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Berks County Advance Auto Parts Workers Unite with LiUNA! to Halt Attacks on Pay, Health Care and Basic Working Conditions

More than 500 Workers Part of Union Election, a First for the Auto Parts Distribution Center

Kutztown, Pa. (March 30, 2017) – Distribution center workers for Advance Auto Parts will vote April 5 – 7 on whether to join the Laborers’ International Union of North America to address concerns about attacks on pay, health care and basic working conditions.

With 515 workers eligible to vote, the union election is one of the largest in the area and, if successful, the first time the distribution center workers would have a voice and negotiating power with the Roanoke, Va., based corporation.

“I’ve been here over 10 years and I’m tired of our declining benefits and hearing empty promises,” said employee Modesto Pimentel. “We can be stronger together and improve health insurance and pay.”

Luis Nunez, another longtime employee, said the cost of health insurance has continued to rise as his coverage worsens.

“All I’ve heard for the past 11 years is promises from Advance Auto and every time we question management we are told that if we don’t like it, we should just leave,” Nunez said. “I’m voting yes to support my coworkers in demanding better and more affordable health insurance and an end to threats.”

The corporation is publicly traded on Wall Street and has sought to drive up its share price by cutting costs, including those associated with the workers who make it possible for the firm to get products to its 5,200 retail locations. In 2016, Advance Auto brought in \$9.6 billion in revenues, of which nearly a half-billion dollars was profit.

While the corporation has sought to squeeze pay and benefits for workers, its executives have prospered. Former Chief Executive Office Darren Jackson was paid \$7.9 million in 2015. Advance’s new CEO, Tom Greco in 2016 was guaranteed a base salary of \$1.1 million, as well as a guarantee of \$5 million a year in equity compensation for the next three years. He also received a \$2 million sign-on bonus. At his rate, he is being paid more than \$3,000 per hour.

According to the LIUNA Mid-Atlantic Regional Organizing Coalition, the auto parts giant has hired the Jackson Lewis law firm to crush the workers’ organizing efforts. Among their

tactics are directing so-called “captive audience” meetings, during which workers are required to sit through hours of anti-union propaganda.

“Advance workers aren’t seeking \$3,000 per hour,” said Chuck Clarke, an organizer with LIUNA. “All they are seeking is a voice on the job to help them win a reasonable rate of pay, family-sustaining benefits and to be treated with respect.”

Election results are expected late April 7.

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LIUNA’s Mid-Atlantic Region includes more than 40,000 workers in Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, the District of Columbia, Virginia and North Carolina.