

Company Continues to Demand Cuts

(September 10) – Our USW bargaining committees are continuing to meet regularly among themselves and with U.S. Steel representatives this week in Pittsburgh in an effort to reach a fair contract settlement.

The progress we've made so far this summer has come slowly, and we know that has been frustrating, both for those of us in Pittsburgh and for our brothers and sisters at home who are hungry for information about what is happening at the bargaining table. While we have made some progress on significant issues, the company continues to insist on a number of unrealistic and unacceptable demands for concessions.

Active Health Care

U.S. Steel has proposed dramatic benefit cuts and employee health care premiums for active employees and a two-tier high-deductible health plan for new hires.

For current employees, the company's proposal would add deductibles, increase employee copays, coinsurance and out-of-pocket maximums and charge up to nearly \$3,300 per year for family coverage by 2018. A family could face up to \$6,300 in premiums and out-of-pocket costs if more than one family member had serious health conditions in a year. These costs would be even higher for out-of-network services. The company also proposes to charge another \$150 per month for spousal coverage if an employee's spouse is offered coverage by an employer.

Two-Tier Plan

Under the company's proposal, employees hired on or after January 1, 2016, would be excluded from the current health care plan and shoved into a high-deductible health plan similar to the plan that covers salaried employees.

The high-deductible plan has slightly lower monthly premiums, but exposes employees and their families to the risk of large out-of-pocket expenses. For example, under the company's proposal, by 2018 a new hire with a family would pay premiums of almost \$3,000 per year and potentially face up to an additional \$6,000 per year in out-of-pocket costs.

The proposal is designed to create a two-tier compensation scheme that will make it harder to bargain benefits, create resentment and undermine our solidarity. Since these employees haven't even begun work, there are no labor cost savings – but the seeds of division are sown.

Retiree Health Care

The company has modified its stance on retiree health care benefits and is no longer proposing to eliminate the current retiree medical plan for Medicare-eligible retirees and surviving spouses. However, U.S. Steel continues to propose higher premiums and drug copays for Medicare-eligible retirees and surviving spouses and substantial cost shifting for non-Medicare-eligible retirees and surviving spouses.

Health Security for All

Health care is an important issue. We work hard. Work in a steel mill is difficult and often dangerous. It takes its toll. We deserve quality health care for ourselves and our families. Our wages shouldn't be eaten up by premiums, and we shouldn't face ruin due to an unexpected hospital admission.

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Health & Safety

We continue to have concerns about a number of health and safety related issues across all U.S. Steel facilities and about what the company's plans are to address these issues. We have met regularly with company representatives to address these matters. Unfortunately, U.S. Steel continues to insist upon having their own input on the direction of our union safety representatives.

Contracting Out

The company continues to pursue contract language changes on contracting out. U.S. Steel wants the right to contract out day-to-day maintenance with no notification. We remain determined not to open the door to more contractors.

Profit Sharing

U.S. Steel has proposed changes to the profit sharing plan which would reduce the frequency of the payments from quarterly to annually.

S & A Benefits

The company proposes to deny Sickness & Accident benefits to employees with less than three years of service. Currently, employees are eligible for S & A coverage 60 days after their date of hire.

Investment in Our Mills

Our committee has proposed that U.S. Steel commit to making significant capital investments in equipment and upgrades (not just routine maintenance) in our mills. We believe negotiating for investment in our mills is an important and effective way to maintain good, family-sustaining jobs and keep our facilities competitive in the global market.

Our Contract

We know that for many members, this might be your first experience with negotiations that have continued past our contract's original expiration date. Please remember that the terms and conditions of our 2012 agreement remain in effect. If you have any questions about your rights, please speak to a CAT coordinator or refer to our online fact sheet at www.usw.org/solidarity-in-steel/resources/what-could-happen-on-september-1

Solidarity Now & Forever

Solidarity – it is more than just a word or a song that we sing. It is what helped the generations of union members who came before us build the middle class. Now, we need to strengthen our solidarity more than ever if we are going to achieve a fair contract and make sure our jobs can continue to support our families and communities. We will need every member in every USW local union across the country to stand together.

Please keep in touch with your CAT coordinators for the latest information on bargaining, as well as news about upcoming mobilization events.

Over the past few weeks, we've taken our message to the streets and gotten an overwhelmingly positive response. Now, we need to keep that momentum going in our plants and in our communities if we are going to win this fight.

In Solidarity, Your 2015 U.S. Steel Bargaining Committee

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Jim Allen, Local 1299
Lowell Carlon, Local 1938
Jason Chism, Local 50
David Clark, Local 1013
Bill Coe, Local 4889
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Dennis Hamilton, Local 1104
Jason Hughes, Local 5133
Jim Johnston, Local 1219
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William "Billy" McCall, Local 1066
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