

# ***Letter To The Editor***

***An open letter to the UAW International Union leadership and the National negotiators from Ed Hardesty and Jim Kruse:***

We are proud UAW-Ford retirees with 40 and 34 years of service respectively and we are thankful for the benefits the UAW has provided for us in past negotiations. In the 2011 negotiations the International Union negotiators failed to include the retirees in the contract negotiations and in fact reduced their pay and benefits even while Ford Motor Company is reaping billions of dollars in profits and paying millions to their top executives. The failure to continue the "Age Creep" provision of our previous contracts will result in a loss of thousands of dollars for every retiree who is currently under the age of 62. Example:

The loss to Jim Kruse is approximately \$14,000.00. To eliminate the \$700.00 bonus previously paid to retirees at Christmas time, especially those who have been retired for many years, and receive only \$600.00 or \$700.00 a month retirement pay shows a total lack of respect for the very people who built this great union and who have always been there for our membership, and our union, when called upon, and who contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in voluntary union dues.

The negotiators discontinued the retiree bonus and the Age Creep provision for the retirees and gave an extra \$1,000.00 to the active workers to vote yes for the contract. We expect Republican politicians to take from lower income people and distribute the money upward, but for our Union negotiators to do the very thing they condemn is unconscionable. Ford Motor Co. is making billions and the \$700.00 bonus could have been paid out of the general fund. With higher negotiated co-payments, monthly charges for health insurance, higher deductibles, and big increases in the payments for prescription drugs many of our lower income retirees are living at or near the poverty level. The media has reported that the total cost of the 2011 UAW contract was one percent, the lowest amount ever negotiated between the UAW and Ford Motor Company.

Thank you to all U A W retirees and surviving spouses for your dedication and support for the UAW' and Ford over the years.

Fraternally,

Ed Hardesty UAW Ford retiree and past union representative, UAW Local 862

Jim Kruse UAW Ford retiree and past union representative UAW Local 862

Cc: Bob King Warren Banford Jimmy Settles UAW Local 862 Solidarity Magazine