were a herd of cattle being auctioned off to the highest bidder. **This slop bucket contract doesn't even have a successor clause.** Instead it offers in the event of sale to "reserve the right to determine the implementation timing of said portions of the Nexteer M.O.U." [page 4].

All UAW contracts have a successor clause that guarantees that any new buyer must honor the agreement. For example: Document 91 of the Delphi-UAW 2007 agreement contains the successor clause, "any sale of an operation as an ongoing business would require the buyer to assume the 2007 Delphi-UAW Collective Bargaining Agreement." The proposed Nexteer contract dissolves on contact. This muck bucket contract has a hole in the bottom that allows a buyer to demand further concessions.

What is the future of a union that bargains for lower wages and zero tolerance attendance policies? What is the future of a union that degrades new hires and slices and dices solidarity? What is the future of a union that wipes its feet on workers and tells them they should be happy because door mats are a hot commodity?

All the auto analysts point to an upward trend in the industry, especially among suppliers. So why should we rush to degrade ourselves when the prospects for bargaining look more promising in 2011? We have a perfectly valid contract that runs for another year and a half. Who knows what things will be like in the fall of 2011? The experts predict it will be better.

But if we take a \$2 wage cut this year, we will lose that amount for every hour we work for the rest of our lives. We don't want a buy down. We want a raise up. We deserve it.

Buy downs and give backs are dead-end unionism. We are worth more and our members deserve more from elected officers. The “\$5,000 Raise Buy-Back” is like trading a dime for a nickle because the nickle looks bigger. It's an insulting deal. The average worker will lose that amount in less than 2 years. How many more years do you have to work? Get out the calculator because you will need it to add up how much money you stand to lose if this kick-the-bucket contract passes.

All Aboard the Titanic!

Taking a Buy-Down is like boarding a sinking ship. The losses in overtime, shift premium, SUB-pay, and raises in 2010 and 2011 compound and escalate going forward while the buy down bonus is consumed in a wave of debt — a tsunami of debt incurred by underpaid workers drowning in a sink hole of inflation. **Five years from now we will make less than we do today if we buy this bucket of crap. That's the bottom line.** Does anyone think prices will go down with our wages?

2% raises in the last two years of the contract are negated by 3.75% raises given up this year and next year. Performance bonuses and Incentive Compensation schemes are jury-rigged in advance [page 8] and negated by the bonuses we give up under the current agreement. This bucket of hogwash presents “nothing” but diminishing expectations and zero return on the investment of our labor.

The math is difficult to calculate because there are so many variables: classification, shift premium, and overtime lost to Alternative Work Schedules. But if we use an underestimated example of \$2 per hour and a 40 hour week, we can visualize a minimum impact.

$\$2 \times 40 \text{ hours} = \$80 \text{ per week} \times 52 \text{ weeks} = \$4,160 \text{ per year.}$ The next question we need to ask ourselves is, how long do I expect to work and continue to lose a minimum of 4 grand per year? Will the lump sum buy down come close to matching the loss?

Most workers will lose a lot more than that. But if they don't “volunteer” to take the buy down, and if they retain their wage rate, there will be a target on their backs. \$12 dollar an hour new hires with anti-family health insurance gives the company an incentive to fire the higher paid. Two tier is not a collective bargaining agreement, it's a prepaid funeral arrangement. Tell the owners to dig their own graves. We believe in solidarity. We, the rank & file, are union.

Workers Give Without Getting

Dave Yettaw used to say, “The companies are playing chess and the UAW is playing checkers.” The companies are willing to pay us off upfront because they are planning several moves in advance. In the long run they expect their buy down investment to pay off — hand over fist, year after year after year.

We will lose money but there is no quid pro quo. Workers give without getting. There is no language in this contract that guarantees our jobs or new work. There is only a weak line: “The sourcing of this new business is dependent on the competitiveness of the site....” [page 5] that indicates more threats and concessions are on order.

The quality of our daily lives on the shopfloor will erode as resentment between different pay groups is exacerbated by management. This is the company's dream contract. Multiple divisions among the workers, endless ways to play worker against worker and break the one effective tool we have “to maintain and protect the interests of workers” — solidarity.

If we ratify this bucket of swill, we will have nothing to look forward to but poverty, a hostile work environment, and more promises in exchange for more concessions.

Say YES to common sense and dignity. Say NO to Nexteer's kick-the-bucket contract.

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**More on-line resources: warriorsoflabor.com, uawtalk.com,
blueovalforums.com/forums/fordemployeeforum.**

This bulletin is put out in the interests of informing workers and renewing the fighting power of organized labor. Please send your comments and your on-the-job, on-scene reports to:

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Solidarity!
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