

The UAW's second court-monitored officer election: what was required and how it was checked

*Status as of 20 October 2026. Bracketed numbers refer to the sources at the end. Items marked **PENDING** were not settled when this edition was written.*

WHERE THINGS STAND

- **Ballots:** The Monitor's Seventeenth Status Report says ballot mailing *began* on 17 August 2026 [1]. The Rules and the member notices had planned for "on or about August 21" [2][4]. More than 1,450,000 ballots were mailed [1].
- **Return deadline:** ballots had to reach the designated postal facility in Chicago by its closing time on 5 October 2026. 118,518 people returned a ballot by then [1].
- **Count:** the count ran at a secure facility in Rosemont, Illinois, from 6 to 9 October 2026. 99,670 ballots were counted. The difference from the 118,518 returned is void and challenged ballots [1].
- **Results:** the Monitor announced unofficial results on 13 October. A candidate won a majority in every race, so **no runoff is needed**. The Rules had pencilled in December 2026 mailing and a February 2027 count in case one was [1][2]. The new officers were installed on 16 October 2026 [6].
- **PENDING:** certification. Unofficial results are not certification. The Monitor certifies only after protests and appeals are resolved [1][6]. Some challenged ballots are still unresolved, but the Monitor has confirmed there are too few of them to change any outcome [1].

WHO RUNS IT

The 2021 consent decree in *United States v. International Union, UAW* (E.D. Mich., No. 20-cv-13293) directs the court-appointed Monitor, Neil M. Barofsky of Jenner & Block, to "develop all election rules and methods" in consultation with the union and to supervise every phase of the election [2 Rule 1-1]. The Election Vendor handles printing, mailing, collection and tabulation [2 Rule 2-3]. For 2026 the union selected Merriman River Group with Election Systems & Software, the same team as in 2022–23 [5]. The OLMS and the court do not have to approve the results [1].

THE REQUIREMENTS THAT WORK AS A DE-FACTO SPEC

1. One master voter file. Ballots go to the union's "Global Mailing List." That list combines LUIS (the Local Union Information System), the Membership Data Portal, pension files and local systems into a single list [7 Q1]. Each candidate may inspect it once within 30 days before voting, but may not copy it [2 Rule 7-1]. If a candidate or

observer says an eligible member was left off, that member is sent a ballot [2 Rule 2-7]. Candidates cannot take the list away. Their campaign mail goes out through the vendor at uniform prices [2 Rule 4-7].

2. Mail to every *potentially* eligible member, and check eligibility at the count. Ballots go to all potentially eligible members [2 Rule 2-5]. Good standing is fixed later, on 30 September [2 Rule 5-1]. The vendor builds an "Election Control Roster" and checks each returned envelope against it before counting [2 Rule 5-2]. Where a member had more than one possible address, the union deliberately mailed more than one ballot. Possible duplicate records are flagged on five criteria, including the same name at the same address and the same SSN. If only one flagged ballot comes back, it counts. If more than one does, the case is investigated, and when both came from the same member only the last one received is counted [7 Q4, Q6]. Anyone who asks gets a replacement ballot, whatever the question about their eligibility [2 Rule 2-9].

3. Notice. Under federal law, notice must be mailed at least 15 days before the election. Here the ballot itself serves as the official notice. Informal notices in English and Spanish were posted on the Monitor's and the UAW's sites [2 Rule 2-4].

4. Ballot secrecy. Each package contains a secrecy sleeve and an identifiable return envelope [2 Rule 2-7]. Members do not sign the ballot. A unique tracking number links each package to the member [7 Q18]. At the count, workers take the sleeves out of the envelopes and set the envelopes aside before any ballot is unfolded [3]. Results are published by local union. Locals with 100 or fewer potentially eligible members, or with fewer than 20 voters, are pooled into a combined line so that no small group's votes can be identified [1 n.14].

5. Observers. Every candidate and slate may send at least one observer, at their own expense, to the printing, mailing, mail pickups, eligibility scanning and count. Observers must be members in good standing and their names had to be filed in advance [2 Rule 7-2]. They may inspect the ballot prototype and the printer's certification of how many ballots were printed [2 Rule 7-3], and they may challenge any voter's eligibility at the count [2 Rule 7-4]. OLMS representatives are also invited [2 Rule 7-2].

