

The UAW Strike: American Sentiment & Implications For Brand & Reputation Managers

Oct. 2023





Understanding American Sentiment Around The UAW Strikes

- As partners to many in the automotive industry and experts in the field of corporate reputation, The Harris Poll is pleased to share our ongoing monitoring of public sentiment relative to the UAW strike.
- We provide a snapshot of American perspectives on the ongoing negotiations and strikes facing the auto sector, with implications for brand & reputation managers across all industries where unionization is at play.

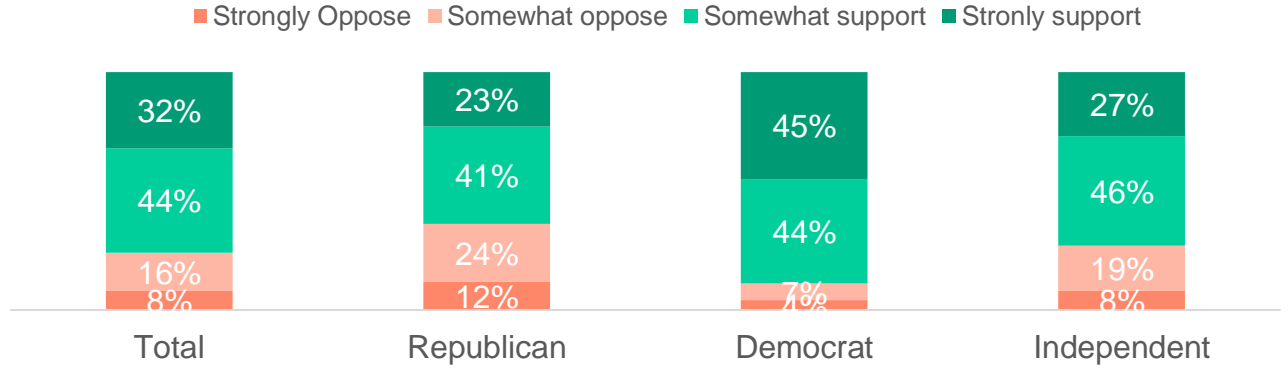
Methodology

This research was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll from September 22nd to 26th, 2023 among a nationally representative sample of 2,087 U.S. adults. Data was collected via Harris On Demand.



Overall Support/Opposition For Employee Unions

Americans overwhelmingly stand behind unions, regardless of politics.



Strongly/Somewhat support	76%	64%	89%	73%
Strongly/Somewhat oppose	24%	36%	11%	27%

Base: Qualified Respondents (N=2123)

Q1. How much do you oppose or support employee unions in general?

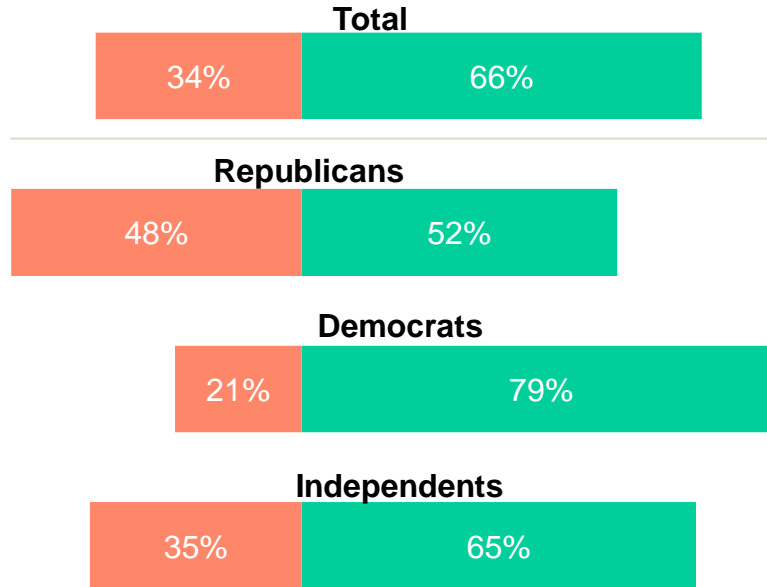


Why Employees Unionize: Where There's Smoke There's Presumed Fire

More Americans believe that employees seeking unionization reflects misdoing on the employer and should be adopted when desired. Republicans are less convinced.

