

UFCW Locals Across the Country Tell State Officials "Stop the Walmart Tax Scam!"



UFCW activists rally against the Walmart tax scam in Trenton, N.J.

UFCW locals from across the country took action last Thursday, April 15, to bring attention to Walmart's use of questionable state tax loopholes and call on state authorities to perform an audit of Walmart to make sure the corporation pays its fair share of taxes.



UFCW Local 23 Members in Pittsburgh, Pa. demand an audit of Walmart by Pennsylvania officials.

At a time when state and local governments are struggling with budget shortfalls and laying off emergency first responders and teachers, Walmart is using tax loopholes to avoid up to \$2.9 billion dollars in responsibility. The almost 50 "Stop the Walmart Tax Scam" actions held by 36 locals gathered signatures,

informing taxpayers that while they are paying their share the largest retailer in the country may be ducking its fair share.

Actions were held in Albuquerque, N.M. (Local 1564); Columbus, Lancaster and Logan, Ohio (Local 1059); 8 cities across Arizona (Local 99); Trenton, N.J. (Locals 1500, 1262, 338*, 1245, 152, 1360, 888, 342, 108 and the UFCW Women's Network); Providence, R.I. (Local 328); Philadelphia, Pa. (Local 1776); Pittsburgh, Pa. (Local 23); Dayton, Ohio (Local 75); Chicago, Ill. (Local 881); Salinas, San Jose and Vacasville, Calif. (Local 5); Chippewa Falls, Sheboygan and Two Rivers, Wis., Red Wing, Minn. (UFCW Textile and Garment Council); Boston, Mass. (Local 1445); Hartford, Conn. (Local 919); Las Vegas, Nev. (Local 711); Central, N.Y. (Local 1); Norcross and Duluth, Ga. (Local 1996); Kansas City and Springfield, Mo., Wichita and Topeka, Kan. (Local 2); Shrewsbury, Mo. (Local 665); Sunset Hills, Mo. (Local 88); Memphis, Tenn. (Local 1529); Nashville, Tenn. (Local 1995); Cleveland, Ohio (Local 75); Indianapolis, Ind. (Local 700); Fresno, Calif. (Local 8GS); Los Angeles, Calif. (Local 1442); and Pomona, Calif. (Local 1428).



Members of UFCW Locals 400 and 27 explain Walmart's unfair tax grab to commuters in Washington, D.C.

Along with thousands of signatures from these events, state tax officials received over 3,000 emails directly from activists encouraging them to perform audits. **OP**

UFCW Members and President Joe Hansen Join Department of Labor at First-Ever National Action Summit on Latino Workers' Health and Safety



The "Making a Difference" panelists, from left to right, were Holder Construction Corporate Safety Director Jorge Cisneros, UFCW International President Joe Hansen, SEIU Executive Vice President Eliseo Medina, Workers Defense Project Director Crintina Tzintzun, and Futuro Media Group President and Anchor of NPR's Latino USA Maria Hinojosa.

UFCW International President Joe Hansen was a featured speaker at last week's first-ever Latino Workers Health and Safety Summit, convened by Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis in Houston, Texas. Before the summit began, a group of 15 UFCW members met with Secretary Solis to brief her on safety conditions in their workplaces and discuss ways they believe the Department of Labor can help.

During a panel discussion entitled "Making a Difference" President Hansen put forth a series of recommendations for improving working conditions in packing, processing and poultry plants, including:

- Adequate resources and staffing to ensure vigorous worker protection through OSHA;
- Congressional legislation that criminalizes companies where negligent conduct leads to worker fatalities;
- Creation of a free and fair process for workers to form a union;
- Passage of comprehensive immigration reform.



Local 1208 President Carl Green and Local 22 Representative Elsa Gordillo meet with Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis before the summit.

President Hansen applauded Secretary Solis for holding the historic summit and for her aggressive advocacy on behalf of all working men and women. He also reflected on the UFCW's long history of representing immigrant workforces and focused on best practices for creating safe, stable and secure working environments for all workers.

Here is an excerpt from President Hansen's statement:

*Unfortunately, we have also seen the other side, the more tragic side, of this issue. We have seen how unscrupulous employers use immigration as a tool to suppress workers' voices and their safety concerns. This inevitably leads to increased injuries and unsafe working conditions. It leads to a race to the bottom that hurts all workers, whether immigrant or native born. To combat this, we believe that OSHA must have the tools and resources to hold employers who violate the law accountable. We also believe that workers must have the right to organize their workplaces free of intimidation and harassment. This will help ensure that they have a voice on the job and an ample opportunity to work with management to prevent injuries and fatalities. **OP***

Local 7 Members Ratify New Meat Contracts



Local 7 President Kim Cordova explains the tentative agreement to UFCW members who work at the JBS/Swift meatpacking facility in Greeley, Colo.

Local 7 has ratified new contracts with major meatpacking employers in the state of Colorado.

The first, with JBS/Swift in Greeley, Colo. includes across the board raises that begin with raising the base rate, and top of the line raises that total more than \$2 an hour. The workers in the plant will receive additional vacation for the most senior members, measures recognizing the diversity in the plant’s workforce, and an in-plant union office.

The contract was overwhelmingly approved by Local 7 members with more than 99 percent of those voting casting a ballot in favor of ratification. “This deal is all gains for everybody,” said Linda Sughroue, a member of the negotiating committee and a 25-year plant veteran. “Workers will get raises, health insurance with better coverage and lower co-pays. Premiums will not increase over the life of the contract...I love the new contract.”

Local 7 workers at the Butterball turkey plant in Longmont, Colo. also ratified a three year contract. The Longmont contract includes improved union security and wage increases for a plant that had been operating without a contract for more than a year. **OP**

Local 686 Inks New Deal with Viscofan

Local 686 has ratified a new deal with Viscofan, Inc. in Danville, Ill. The 230-member unit ratified the deal with a vote April 10.

The contract includes wage increases of up to \$1.70, as well as holding the line on health care costs.

“This is the best contract we’ve had in 18 years, economically,” said Local 686 President John Stokes, who has 35 years of experience as a dryer operator in the plant. “We had a good negotiating committee, with every sector of the plant represented – and they stuck to their values until the very end to make this victory possible.”

The Viscofan plant makes casings for meat products such as hotdogs and deli meats. **OP**



Local 686 bargaining committee: President John Stokes, Secretary-Treasurer Tim Miller, Robbie Greumburg, Neva Alexander, Russell Guthrie, Joe Tate, Joe Lutchka, Randy Gonwa, and Shirley Perryman (not pictured: Ken Allison, Sami Rimaila)