# Mercedes Workers in Alabama Reject Union, Dealing Blow to UAW's Southern Campaign



**Mercedes Workers in Alabama Reject Union**

Workers at Mercedes-Benz factories near Tuscaloosa, Alabama, voted against joining the United Automobile Workers (UAW) on Friday. The decision, unofficially tallied by the union, marked a significant setback for the UAW’s efforts to organize auto workers in the South.

Polling, supervised by the National Labor Relations Board, took place all week at Mercedes’ sport utility vehicle factory in Vance and its battery pack facility in Woodstock. Out of more than 5,000 eligible voters, 2,642 opposed union representation while 2,045 supported it.

The campaign faced strong opposition from Alabama’s political leaders, including Governor Kay Ivey, and prominent Republicans, who argued that unionization would hinder investments in the state’s burgeoning auto industry. Alabama hosts significant manufacturing plants for Hyundai and Honda, alongside Mercedes.

The unionizing effort was seen as crucial for the UAW, aiming to build on recent successes, including securing substantial pay raises for workers at Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis. Despite these gains, the loss in Alabama may slow the UAW’s broader campaign to unionize Southern auto factories, such as those in Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Mercedes had actively tried to prevent unionization, addressing employee concerns and appointing Federico Kochlowski as CEO of its U.S. unit last month. The UAW has filed several charges of unfair labor practices against Mercedes, which the company contests.

Elizabeth Shuler, president of the AFL-CIO, expressed resolve despite the defeat, emphasizing continued efforts to unionize the workforce.