Employee unions and their strict federal labor laws cause too many disadvantages to employers and shouldn't be adopted.

Employees seeking unionization reflect misdoing on the employer and should be adopted when desired.

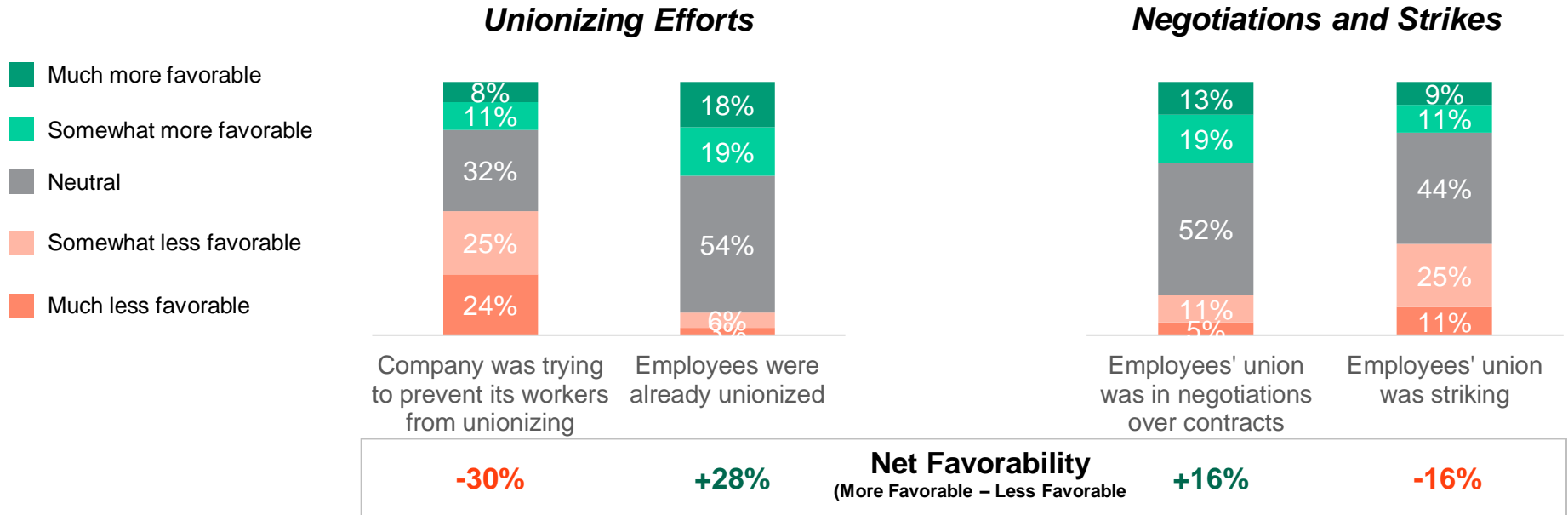


Base: Qualified Respondents (N=2123)
 Q2. Which statement comes closest to your belief?



Impact Of Union-Related Activities On Corporate Perceptions

Americans have more favorable opinion of companies where employees are unionized or in negotiations, but opinions sour when companies try to prevent unionization or when employees strike.



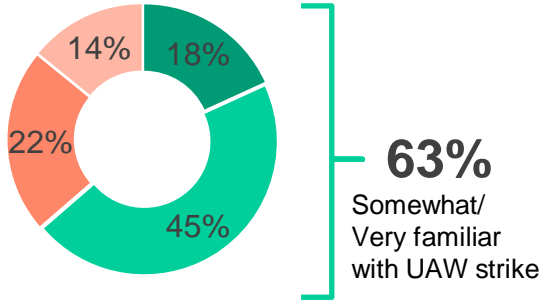
Base: Qualified Respondents (N=2123)

Q4. Would you say you have a more or less favorable opinion of a company in each of the following situations?



