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In this weekend's news and commentary, UAW members approve contracts with the Big Three and a New York judge prevents a local union from voting on a statement calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.

On November 18, the United Auto Workers (UAW) union finished tallying votes showing that its members ratified contracts with Ford, GM, and Stellantis. Workers at Stellantis voted 68.8% in favor of their tentative contract, approving their deal by a 10,000-vote margin, and workers at Ford voted 69.3% for their proposed deal, passing it with nearly a 15,000-vote margin. Meanwhile, workers at General Motors approved their contract by a much narrower margin, with about 55% of members voting yes. The GM contract largely

mirrored the deals with Ford and Stellantis, but some of the longtime employees at GM said they wanted more from the company, including earlier wage increases and greater pension contributions. The contract had more support among the skilled trades as compared to production workers.

On November 17, Nassau County Supreme Court Judge Felice J. Muraca issued a Temporary Restraining Order preventing the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys – UAW Local 2325 (ALAA) from completing a membership vote on a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. The resolution had been passed by a vote of 108-13-8 in the ALAA Joint Council, composed of delegates from local shops' chapters, on November 14, 2023 to bring the resolution to a wider membership vote. The membership vote was supposed to be held on November 17, but Judge Maraca enjoined ALAA from sending the resolution to the membership. Rank and file members of ALAA blasted Judge Muraca's order as "blatantly unconstitutional," "anti-labor," and "anti-democratic."

The ALAA represents 2,700 legal and social service workers at over 20 nonprofits in the NYC metropolitan area, including prominent legal services organizations such as the Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, Children's Law Center, Legal Aid Society of New York, and Prisoners' Legal Services of New York. After ALAA introduced the resolution earlier this week, management at several of these employers began cracking down on pro-Palestinian speech. Legal Aid Society CEO Twyla Carter said that the resolution's language was antisemitic, and that four law firms had threatened to pull funding from the office over the union's resolution. Bronx Defenders also issued a statement stating that the union's resolution "is not consistent with our values and mission."

The ALAA introduced the resolution after Palestinian trade unions called for international solidarity and asked international unions to "end all forms of complicity with Israel's crimes." Many US unions have begun responding to this call. UFCW 3000, UE (United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America), AFT-Oregon, SEIU-United Service Workers West, UAW Regions 6 and 9A, and many other US unions have joined a statement calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Other unions such as the American Postal Workers Union

(APWU) and Starbucks Workers United have issued their own statements in support of a ceasefire. However, ALAA is not the only union to face obstacles in expressing their support for the Palestinian people. Earlier this month, the AFL-CIO squashed a resolution calling for a ceasefire and an end of U.S. aid to Israel that was passed by the AFL-CIO affiliate Thurston-Lewis-Mason Central Labor Council representing workers in Washington state.

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