

## UFCW JBS Workers Handbill to Protest Bad Health Plans That Could Bankrupt Workers



*JBS workers across the country, including UFCW Local 1161 (above), and UFCW Local 1776 (below), held a handbill action protesting the company's proposed health plan that contains severe coverage cuts and high costs.*



JBS workers from across the country held a handbill action last week in protest of a proposed health plan that contains devastating increases in co-pays and deductibles. Other proposals in the plan would shift significant costs to workers. The coverage cuts and increased costs of the proposed plan are so severe, workers could be left bankrupt if they become seriously ill, injured, or have a baby.

UFCW locals 7, 99, 227, 293, 540, 711, 951, 1161, 1149, 1473, and 1776 all participated in the action. Members wanted to send a message to the company that workers are standing together nationwide in support of fair health plans that protect workers and working families. JBS workers say they are united in rejecting a bad health plan that is solely for corporate profits and threatens to bankrupt workers.

To learn more about the plan that is threatening JBS workers, the handbill action, and to view a video featuring workers from UFCW Local 1161, visit <http://bit.ly/1cR2zsk>. **OP**

## El Super Workers Rally for a Fair Contract and to Raise Standards Across the Grocery Chain



*UFCW El Super workers rally in Los Angeles to call on a fair contract for workers and better working conditions throughout the grocery chain.*

More than 100 workers, labor leaders, community activists, students, and clergy members gathered outside a South Los Angeles El Super store last week to demand a fair contract for union grocery workers employed by the chain. Workers at seven El Super stores across California, Nevada and Arizona currently have a union voice on the job. The workers are fighting for a fair contract that will raise standards across the 45-store grocery chain.

“We would like the company to pay us sick leave and give us 40 hours a week – a real full time job,” said Fermin Rodriguez, a cashier and shop steward with UFCW Local 770. “All workers at El Super deserve to be healthy and that’s why we are asking for sick leave. We’re here to send a message to workers and families that we will keep fighting for you and won’t give up until we win. Every El Super worker deserves a fair contract.”

El Super workers represented by UFCW Locals 324, 770, 1167 and 1428 are part of a growing movement of unionized workers at ethnic markets. Rapidly expanding chains like El Super underscore the importance of union workers achieving fair contracts that set higher standards across the chain. While El Super only had 14 stores as recently as 2008, the chain now employs over 4,000 workers and is opening 5 to 6 stores in the U.S. each year.

Martin Ayala, who has worked as a meat clerk at El Super for five years, explained why he was marching: “We are fighting for our benefits and for our rights because the El Super company has rejected all of what we’ve asked for at the bargaining committee. We’re asking for sick days because it’s important – we come

into work sick, which is not respectful for the workers or the customers. We are forced to work sick and we handle food, so this is not good.”

Among the issues that El Super has refused to address in bargaining are respect on the job, seniority rights, health benefits and a guarantee of 40 hours per week for full time workers. The Mexico-based retailer that owns 80 percent of El Super, Grupo Comercial Chedraui, took in \$120 million in 2012, and co-President Alfredo Chedraui Obeso’s net worth was reported to be over \$1 billion as of January 2013. **OP**

## UFCW Local 1208 Hosts “Poultry Worker Appreciation Day”



*UFCW Local 1208 members host a “Poultry Worker Appreciation Day” in support of workers at Mountaire Farms as they call for better wages, hours, and working conditions.*

UFCW Local 1208 workers in North Carolina recently hosted a “Poultry Worker Appreciation Day.” Workers wanted the event to bring awareness for the need to improve working conditions and living wages for the workers at the Mountaire Farms chicken processing plant.

About 65 UFCW Local 1208 members served food to the plant workers for all of the shift changes. UFCW members wore their UFCW gold, and held signs to support the plant workers, demanding equal rights, and calling for more reasonable work weeks.

“We are tired of the treatment and low pay we endure daily at Mountaire,” said Jasmine Isom, who has worked there for three years. “We work hard full-time jobs and \$10 an hour is not enough to raise our families.”

UFCW Local 1208 Secretary-Treasurer Terry Slaughter, said that “the workers are the ones that put chicken on our tables

and get the poultry orders out. It is hard to feed your family on \$9 an hour. These employees need more money and more respect for the job that they do.”

Standing in solidarity with the plant workers, UFCW members are supporting the Mountaire Farms workers in their efforts to join a union. Hundreds of Mountaire’s 2,000 workers have signed union cards, indicating an interest in having a union voice on the job.

Attorneys with UFCW Local 1208 also filed unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB against Mountaire Farms for an immediate injunction to stop severe and widespread violations of federal labor law.

The charges state that Mountaire Farms has been disciplining employees for their union activity, threatening to have employees arrested, engaging in surveillance and coercion, interrogating employees, threatening termination, and changing personal working conditions if employees support being part of a union.

“The Mountaire workers are standing up to this company and saying we will not be abused and disrespected any longer. We stand proudly with these workers,” said Keith Ludlum, UFCW President of Local 1208. “Anytime Mountaire violates the rights of workers we will hold them accountable.” **OP**

## UFCW California Members Lobby Their Legislators

The UFCW Western States Council, along with members and leaders from Locals 5, 8, 135, 324, 648, 770, 1167, 1428, and 1442, recently went to the State Capitol in Sacramento to lobby California legislators about issues important to working families.