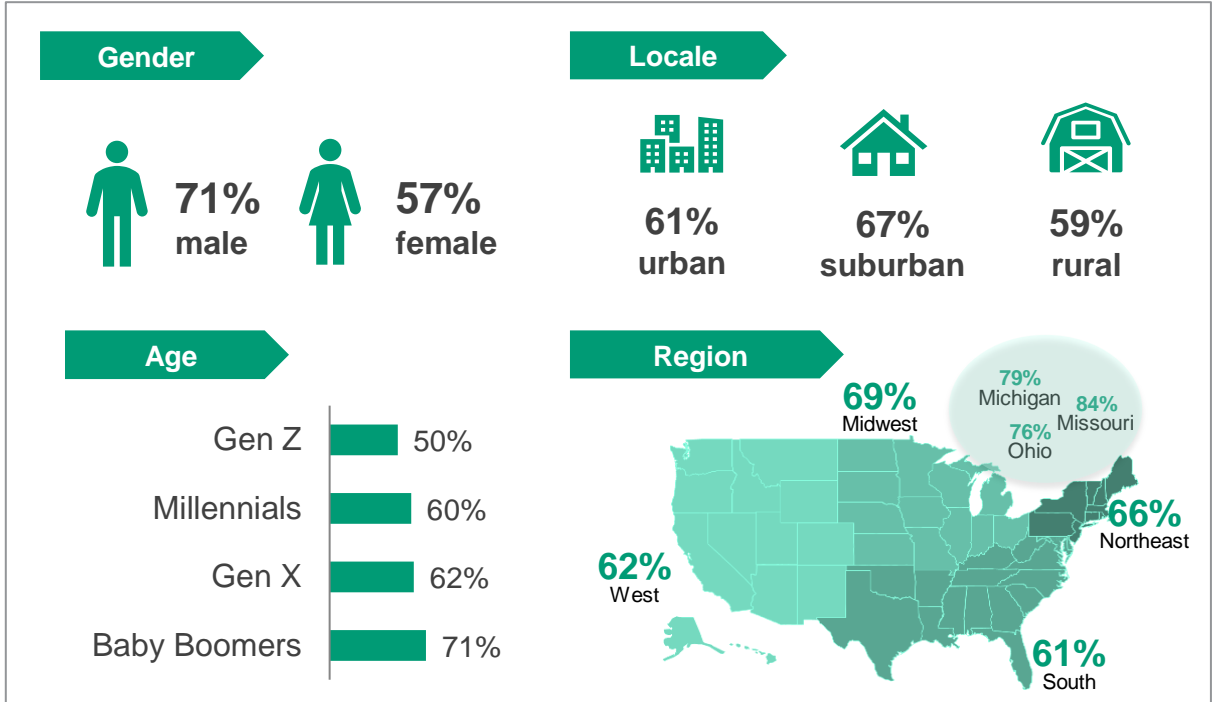
Familiarity With UAW Strike

The UAW strike has gotten the attention of Americans, especially those in states where auto workers are on strike.



- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not very familiar
- Not at all familiar

