

## UFCW Local 1996 Members at Kroger in Savannah and Atlanta Ratify New Four-and-a-Half-Year Agreement



Members of the 2010 Kroger negotiations team with Local 1996 President Steve Lomax and Local 1996 Secretary-Treasurer Leon Holderfield.

An overwhelming majority of UFCW Local 1996 members who work at 165 Kroger stores in Atlanta, Ga., and 12 Kroger stores in Savannah, Ga., voted recently to ratify a new four-and-a-half-year agreement with the company.

Highlights of the new contract, which covers over 12,000 Kroger associates, include:

- Improved pension and retirement security.
- Increased health care benefits for both full-time and part-time members.
- Maintained health benefits for current employees with no increase in employee co-pay.
- Hourly wage increases between 60 cents and \$1.10 over the life of the agreement.
- Generous ratification bonuses between \$400 and \$1,000.

“I am delighted we were able to secure a very good contract for our members,” said Local 1996 President Steve Lomax. “In the current tough economic times, having such a strong agreement makes the difference for working families and the community as a whole.” **OP**

## Wake Up Walmart Activists Fight for Fair Sick Leave for Walmart Workers



Wake Up Walmart supporters listen to California State Assemblywoman Fiona Ma (D-San Francisco) as she speaks about Walmart sick leave policy at a national press conference in Oakland, Calif., this past Wednesday.

Supporters of Wake Up Walmart from across the nation gathered with the Labor Project for Working Families in Oakland, Calif., at a press conference Wednesday to launch a national educational campaign about Walmart’s sick leave policy.

“It is important that when people are sick, they are allowed to stay home and recover because nobody wins when workers go to work sick,” said California State Assemblywoman and Majority Whip Fiona Ma (D-San Francisco) who spoke at the press conference.

Assemblywoman Fiona Ma is the author of the Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families bill (AB 1000), a common sense public health prevention strategy that would guarantee all California workers the right to earn and use sick days for personal illness, to care for a sick family member, or to recover from domestic violence or sexual assault, without fear of losing their jobs.

Last week’s press conference was part of a national day of action during which Wake Up Walmart activists organized actions at over 50 Walmart stores across the country to educate consumers about the effects of the company’s policies on workers and consumers, and to encourage the public to send demerits to Walmart. To give Walmart a demerit, visit <http://www.demeritwalmart.com>. **OP**

## UFCW Activists Flood Congress with Over One Million Calls to Action



Local 1776 members and staff welcome the marchers at the rally in Congress last Wednesday.

Last Wednesday, UFCW members from all over the country joined scores of other activists from a wide coalition, including our nation's leading progressive organizations, in a day of action to urge Congress to pass health care reform now.

The action last week, known as "The Virtual March on Washington," was the single largest day of action to date in the fight for health care reform.

Members of the coalition from coast to coast sent a loud and clear message to Congress, with over one million messages sent via phone, fax, email, Facebook, Twitter and an online petition, urging legislators to finish the job and pass real health care reform.

The Virtual March was organized to coincide with Health Care for America Now's (HCAN) 136-mile march from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C., named "Melanie's March," in honor of health care activist Melanie Shouse who lost her battle with breast cancer because of lack of affordable health insurance.

UFCW Locals 1776, 1994, 27 and 400 took a leading role in helping organize and coordinate the march, and dozens of their members were at the Capitol to welcome the marchers as they arrived in Washington, D.C. **OP**

## Center for American Progress: Unions Help Close Ethnic Wage Gap

An article published last month by Christian Weller, an Associate Professor of Public Policy and Public Affairs at the University of Massachusetts Boston and Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, argues that increased union membership among minorities is the way to close the wage gap between minority workers and their white counterparts, and effectively combat poverty.

Drawing his conclusions from a variety of studies, the author asserts in "Short-Term Labor Solutions Can Help Persistent Poverty Among Minorities" that:

- Increasing access to union membership would be an effective way to ensure improved economic security for minority workers;
- Gaining the right to bargain collectively is a proven way to substantially and sustainably reduce the chance of persistent poverty; and
- The benefits of greater unionization would especially benefit Hispanics and African Americans and could prove to be an important anti-poverty tool.

The article also offers labor solutions for the current tough economic times. To read the full article, visit [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/02/poverty\\_oped.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/02/poverty_oped.html). **OP**

## UFCW Local 227 Stands in Solidarity with Locked Out Local 1400 Workers



UFCW Local 227 staff showing their support for the locked out workers of UFCW Local 1400. Local 227 President Gary K. Best also sent Local 1400 a video message of support and Local 227 has committed to sending \$1,000 monthly support to its brothers and sisters on the picket lines.