

ON POINT

UFCW
Unity Agenda of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union

Special Edition: Restoring the American Dream

Building Worker Power. Rebuilding our Economy.

The Change to Win (CtW) Leadership Council convened on September 30, 2010, and elected UFCW International President Joe Hansen to be the new Chair, and elected Teamster President Jim Hoffa as Secretary-Treasurer. The Leadership Council then took action to refocus and redouble CtW's efforts around organizing by consolidating the mission, operations, and resources of Change to Win around the Strategic Organizing Center (SOC). Change to Win affiliates share the commitment to organize more workers with the knowledge that greater collective bargaining strength is the key to restoring good jobs and a middle class to our economy.

The SOC has been an innovative laboratory for organizing tactics and strategies in the private sector, including in retail and transportation. CtW affiliates are engaged in their own key organizing programs around the country and in many cases, those programs are in the same city or geographic area. The SOC will coordinate its work to increase support of affiliate organizing programs and magnify the collective impact in that particular area. CtW continues to advance strategies to win major labor law reform in Congress and via the National Labor Relations Board. And CtW, through the White House Task Force for the Middle Class, and direct advocacy

with the Administration, is seeking federal procurement practices that support a strong economy with good jobs and will level the competitive playing field for good employers, including union employers, who play by the rules.

Change to Win unions -- the UFCW, Teamsters, SEIU, and the Farm Workers -- represent millions of private-sector unionized workers in the United



States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. Change to Win members work in the fastest growing industries in the country in service-sector jobs, including retail, transportation, health care, and food production, among others. In many cases, CtW unions have common employers in core industries which make coordination even more important. CtW has a unique opportunity and responsibility to grow union density in those private-sector industries.

The Change to Win Strategic Organizing Center provides the collaborative tools to do just that.

The CtW structure now directs all resources directly to organizing. On the many other issues that require coordinated action -- legislative, advocacy, communications, research and safety and health -- CtW facilitates the work among the appropriate directors of the affiliate unions. The result of that work is that department directors at the UFCW International Union have a stronger, more direct relationship with their counterparts at sister CtW unions.



As a strong and viable, independent organization, CtW is committed to creating productive partnerships with the AFL-CIO. It does not seek to compete with, but rather to work in tandem with the AFL-CIO and the NEA whenever possible.

In this heated 2010 election cycle, CtW is working closely and cooperatively with the AFL-CIO at the local, state and national level. The labor movement shares unity of purpose around many issues, particularly the commitment to elect worker friendly candidates. Many UFCW local unions are leading those coordinated efforts to turn out the vote next month and keep moving America in the right direction.

There has never been a more crucial time to fight for worker power. In the face of the crisis confronting working families, CtW's goal is to unite workers in core jurisdictions to level the playing field between working America and corporate America. This endeavor has not come without challenges, challenges that all unions face as we continually engage with workers on what the union can do to improve the quality of their lives. CtW has sought earnest examination and discussion within the labor movement around why private sector unionization rates have shrunk to seven percent and how we turn around the decades-long campaign by corporate interests and union-busters to weaken workers and maximize profits. **OP**

Catfish Workers Stand Tall for New Contract

Approximately 650 members of UFCW Local 1529 have ratified contract agreements, averting a potential strike by hundreds of workers at the Delta Pride Catfish, Inc. plant in Indianola, Miss., and at plants operated by partner firm Country Select in Isola and Belzona, Miss.

The initial contract proposed by the company sought to roll back the clock by twenty years, reversing many of the hard-fought gains by workers during the historic Delta Pride strike in 1990, where 900 workers walked the picket lines for four months and inspired a national boycott of Delta Pride products. The strike in the early '90s was the largest by black workers in Mississippi's history and was the subject of the award-winning documentary, *Standing Tall: Women Unionize the Catfish Industry*.

"It made me sick just to think about it," said Mary Sibley, a quality assurance inspector at the Country Select plant in Isola, Miss., who sat on the negotiating committee. "We have fought for the things that we have in our contract. It took a long, long time to get this and we're not going back."



Today's workers held their ground in the face of the company's proposals, voting unanimously in May to go on strike rather than accept Delta Pride's regressive terms. The strike vote caught the company's attention, and both sides worked hard to avoid the necessity of a walk-out.



“We took a stand as a unit and as a family. That’s what was needed and that message got to the company,” Sibley added.

Not only were all 84 previous proposals from the company taken off the table, but workers were able to achieve wage increases, retain daily overtime, and find common ground on a modified co-pay for insurance.

“Together we stand, united we fall and we’re going to stick together,” Sibley said. “Talk to each other about what’s going on. Don’t let down the fight for your rights and believe in your success. You will succeed.” **OP**

EMD Sales Workers Vote “Union Yes”

Thirty-nine EMD Sales workers voted to join UFCW Local 400. EMD distributes international foods, spices and kitchen utensils in the Mid-Atlantic Region, and the workers are sales staff and merchandizers for the company. The overwhelming “union yes” vote from workers “sends a clear message to the management of EMD Sales that it is time for a change!” said Local 400 President Tom McNutt.

“I’m happy because we wanted to put a stop to the things the company was changing without notice,” said Juan Pablo Barrelo, a worker at EMD Sales. “I know that the win will make a big difference.” **OP**

New Agreement for Houston Area Kroger Workers

Houston-area Kroger workers and members of UFCW Local 455 voted overwhelmingly to accept a new three-year contract agreement that covers 13,000 workers in 107 Texas Kroger stores.

After a lengthy negotiations process, UFCW Local 455 members were able to achieve a solid contract

securing pensions, significant improvements to their health and welfare benefits, and wage increases. Also included in the agreement are enhancements to vision, dental, and preventative care, shortened progressions to top rate, and stronger orientation language. **OP**

Tens of Thousands Gather in D.C. for One Nation Rally



Tens of thousands gathered for the “One Nation” Rally in D.C., on Saturday, October 2, to take a stand against the divisive rhetoric dominating both media coverage and political debate, and called on Washington to take real action to create good jobs with good benefits and help get the middle class back on its feet. **OP**

In observance of the Columbus Day holiday, the next edition of On Point will be on Wednesday, October 13.