Percentage Somewhat/Very Familiar



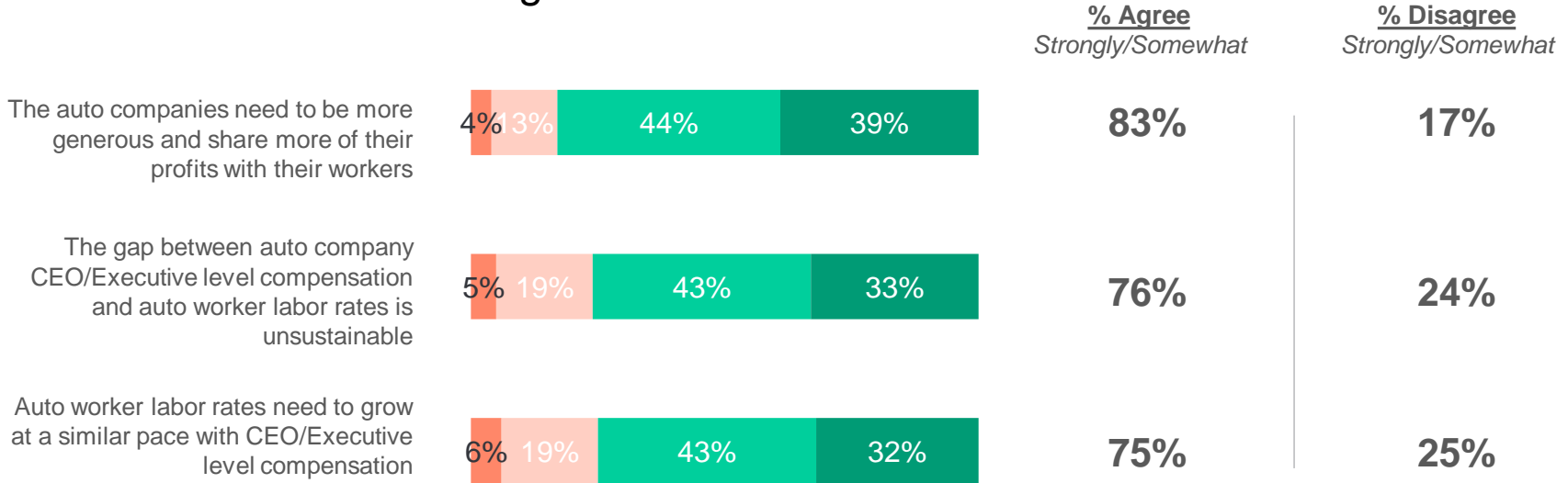
Base: Qualified Respondents (n=2087)

Q. How familiar are you with the current, ongoing strike between the auto workers' union and a few large automotive companies?



Perceptions Of Auto Worker Wages

The public overwhelmingly feels the Big Three automakers should provide greater fairness in auto worker wages.



■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Strongly agree

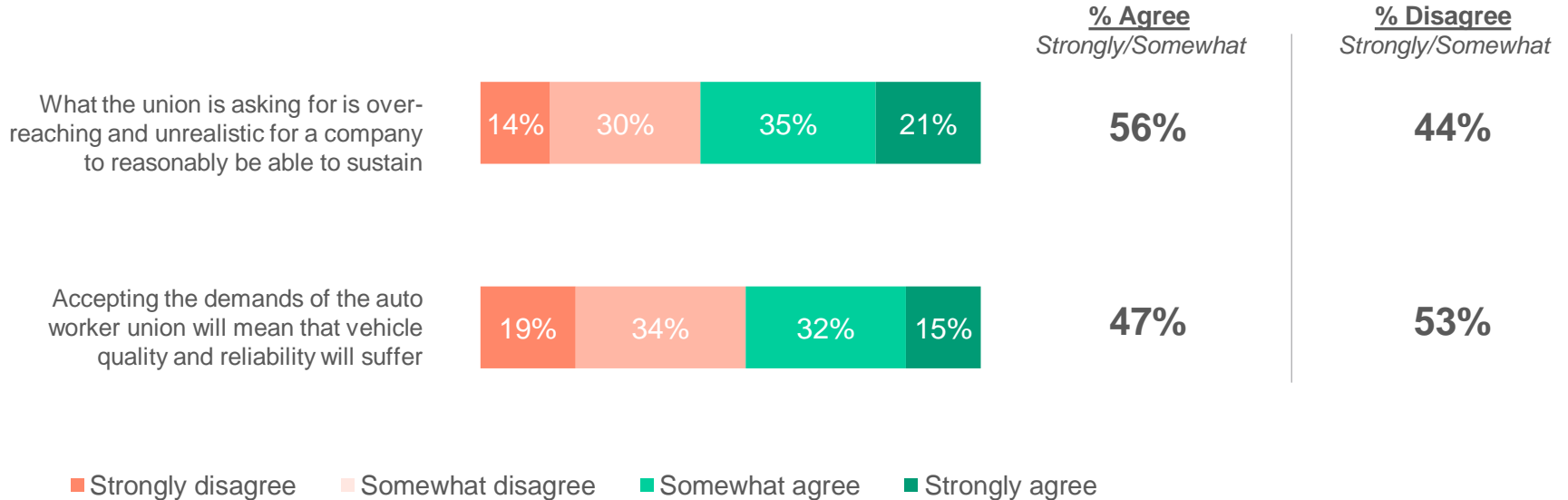
Base: At Least Somewhat Familiar With Strike (N=1802)

