

## **For immediate release: Feb. 21, 2014**

UAW appeals outside interference in union representation election for Chattanooga Volkswagen workers

DETROIT, Mich. – The UAW filed an appeal (“objections”) with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) today related to the interference by politicians and outside special interest groups in the union representation election held last week at Volkswagen’s Chattanooga plant.

A firestorm of interference from politicians and special interest groups threatening the economic future of the plant occurred just before and during three days of voting in an election supervised by the NLRB. Workers voted narrowly to reject representation, with a slim 44 vote swing. The objections detail a coordinated and widely publicized coercive campaign conducted by politicians and outside organizations to deprive Volkswagen workers of their federally protected right to join a union.

The campaign included publicly-announced and widely disseminated threats by elected officials that state-financed incentives would be withheld if workers exercised their protected right to form a union.

“It’s essentially saying, ‘If you unionize, it’s going to hurt your economy. Why? Because I’m going to make sure it does,’” said Volkswagen worker Lauren Feinauer. “I hope people see it for the underhanded threat that it is.”

The campaign also included threats by U.S. Sen. Bob Corker related to promises of a new product line awarded to the plant if workers voted against UAW representation.

The objections state, “Senator Corker’s conduct was shameful and undertaken with utter disregard for the rights of the citizens of Tennessee and surrounding states that work at Volkswagen. ... The clear message of the campaign was that voting for the union would result in stagnation for the Chattanooga plant, with no new product, no job security, and withholding of state support for its expansion.”

“It’s an outrage that politically motivated third parties threatened the economic future of this facility and the opportunity for workers to create a successful operating model that that would grow jobs in Tennessee,” said UAW President Bob King. “It is extraordinary interference in the private decision of workers to have a U.S. senator, a governor and leaders of the state legislature threaten the company with the denial of economic incentives and workers with a loss of product. We’re committed to standing with the Volkswagen workers to ensure that their right to have a fair vote without coercion and interference is protected.”

An affirmative vote for union representation at the Volkswagen plant would have led to the establishment of a works council that would have been the first such model of labor-management relations in the United States.

The NLRB will investigate the election conduct and determine whether there are grounds to set aside the election results and hold a new election for Volkswagen workers.

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