

Statement of Donna Stinson
Dana Corp employee
Bristol, Virginia

My name is Donna Stinson. I'm here with my co-worker Barry Woods and we work for Dana Corp in Bristol Va.

In July of 2002, we had a NLRB secret ballot election, which the union lost. In early August of 2003, we were suddenly called into a plant meeting to be told that Dana and the UAW had formed a partnership agreement. We were told there would not be an election, this would be a card check and that the UAW would be given access to our plant.

Over the next few weeks we had cell meetings at which members of management told us that the UAW was putting pressure on Ford to require that its suppliers be union suppliers. The work we had now would dry up and no new work would be given to us.

We were told that the old cards – signed to obtain a secret ballot election over a year ago – would now be used as our votes. Anyone who wanted their card back had to go to the Holiday Inn convention center and find a certain union rep, or by calling one of two phone numbers. When ask why they could not bring the cards back to the plant and allow people to get them back there, we were told that this was not their procedure.

When we asked to see the partnership agreement, we were told we could not see it, it was a private business contract, but they would give us "Highlights". The highlights were that we would not get any big wage increase and we would have a no-strike clause. We were given about 15 minutes to ask questions, in which no real answers were given to us. They kept telling us how this was our choice, but at the same time made us feel like this was something that we needed to do to protect our jobs.

The UAW was given our personal information, which most of us thought was illegal, but turns out it is not. They "Home Visited" all Labor Day weekend.

The next Tuesday, we were told that a "Neutral Third Party" had counted the votes and we were now a UAW facility. We were not told who the third party was, what the count was, or who verified the signatures. It is now May of 2004 and we still do not have a contract. One was offered, but it only made people mad and they voted it down – only 3 voted yes and 130 voted no.

Regardless of whether you support a union or not, I cannot see how anyone can think this is right. We should have a right to our privacy, we should have a right to a real union, and we should have the right to make this choice in a secret ballot election. We should not have to explain our decisions to our co-workers or the union, these are important decisions that affect our jobs, our families, our finances and for some people, their religious or political beliefs.

Card checks force you to choose sides out in the open and defend your choices, they divide the work place and create a very hostile environment. The union organizers are allowed to stay and pressure employees until they get enough cards signed, and, feeling the heat, many cave in just to get along.