

Local 876 and 951 Members Lobby State Representatives to Support the Michigan Employment Security Act



UFCW members in Michigan stand together at the state capitol during Lobby Day.

Members from UFCW Local Unions 876 and 951 visited their state capitol on June 2 in Lansing, Michigan, to lobby for an amendment to the Michigan Employment Security Act.

Carrie Niswender, a Local 951 union steward at Meijer, enjoyed discussing working family issues with her legislators. "My state representative is right on target with what we support. She also supports us by doing her shopping in a union store. I know, because it's my store."

UFCW workers spoke to their representatives about supporting H.B. 4785 and H.B. 4786, bills that would provide unemployment benefits to part-time workers and extend benefits to individuals who exhaust regular benefits and are enrolled in an approved job training program. Enactment of these provisions would also enable Michigan to receive \$138.9 million in additional federal funding.

"Our current unemployment system requires part-time workers to pay into the unemployment fund, but prohibits them from collecting benefits when they are laid off," said UFCW Local 951 President and International Vice President Marv Russow. "We are asking legislators to bring fairness to the system and reminding them many people work part-time because they are unable to find full-time work, or are limited to part-time work because they are caring for a family member. However, they need their income to make ends meet."

UFCW Local 876 President Roger Robinson said the annual lobby day reinforces the importance of the two UFCW local unions working together on behalf of 50,000 UFCW members across Michigan. "Our joint political agenda shows that the UFCW speaks with a unified and powerful voice for working families in this state."

Robert Hernandez, a Local 876 union steward and SPUR, agreed, "It's good to see our union is a fighting force and we have the strength and numbers to support our issues. All our union members here today show that the UFCW *really* is a voice for working America." **OP**



UFCW Local 22 Rides Harleys to Rally for Employee Free Choice in Nebraska

UFCW Local 22 members and staff joined Change to Win and affiliate unions in a Harley-Davidson motorcycle ride across Nebraska to bring attention to passing the Employee Free Choice Act. Riders stopped at rallies in Grand Island, Lincoln, and Fremont before ending the day-long trip in Omaha.

Tim Haumont, a Local 22 steward and 18-year veteran at the Grand Island, Neb., JBS/Swift meatpacking plant, enjoyed riding with fellow union members to garner support for the legislation. “Employee Free Choice is really important for all workers. The ride was a fun way to bring us together and get this message out.”

On separate stops, union members rallied in front of the offices of Senators Ben Nelson (D-Neb.) and Mike Johanns (R-Neb.), who remain non-committal on the legislation. Local 22 members hope if they continue to mobilize for support, Sen. Nelson will vote for cloture of the bill since he has stood with them on other working family issues like the children’s health insurance program, the stimulus package and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. While Sen. Johanns voted against each of these bills, Harley riders asked him to vote for cloture on the Employee Free Choice Act and give the bill an honest debate. **OP**



Members and staff from Local 22 in Nebraska ride Harleys to rally their senators to support the Employee Free Choice Act.

WakeUpWalMart.com Campaigns Across the Nation for Workers’ Rights



A Walmart worker shares her story at the WakeUpWalMart.com press event coordinated by Local 400 in Landover, Maryland.

WakeUpWalmart.com held press events across the nation last week launching a new campaign in support of workers’ rights. The campaign kicked off with a week of press conferences and petition drives, allowing Walmart workers to share their stories and ask for others to support their right to organize and to support the Employee Free Choice Act.

Denise Spittler, a Walmart employee in Maple Grove, Minnesota, told the crowd at a St. Paul press conference coordinated by UFCW Local 789 that she is tired of being told workers can do nothing to improve their conditions.

“One of the first things Walmart does in orientation is show a five-minute video on why Walmart does not need a union,” Spittler said. “I was a union member for 16 years—I know what a union can do. They tell us, ‘If you don’t like it, leave.’ That’s not how it works. We’re not leaving.”

Workers, local unions, community leaders, and local WakeUpWalMart.com activists asked workers and community members to sign petition cards supporting the right of Walmart workers to join a union. **OP**