

Member Activists from UFCW Locals 21 and 1428 Vocal in Support of Health Care Reform at Local Town Hall Meetings



UFCW Local 1428 members demonstrate outside of Rep. David Dreier's office in San Dimas, California. Members demanded the House Republican back a comprehensive plan for health care reform.

Active members from UFCW Local 21 in Puget Sound, Washington, and UFCW Local 1428 in Claremont, California, have been bringing the voice of working America to their respective town hall meetings and events on health care reform.

With Congress on August break, the media has spotlighted town hall meetings overcome by raucous shouting matches from right-wing groups and individuals opposed to fixing our health care system.

At their local town hall on August 12, Local 21 members and pro-reform supporters outnumbered the health care opposition and were successful in demonstrating a greater support for meaningful health care reform. Local 21 has ramped up efforts to show massive backing for reform by having 1,500 members send postcards to their congressional representatives.

Local 1428 has been in the forefront of the health care debate in northern California area, with members and staff actively involved in town hall meetings and planned community discussions throughout August. At a recent health care forum, Local 1428 helped solidify support from Blue Dog Democrat Joe Baca for H.R. 3200.

Just yesterday, the local union received good press coverage for demonstrating outside of Rep. David Dreier's office. Local 1428 members turned out with signs and called for the Republican's support of comprehensive health care reform. **OP**

UFCW Local 75 Grocery Workers Okay Contract with Kroger in Ohio

Members of UFCW Local 75 approved a three-year agreement with Kroger last week that secures fair wages and affordable health care for 5,000 grocery workers in the Dayton and Springfield areas of Ohio.

The contract:

- Raises hourly wages by \$1 over the term of the agreement for department heads, assistant department heads, and top rated clerk classifications;
- Preserves current weekly benefit contributions;
- Improves sick pay and major medical, dental, prescription, retiree, and life insurance benefits;
- Stabilizes the pension fund over the life of the contract;
- Enhances seniority provisions;
- Adds a sixth week of vacation and a personal day for non-foods classification; and
- Includes retroactive pay for all hours worked since the previous contract expired June 20. **OP**

WakeUpWalmart.com Speaks Out for Comprehensive Health Care Reform

WakeUpWalmart.com held events across the country last week with Walmart workers, community leaders, members of Walmart Workers for Change, Health Care for America Now activists, and UFCW local unions who spoke out in support of health care reform.

Continued on back

Continued



As part of the August activities, Walmart workers talked about their experience with Walmart and health care, and urged elected officials and the public to support comprehensive reform. Events included a petition drive asking community members and Walmart customers to support real health care reform.

Walmart recently made a PR splash by announcing its support for reform, even running an ad touting that 94 percent of its workforce has some type of health insurance. But Walmart remains one of the worst offenders of not providing quality, affordable insurance to employees. What Walmart doesn't advertise is that:

- Only 52 percent of Walmart workers get their health care coverage through the company, while the rest who have insurance have to rely on a spouse's employer or state programs;
- Walmart's health insurance coverage remains far too costly for those who have it. In the event of a serious family health issue, employees have to pay the entire out-of-pocket maximum for the least expensive health plan—adding up to 53 percent of their income on average;
- Between Medicaid and SCHIP, taxpayers are paying over a billion dollars a year to subsidize health care to Walmart employees; and
- Walmart insures far fewer workers than most large employers, who, on average, cover 62 percent of their employees. **OP**

UFCW Locals 230 and 431 Work Together to Help Workers Organize at West Liberty Foods in Iowa

UFCW Local 230 in Ottumwa, Iowa, and UFCW Local 431 in Davenport, Iowa, are working together to help workers form a union at two West Liberty Foods plants that process turkeys.

A labor supplier to West Liberty Foods recently came under legal scrutiny for breaking wage and hour laws and currently faces \$900,000 in fines related to 9,000 separate violations filed by the state of Iowa. The media attention surrounding the story has heightened West Liberty workers' awareness of workers rights.

West Liberty operates a plant in each local's servicing area, employing about 1,200 workers combined. Both locals say they are having success in building worker support for organizing committees, and will reach out to the entire workforce within the next two weeks.

Additionally, Local 431 has recently restructured to focus on growth by hiring more organizers and working to train its active members to help organize. **OP**

UFCW Responds to Whole Foods CEO's Efforts to Derail Health Care Reform

The UFCW International and local unions are coordinating efforts to handbill Whole Foods grocery stores in response to CEO John Mackey's recent op-ed attacking President Obama's plan for health care reform. While Mackey's comments have received on-line attention, the UFCW is working to inform shoppers of Mackey's extreme position on health care.

Published in the *Wall Street Journal*, Mackey's op-ed spouts radical right-wing ideology and claims that health care is not a right that all Americans should be entitled. He relies on scare tactics to mislead people about the President's position. [Click here to read John Mackey's op-ed, The Whole Foods Alternative to ObamaCare.](#)

Handbilling events are already planned in key cities this week, and other local unions are encouraged to target a store in their area by contacting the executive assistant at their regional office. **OP**