

**UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL**

**LOCAL 971**

# SHOP NOISE



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## **Machinists Strike Pratt & Whitney, Press for Fair Contract**

Under grey spring skies, thousands of union machinists at Pratt & Whitney's Connecticut plants have hit the picket lines this week after rejecting the aerospace manufacturer's latest contract offer. About 3,000 members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) Locals 700 and 1746 walked off the job at midnight on Monday, May 5, launching the first strike at Pratt & Whitney since 2001.



The work stoppage comes after 77% of union members voted to strike when negotiations broke down over wages, benefits, and job security issues. Union leaders say the company's proposal failed to meet the workers' key demands; including adequate pay raises, protection of retirement benefits, relief from rising healthcare costs,

and firm job security commitments... all crucial issues for the bargaining units in East Hartford and Middletown.

### **Union Members Demand Fair Wages and Security**

Union members on the line describe the strike as a fight for dignity and a fair share of the company's growing prosperity. "This strike is about dignity, respect, job security and protecting middleclass jobs in Connecticut," said Howie Huestis, president of IAM Local 1746, which represents over 1,600 workers at Pratt & Whitney's East Hartford facility. "We are ready to hold the line for as long as it takes to secure a contract that recognizes the value we create every single day for the company," he said, underscoring the union's resolve.

At the Pratt & Whitney plant in Middletown, where IAM Local 700 represents roughly 1,400 machinists, union president Wayne McCarthy echoed that frustration. "For months, we have negotiated in good faith with Pratt & Whitney in hopes of reaching a fair contract that reflects the billions in profits our members make for the company," McCarthy said. He blasted the company's final offer as "an insult to the machinists who  
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Optical Services are located in the Manufacturing Building on A aisle across from the NEXT Lounge and is open every Tuesday, 8:00am – 4:00pm. Appointments are required. Call 561-796-2020. Bring in your current prescription.

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## ***International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers Local Lodge 971***



[www.iamll971.org](http://www.iamll971.org)



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**IAM Local Lodge 971**

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**Vice President.....Chris Fowler**  
**Rec. Secretary ..... Jacob Doyon**  
**Secretary-Treasurer..... Zachary Hill**  
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make the best jet engines in the world”. Union negotiators pointed out that the company refused to budge on top member concerns, fair wage increases and retirement security, and “offered nothing to improve job security,” according to IAM District 26 Business Representative Jeff Santini. Santini outlined the workers’ goals going into talks: “We’re looking to secure fair wages that reflect the rising cost of living, provide job security and ensure we have robust retirement benefits that provide peace of mind for our members and their families.” Behind the union’s demands is a sense that employees have helped fuel boom times for Pratt & Whitney, and now seek a contract that rewards that contribution. Union officials note that the company’s profits have soared in recent years, increasing 162% over the last three years, by one estimate. Pratt & Whitney earned approximately \$2 billion in profit last year, and about \$580 million in the first quarter of 2025 alone, up 41% from the same period in 2024. “Pratt & Whitney is a powerhouse in military and commercial aerospace products because our membership makes it so,” IAM Eastern Territory General Vice President David Sullivan said in a statement, vowing that union members “will continue to fight for a fair contract.” Given these figures and the company’s healthy backlog of orders, machinists like 34 year veteran Shawn Moua say they simply “deserve decent pay, and what we received from the company isn’t good enough”. Standing alongside his son on the picket line, Moua said he’s out here to show that “we deserve better”.



## Company Stands by Final Offer:

Pratt & Whitney, a division of RTX Corp. (formerly United Technologies), insists that it has put forward a competitive contract offer and expressed disappointment that it was rejected. The company's last, best offer included immediate across-the-board pay raises and other enhancements: a 4% raise in the first year, followed by 3.5% in 2026 and 3% in 2027, plus a \$5,000 ratification bonus. The proposal also featured improved retirement contributions – including a 20% increase to the monthly pension benefit formula and a boost of the company's 401(k) match from 50% to 100% in 2028 – as well as a higher cost-of-living adjustment and expanded time-off and scheduling flexibility. Pratt & Whitney argues that this package “competitively compensates our workforce”, noting that its Connecticut employees are “among the highest compensated in the region and the industry”. “Our message to union leaders throughout this thoughtful process has been simple: higher pay, better retirement savings, more days off and more flexibility,” the company said in a prepared statement, emphasizing that the offer “built on that foundation.”

As of now, Pratt & Whitney is standing by its final offer and has not returned to the bargaining table. “We have no immediate plans to resume negotiations at this time and we have contingency plans in place to maintain operations and meet our customer commitments,” the company stated flatly. Pratt & Whitney has declined to publicly detail those contingency plans, but union members report that the company has brought in “temporary contract workers” to keep critical operations running. During the ongoing strike at Pratt

& Whitney, the company has reassigned salaried office staff, health and safety personnel, supervisors, and engineers to fill in for striking machinists, taking on production and maintenance tasks far outside their usual roles. Despite these contingency measures, operations remain significantly limited. Union leaders report that no jet engines have been assembled or tested since the strike began, underscoring the critical role of the skilled union workforce and the inability of temporary replacements to sustain full production. Union leaders have also raised serious safety and product quality concerns over Pratt & Whitney's decision to use untrained or minimally trained personnel in critical roles, warning that assigning health and safety staff and office workers to operate complex machinery increases the risk of accidents and compromises the precision standards required for jet engine manufacturing. They argue that such high stakes work demands specialized expertise, and cutting corners with inexperienced replacements could lead to costly errors or long term operational setbacks. The impasse has drawn attention from state leaders, with Governor Ned Lamont and Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz urging both sides to resume dialogue: “Pratt & Whitney is a world leader in manufacturing aircraft engines because of their amazing workers... We strongly encourage the company's leadership and the machinists union to come together to reach a fair deal negotiated in good faith.” No new talks have been scheduled, but IAM officials say they're ready to return when the company presents an offer that truly values the machinists' skills and contributions.





## Economic Impact and Community Response:

The strike's ripple effects extend well beyond Pratt & Whitney's factory gates. As one of Connecticut's largest manufacturers, Pratt & Whitney employs about 11,000 workers at its East Hartford and Middletown facilities alone, a massive workforce whose daily absence is being felt in the local economy. From diners and shops that normally cater to plant workers, to suppliers awaiting shipments, the work stoppage is reverberating through the community. Local businesses are bracing for leaner days if 3,000 machinists remain off the job for long. The company itself is a pillar of the region's economy and a source of state pride. The strike has sparked strong public and political support for the union. The Connecticut AFL-CIO called for statewide solidarity, and elected officials, including Senator Richard Blumenthal and Rep. John Larson, have publicly backed the machinists, citing their right to fair wages, job security, and equal treatment. Other Connecticut leaders have echoed this sentiment, urging the company to offer a contract that reflects the workers' value. On the ground, picket lines are active around the clock, with members taking shifts, supported by honking cars, union allies, and even their families. Many longtime employees recall past strikes, now joined by their children on the line, creating a sense of shared history and unity. That deep solidarity and dedication have kept morale strong, even as uncertainty lingers. Union leaders remain committed for the long haul, citing past strikes and emphasizing this fight is about more than pay—it's about respect, stability, and the future of Connecticut's working families. As the community watches, machinists vow to stay out "as long

as it takes" for a fair deal, while the company aims to limit disruption and bring operations back to normal.



## Union Meeting

**May 18th**

**7:00pm**

***Executive Board Meeting at 6:30***

**Old Town Hall,**

**1000 Town Hall Ave., Jupiter**