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



Perceptions Of Union Demands

However, there are limits to union demands. A slight majority of the American public feel what the union is asking for is unsustainable for the Big Three automakers. There is also sizeable concern that union demands could lead to vehicle quality issues.



Base: At Least Somewhat Familiar With Strike (N=1802)

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

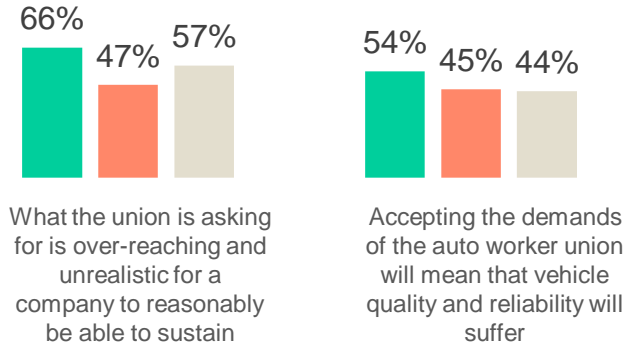


Strike Perceptions By Political Affiliation

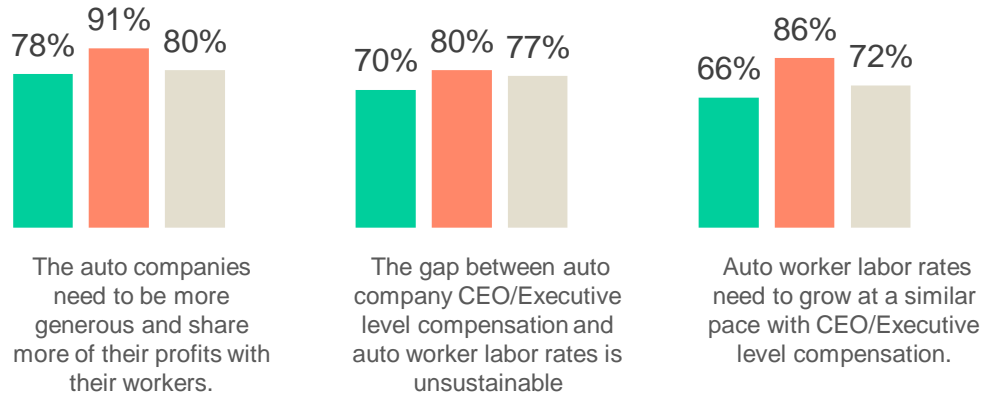
The call for more generosity with workers crosses party lines. Republicans are more committed to the position that union requests are overreaching, but nearly half of Democrats have concerns there as well.

