



No Interim Agreement Reached Between UE, Wabtec

Wabtec provokes first major U.S. manufacturing strike of Trump era by insisting on mandatory overtime, drastic wage reductions, and use of temporary workers

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Erie, PA — UE Locals 506 and 618, which together represent 1700 workers at Wabtec's newly-acquired locomotive plant in Erie, PA, worked long into Tuesday morning and were not able to convince the company to negotiate an acceptable short-term agreement that preserves the wages, benefits, and working conditions negotiated with GE, their former employer, over the past eight decades.

"We are extremely disappointed that the company could not see its way to agree to continue the terms and conditions that we have worked under for decades. Their refusal leaves us with no choice but to go out on strike to protect our members' and our children's future," said Scott Slawson, President of UE Local 506.

Karlene Torrance of UE Local 618 said, "We are gratified by the outpouring of support we have received from our friends, neighbors, and community in Erie. We will need their support now more than ever."

UE members began their strike at 5am this morning.

Wabtec's terms and conditions, which they imposed when they took over the plant on Monday, include the introduction of mandatory overtime and arbitrary schedules, wage reductions of up to 38 percent for recalled and newly-hired workers, and the right to use temporary workers for up to 20 percent of the work in the plant.

U.S. Senator and presidential candidate Bernie Sanders has weighed in on the conflict, writing a letter to Wabtec CEO Raymond Betler last Friday. "Let's be clear," Sanders told Betler. "Wabtec is not a poor company. It is not going broke. Through the first three quarters of last year, Wabtec made a \$256 million profit and had enough money to give you a \$3.5 million compensation package."

GE Transportation, which Wabtec purchased last year, has consistently earned profits of over 16 percent for the last five years, driven by the skilled work done by UE members at the flagship plant in Erie.

About UE: "UE" is the abbreviation for United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, a democratic national union representing some 35,000 workers in a wide variety of sectors. UE has represented GE workers since 1937.