

UFCW-Led Report Spurs Coast-to-Coast Coverage of ICE Raids and Need for Reform



UFCW Local 1149 member and Swift worker Michael Graves said he was handcuffed and held at gunpoint during an ICE raid at the Marshalltown, Iowa, plant.

The UFCW-led National Commission on ICE Misconduct and Violations of 4th Amendment Rights released its comprehensive report of Bush-era immigration raids on Thursday.

Over 40 members of the media participated in a press call with UFCW International President and Commission Chairman Joe Hansen and other Commission members who provided a detailed account of the report. The report received coverage in major news outlets across the nation.

The Commission is made up of former elected officials, labor leaders, academics, civil rights leaders, and immigration and legal experts, and included U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. The Commission's report is an expansive analysis of the Bush administration's use of workplace raids and its total failure to address the broader problems of our nation's immigration system. It brought several disturbing realities to light, such as the systemic abuse workers suffered at the hands of ICE agents, the devastating toll on the communities around the raided plants, and the way raids reward law-breaking employers by giving

CORRECTION: UFCW Women's Network Convention Slated for Oct. 22-25 in Florida

Last week in *OnPoint*, we reported that the UFCW Women's Network is holding its Ninth Biennial Convention on October 22-25, 2009, in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. Unfortunately, we provided an incorrect link for on-line registration and payment. The correct link is <http://ufcwwomenetworkconvention2009.eventbrite.com>.

Please contact Michelle Clemens for more information at mclemens@ufcw.org. We apologize for any inconvenience last week's error may have caused. **OP**

companies total power over workers without punishing those that recruit undocumented workers.

"I was totally shocked by the level of abuse," said Commission member and UC Davis Law Professor Bill Ong Hing. "ICE showed up with weapons drawn and no warrants. We saw deprivation of prescription drugs, separation of newborns from nursing mothers."

The report described the 2006 Swift raids in which thousands of workers—most of them U.S. citizens or documented immigrants—were held by heavily armed ICE agents for up to eight hours without food, water, or the opportunity to use a bathroom or a telephone.

UFCW Local 7 member and 22-year Swift employee Darryl Harrington was angered at the way the ICE raid was conducted at his plant in Greeley, Colorado. "As far as I'm concerned, the Constitution was completely violated," said Harrington, now retired. ICE agents "marched into our work area and held people against their will. They didn't give the Mexicans a chance to get their green cards or notify their families to get their papers. I don't know about you, but I don't bring my birth certificate to work every day. I am a Korean War veteran. That style of law-enforcement isn't what I was defending."

The report, which can be viewed at www.icemisconduct.com, also emphasized the need to pass meaningful immigration reform legislation that must include a path to earned legalization, family unification, and stronger employer sanctions. **OP**

Local 1564 Grocery Workers Ratify Contract with Smith's in New Mexico



Margo McCoy, UFCW Local 1564 member at Smith's

UFCW Local 1564 members overwhelmingly approved a one-year contract agreement with Smith's, the Kroger-owned grocery chain in New Mexico. Covering about 2,000 grocery workers in 26 stores, the deal improves on workers' health care and raises wages for all workers—with the majority receiving a 35-cent hourly wage hike.

"This contract allows workers to receive high-quality health care benefits, and a one-year contract immediately puts the money in their pockets that they need in today's economy," said Local 1564 President Greg Frazier. **OP**

Employee Free Choice Act Ad Centers on Need for Arbitration in Reform

American Rights at Work released a new ad focusing on the need for arbitration in labor law reform. The ad illustrates how employer stall tactics prevent newly organized workers from getting a contract: 52% of workers' unions had no contract one year after a successful election, and 37% of workers' unions had no contract two years later.

American Rights at Work also highlights the fact that arbitration is not a new concept; corporations often and effectively use mediation during negotiations to avoid drawn-out, costly disputes.

➤ Between 2003-2008, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service mediated nearly 19,000 private-sector negotiations.

➤ Mediation is a productive, effective process. In 2008, 87% of mediated negotiations were settled.

➤ Major corporations use voluntary mediation to settle bargaining stalemates, including GE, Borders, Pepsi, and many UFCW employers like Kroger, ConAgra, Swift, Tyson, and Smithfield.

Arbitration is a necessary component of the Employee Free Choice Act that will level the playing field by giving both workers and employers the right to bring in an outside mediator, and then an arbitrator, if they can't settle a contract.

Go to www.ufcwforfreechoice.org under tools and materials to download a PDF of the latest ad. **OP**

Overwhelming Majority of Americans Support Public Health Care Option

The latest *New York Times*/CBS News poll reports that Americans overwhelmingly support substantial changes to the health care system and are strongly behind a public plan held accountable by the government to compete with private insurers.

➤ 72% support a public insurance plan, while 20% were opposed.

➤ 64% thought the federal government should guarantee coverage, and 6-in-10 would be willing to pay higher taxes to make sure everyone is insured.

➤ 50% of those who call themselves Republicans said they would support a public plan, along with 75% of independents and 9-in-10 Democrats.

Americans support the idea that any real health care reform must include a public option. However, conservatives in Congress—including some moderate Democrats—are pushing weak half-measures and calling them "public plans." The latest is a proposal for small, regional "co-ops" that would have *no chance* of competing against insurance companies to lower costs.

Go to www.ufcwhealthcarenow.org to view the poll results and to read a related editorial from *New York Times* economist Paul Krugman. **OP**