UFCW members spoke about two key bills they will be pushing this session: SB270, which would ban single-use plastic bags in grocery stores and pharmacies across California, and AB1792, which would pressure companies in California to pay their fair share for health care.

Banning single-use plastic bags in grocery stores would reduce costs to consumers, protect jobs, and help clean up the environment.

As UFCW members met with lawmakers about SB270, they passed out reusable plastic bags with the UFCW and the California Grocers Association logos. As the day went on, reusable bags were seen all across the Capitol.



*UFCW members in California held a lobby day at the State Capitol to talk to their legislators about issues important to workers.*

Many large companies in California – including Walmart – have used a loophole in the Affordable Care Act to move workers from employer sponsored coverage to the state’s Medi-Cal program.

AB1792 would require the publishing of data about the number of workers receiving public assistance to help ensure companies in California are pressured to pay their fair share of health costs.

Angie Balderas, a member of UFCW Local 1167, talked about the importance of speaking out.

“I think it was amazing that we went to lobby. It seemed like we took a more casual approach that was very welcomed by legislators,” she said. “I hope we continue to keep the UFCW visible at the State Capitol. I thought the visit was a success and very educational, and think we should send even more members from the stores in the future.” **OP**

## Walmart Workers Stand Up for More Hours

Walmart workers have launched a national petition calling on their managers to allow workers to have access to full-time work. When 2,000 community supporters sent emails to a Fremont, California store, workers there reported that they were given access to additional hours. To sign the petition and learn more about Walmart workers’ call for more hours visit <http://www.coworker.org/petitions/walmart-stop-cutting-our-hours> **OP**

## UFCW Local 23 Members Rally in Support of Better Wages and Working Conditions for Workers



*UFCW Local 23 members joined more than 1,000 community allies in a rally to support UPMC workers and make the call to increase the minimum wage for all workers.*

UFCW Local 23 members joined hundreds of allies and community supporters in a rally to support of University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) service workers as they stood together for better wages, working conditions, and a union voice on the job.

More than 1,000 protesters attended the rally in Pittsburgh, Pa. UFCW Local 23 members joined the protest to not only show their support for UPMC workers, but also help spread the message about the importance of raising the minimum wage and improving working standards for all working people in the city of Pittsburgh. **OP**

## Car Wash Owner Must Pay Workers In Major Settlement

New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman announced that New York City car wash owner John Lage and two associates have agreed to pay \$3.9 million in a settlement for numerous labor law violations, including underpayment of workers and failing to pay for required employees’ compensation and unemployment insurance. More than \$2.2 million of the settlement will be divided up among roughly 1,000 New York City car wash workers.



*Around 1,000 New York City car wash workers will receive payments from a settlement with the company owner after numerous labor law violations.*

“It’s a huge thing for me to know that justice is being done,” said Ernesto Salazar, who has worked for Lage since 2001. “We are poor, but we have rights in this country too.”

“This settlement is a triumph of justice for the individual workers who will be getting the money they have earned and are owed. But it is also a powerful statement of principle that working people can expect the full protection of the law,” said President RWDSU District Council of the UFCW President Stuart Appelbaum.

Also as part of the settlement, if Lage sells or closes locations, he must either guarantee workers jobs with the new owner or at another Lage shop, or give workers 60 days notice and priority for new openings. **OP**

## UFCW Statement on Safeway’s Announced Sale to Cerberus

UFCW International President Joe Hansen issued the following in response to Safeway’s announced sale to Cerberus Capital Management.

“Safeway announced today that it has reached an agreement to be purchased by Cerberus Capital Management which currently operates supermarkets across the country under the Albertson’s, Acme, Jewel-Osco and Shaw’s banners, among other stores.

“The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) represents tens of thousands of workers within these two companies. Through ups and downs, the UFCW has maintained good relationships with both Safeway and Cerberus.”

“The UFCW will work closely with Safeway and Cerberus through the acquisition process and beyond so that these major supermarket companies can maintain strong market share and that our members can continue to serve customers and their communities.” **OP**

## UFCW Launches Language Access Working Group

As UFCW members become more diverse, the UFCW is committed to building and increasing our multilingual capacity in order to break down language barriers and achieve goals established at the 7th Regular Convention last summer. It is important to be able to speak to workers in their native tongue during campaigns as workers seek to have a union voice on the job and to also engage members for whom English may only be a second or third language, or who may have Limited English Proficiency.

The newly established Language Access Working Group is working to develop a three-year plan to help build our capacity to function as a multilingual organization.

The Language Access Working Group initial areas of focus will be on:

- Training bilingual members to become interpreters in their workplaces and for their local union.
- Developing resources and procedures for translation services for all of our key languages.
- Leadership development for bilingual members and staff.

The Language Access Working Group is looking for input from locals to help identify opportunities to promote language access. Local unions can submit ideas, challenges, or identify bilingual members for the interpreter trainings to International Vice President and Director of the Civil Rights and Community Action Department Esther Lopez at [elopez@ufcw.org](mailto:elopez@ufcw.org). **OP**