

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Scott Houldieson, Chairperson, UAWD

Phone: 219.801.2002 - cell

Email: uawdemocracy@gmail.com

Former UAW Vice President, Joe Ashton, Sentenced To Prison For Stealing UAW Funds

Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD) issues the following statement regarding the sentencing of Joe Ashton, former Vice President of the UAW International Union, to prison for corruption:

[Chicago, Illinois, **November 17, 2020**] – In yet another example of corruption in the hierarchy of the United Auto Workers International Union, Joe Ashton, -- former Vice President of the UAW -- was sentenced to 30 months in federal prison today. Ashton is the second former member of the UAW International Executive Board (IEB) to be sentenced to prison for crimes against the membership of the union.

"Without a doubt, this is a sad day in the history of the UAW," says Justin Mayhugh, Co-Chairperson of Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD). The membership of the UAW must rise up with indignation over what seems like a never-ending stream of corrupt acts on the part of the UAW leadership, who were swept into office by the Administration Caucus. This is why I am involved in the efforts of UAWD to provide another caucus in the UAW so members will have a chance to elects leaders who will work in their behalf and not steal money from them."

Ashton pled guilty on December 4, 2019, almost a year ago, to wire fraud and money laundering by accepting kickbacks for his part in a scheme to give his friend a \$4 million contract to purchase 58,000 watches with union funds. The money came from the UAW/General Motors (GM) Training Funds set up to provide training to members of the UAW. Ashton received a kickback of \$250,000 for his role in the scheme.

"It is imperative that UAW members have full transparency along with the right to vote on our International officers, says Scott Houldieson, Chairperson of UAWD. These reforms are the only thing that can prevent more corruption. Until real checks and balances are put in place, there cannot be accountability. It is the membership that suffers from all of this corruption," says Scott Houldieson, Chair of Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD).

UAWD is fighting for direct elections of top UAW officers through a one-member, one

vote method of electing International union officials. Currently, the top officers of the union are elected through a convention delegate system controlled by the Administration Caucus. The Administration Caucus has been in total control of the UAW for the last 70 years. All of the Administration Caucus candidates for the leadership of the UAW have been elected with virtually little or no opposition.

One reason the membership of this union has to accept corrupt leaders is due to the one-party state within the UAW. This one-party system of electing international officers has cultivated a culture of corruption at the highest levels of the union.

Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD) is a newly-founded political caucus in the UAW calling for structural changes in the UAW International Union, including the election of International officers by direct vote of the union membership.

If you would like more information about this topic, please call Scott Houldieson at phone: **219.801.2002** – cell, or email: <u>uawdemocracy@gmail.com</u>

#