Percent Strongly/Completely Agreeing

Perceptions of Union Demands



Perceptions of Auto Worker Wages



■ Republican ■ Democrats ■ Independent

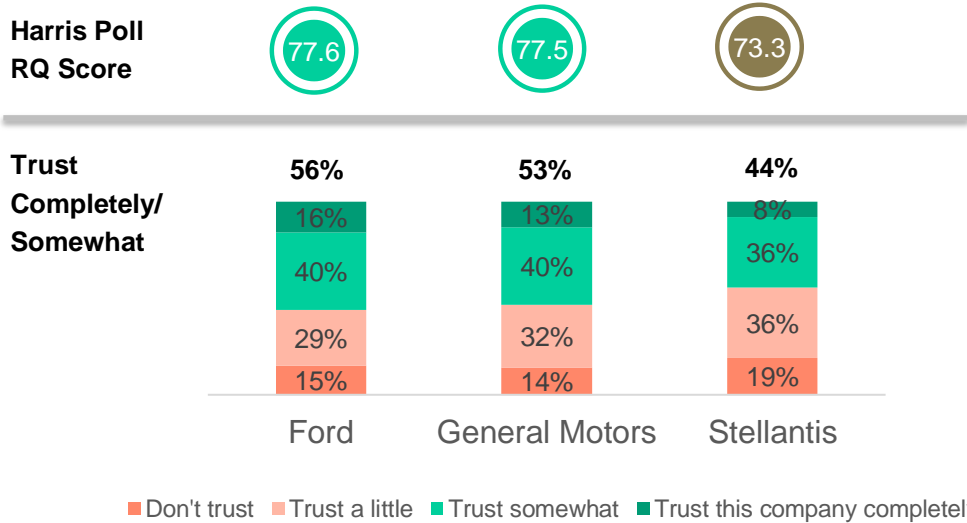
Base: At Least Somewhat Familiar With Strike (N=1802)

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



Reputation As A Crisis Stabilizer: Buoying Trust As Fair Negotiators

Stronger trust in Ford and GM to negotiate fairly and in good faith underscores the importance of corporate reputation, where Ford and GM benefit from stronger reputational equity than Stellantis among Americans.



Trust to negotiate fairly and in good faith

	Ford	GM	Stellantis
Gen Z	56%	57%	50%
Millennials	62%	60%	53%
Gen X	55%	50%	40%
Baby Boomers	52%	49%	39%

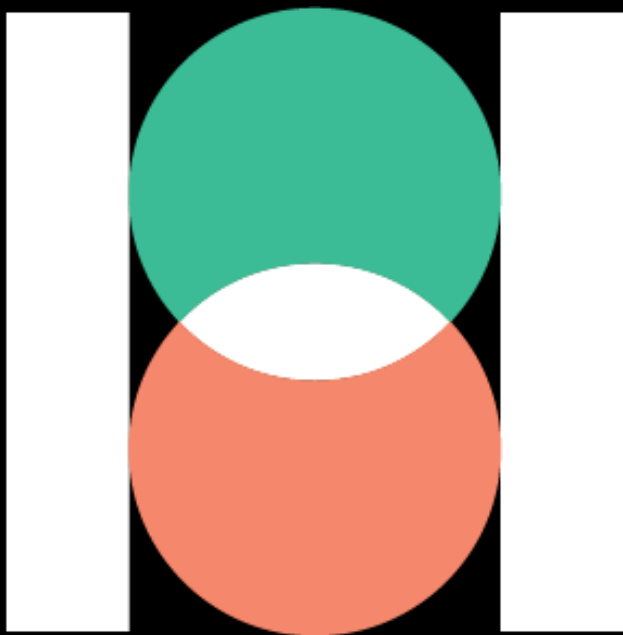
Base: Qualified Respondents (n=2087)

Q. Regardless of your current level of familiarity with the current automotive strike, to what extent do you trust each of the following companies to negotiate fairly and in good faith with the union that represents their employees?



Implications For Brand & Reputation Managers

- Strong corporate reputation at the onset of a crisis provides firmer footing for subsequent actions.
- American on both sides of the aisle stand behind unions. For industries facing new unionization efforts, be forewarned that Americans will default to thinking it's sparked by employer misdoing.
- Relative to the UAW strike, it's clear that the auto sector continues to be part of the fabric of America and the public is paying attention.
- Even in a divided America, some issues nearly everyone can get behind (scale of CEO pay, respect for workers as an American value).
- However, there is recognition by many that there's a cap to what workers can realistically demand if companies are to remain viable.



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