6. Protests, records and remedies. All protests go to the Monitor on a standard Protest Form, which is new for 2026 [5]. A post-election protest is due by the later of 15 days after the unofficial results or 5 days after the protester knew, or should have known, of the conduct [4]. Once the Monitor's process is exhausted, members can still go to the Secretary of Labor under Title IV [2 Rule 1-2]. Ballots, envelopes and tally sheets are kept for one year [2 Rule 2-18]. Tally sheets by region and by local are public [6].

WHAT CHANGED FROM 2022-23

- **Timing.** In 2022, ballots went out from 17 October and the count began on 29 November, outside Dayton, Ohio. A runoff for President and other offices followed in early 2023 [8]. In 2026 the cycle closed about seven weeks earlier in the calendar and needed no runoff [1].
- **Who counts as a voter.** The Monitor found that the constitution's "retired" member was ambiguous. The union's Executive Board defined it in November 2025, and graduate student members in April 2026. The Monitor adopted both definitions [5]. Ballot packages for members who might be retired carried a certification signature box on the envelope [7 Q21].

- **Campaign finance.** Non-members may no longer contribute, and each member may give at most \$2,000 per candidate. Groups that raise or spend more than \$2,000 must register as "ROOMs" [5].
- **Turnout.** About 106,790 ballot packages came back in 2022 and about 141,548 in the 2023 runoff [8]. In 2026, 118,518 came back out of more than 1.45 million mailed [1].
- **Unfinished business from 2022–23.** After the first election, the Monitor asked the union to consider a "centralized and current contact list," alternatives to mail-in ballots (in-person or electronic), and alternative runoff methods such as ranked-choice voting [8]. The 2026 election was again run by mail with a traditional runoff [2]. We have found no published explanation of why the alternatives were not adopted.

OPEN QUESTIONS TO WATCH

1. **PENDING:** Post-election protests. By our reading of the Rules, the 15-day window from 13 October runs to about 28 October 2026 [4].
2. **PENDING:** Certification, and how the unresolved challenged ballots are handled [1].
3. **PENDING:** The Monitor's promised fuller report on the 2026 election [1]. In particular: how many packages were returned as undeliverable and how many duplicates were flagged, neither of which has been published yet.
4. **PENDING:** Which of these procedures survive once the monitorship ends. Press reports put the end of the mandate in early 2027, subject to possible extension [9]. The Monitor has said it intends to hand protest handling to the UAW itself [4].
5. **Turnout and address quality.** Labor Notes puts turnout at a little over 10% of active and retired members, similar to 2022, with sharp drops in some higher-education and legal-aid locals [9]. No source we have read establishes whether address quality, mail-only voting or something else explains it.

Sources

1. Monitor's Seventeenth Status Report (ECF No. 185, filed 13 Oct 2026), with Exhibit A tally: <https://www.uawmonitor.com/s/UAW-Monitors-Seventeenth-Status-Report-101326.pdf>
2. Official Rules for the 2026 International Officer Election, v1.1 (22 May 2026): <https://www.uawmonitor.com/s/2026-UAW-International-Officer-Election-Rules-a6nr.pdf>
3. 2026 Vote Count Rules: <https://www.uawmonitor.com/s/2026-UAW-International-Officer-Election-Vote-Count-Rules.pdf> ; Rules for Observers: <https://www.uawmonitor.com/s/2026-UAW-International-Officer-Election-Rules-for-Observers.pdf>
4. 2026 Election Questions and Answers (8 Jul 2026), Monitor's site; Memo to Members (20 Aug 2026): <https://www.uawmonitor.com/s/UAW-Memo-to-Members-re-2026-Election-82026.pdf>
5. Monitor's Fifteenth Status Report (ECF No. 159, 22 May 2026): <https://www.uawmonitor.com/s/UAW-Monitors-Fifteenth-Status-Report-Dkt-159.pdf>
6. Monitor, "Unofficial 2026 Election Results": <https://www.uawmonitor.com/unofficial-2026-election-results> ; elections hub: <https://www.uawmonitor.com/elections>
7. Ballot and Count Questions and Answers (20 Sep 2026): <https://www.uawmonitor.com/s/UAW-Ballot-Questions-and-Answers-92026.pdf>

8. Monitor's Eighth Status Report (ECF No. 119, 8 Dec 2023), on the 2022 election and 2023 runoff: <https://www.uawmonitor.com/s/Monitors-Eighth-Status-Report-12823.pdf>
 9. Labor Notes, "UAW President Shawn Fain Wins Reelection Victory" (Oct 2026): <https://www.labornotes.org/2026/10/uaw-president-shawn-fain-nears-re-election-victory>.
-

Votem provides online election services to unions. Reply "yes" for Edition 2, or "no thanks" and we won't write again.