

Americans Call on President to Challenge Walmart to End Income Inequality, Take Real Steps Towards Sustainability



Members of OUR Walmart join community supporters and environmental activists to call on President Obama to tell Walmart to improve jobs and take real steps to protect the environment.

Responding to President Obama's call to address the income inequality that he said was the "defining challenge of our time," Walmart workers, elected officials, faith leaders, and prominent environmental and advocacy groups are calling on the president to challenge Walmart to take real steps to improve jobs and protect the environment. The wave of calls for change comes after the president visited a Walmart store in Mountain View, Calif., on Friday where hundreds of people, including members of OUR Walmart and UFCW Locals 5, 8, and 648 rallied and asked him to challenge the low-wage employer to improve jobs.

"When I heard President Obama was visiting my store, I wanted to tell him what income inequality really looks like—right here working at the country's largest employer," said Pam Ramos, a Mountain View Walmart worker. "I bring home \$400 every two weeks. The President needs to know there is no solution to end income inequality in this country that doesn't include improving jobs at Walmart. We are here today to ask him to stand with us in calling on Walmart to raise wages and pay my co-workers and me a minimum of \$25,000 a year for full-time work."

UFCW International President Joe Hansen released a statement on the President's visit to Walmart saying, "On Friday,

President Obama will stand side by side with a company known for low wages, few benefits, unreliable hours, discrimination against women, violating workers' rights, and yes, environmental degradation. Despite promising to be a leader on climate, Walmart's greenhouse gas pollution continues to rise. According to its own Global Responsibility Report, the company's emissions grew 2 percent, nearly half a million metric tons, in the last year alone.

"More than anything, the President's visit sends a terrible message to workers across America. He is lending credibility to a bad actor when he should be joining the calls for Walmart to change. A federal agency—the National Labor Relations Board—is prosecuting Walmart for retaliating against workers who stand up and speak out. Taxpayers are subsidizing Walmart which pays many of its own workers so little that they must rely on food stamps and Medicaid. And at a time when there is a renewed conversation about addressing income inequality, Walmart's business model is making the problem worse.

"After the pep rally in California, I invite the President to meet with Walmart workers who can tell him firsthand about their struggles."

In addition to the hundreds of people that rallied outside of the store, 32 groups including, UFCW locals from across the country, Global Exchange, Jobs with Justice, Moveon.org, and Rainforest Action Network, signed onto a joint statement asking the President to challenge Walmart to help strengthen the economy and protect the environment by becoming a leader in sustainability and creating better jobs. **OP**

Tyson Poultry Plant Sanitation Workers Join the RWDSU

More than 30 QSI Contract Sanitation workers came together for a union voice on the job and voted to join the RWDSU Southeast Council. The workers in Buena Vista, Georgia, work sanitation inside a Tyson poultry plant. Workers at QSI Contract Sanitation say they needed a voice on the job to address the lack of a grievance procedure and improve their jobs at the plant.

"Every one of us voted to join the RWDSU. We are looking forward to seeing improved working conditions and higher wages in the near future," said Leon Burke, a five-year employee at QSI.



Sanitation workers at a Tyson poultry plant came together to join RWDSU Southeast Council to have a union voice like the RWDSU members who currently process poultry in the same plant.

The poultry processing workers at the Tyson plant are already members of the RWDSU and played a critical role in assisting QSI Contract Sanitation workers win a union voice. After speaking with their RWDSU co-workers, QSI workers realized the only way they could resolve the lack of a grievance procedure and improve their jobs was by joining a union and negotiating a union contract.

“We couldn’t have done this without the support of the RWDSU Tyson steward leadership and members,” Burke continued. **OP**

UFCW Local 540 Secures Federal Benefits for Laid Off Cargill Workers at Shuttered Plant

The U.S. Department of Labor has approved a petition filed by the UFCW on behalf of the approximately 2,000 workers formerly employed at the shuttered Plainview, Texas, Cargill meatpacking plant. The approval of the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition makes those former plant workers eligible to apply for extended unemployment, job retraining, and other federal programs under the Trade Act of 1974 that are designed to mitigate the adverse economic impacts of trade agreements.

The increase of beef imports due to the severe drought and its contribution to the closing of the plant made the plant workers eligible for the benefits under the Trade Act. During the 12 months preceding the closure of the plant, the drought forced

packers to import more beef to try to secure enough supply to keep their plants operating at full capacity.

After the petition was approved, UFCW Local 540 sent out notices to all the laid-off workers informing them of the various programs available, and how to apply for them.

“Given that Congress has failed to extend unemployment benefits, the Department of Labor’s approval of this Trade Adjustment Assistance petition provides some much needed good news for those employees laid off by Cargill’s shutdown of the Plainview plant,” said Johnny Rodriguez, President of UFCW Local 540. “It will provide crucial resources to those workers to help them re-enter the workforce as quickly as possible, which in turn will help the overall economy.”

The UFCW’s TAA petition sought assistance in the form of extended unemployment insurance, job retraining, and other benefits for workers who were laid off when the plant closed. TAA provides such assistance to mitigate the negative impacts on workers, farmers, businesses and communities due to increased imports under trade agreements. **OP**

UFCW Locals 152 and 1360 Hold Action to Support Bottom Dollar Grocery Workers



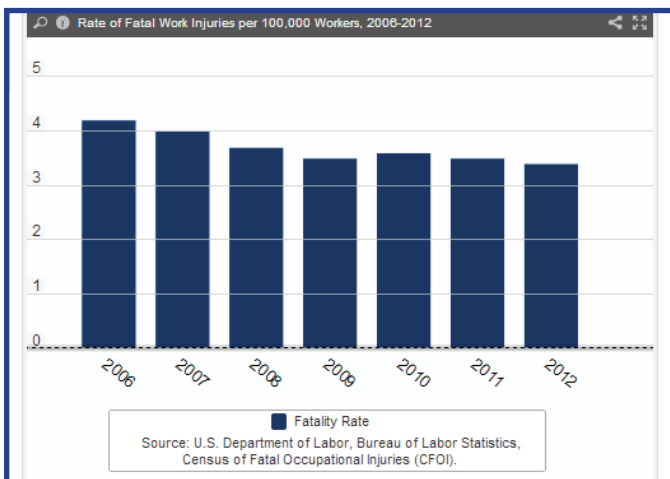
UFCW local 152 and 1360 members held a grocery bag action to show support for Bottom Dollar grocery workers as they work toward having a union voice on the job.

Members of UFCW Locals 152 and 1360 showed support for Bottom Dollar Grocery workers and their efforts to have a union voice on the job. Workers at Bottom Dollar do not have a union and workers have reached out expressing interest in joining the UFCW.



Last Friday, members participated in a grocery bag action where they distributed hundreds of UFCW reusable grocery bags to Bottom Dollar customers across 13 stores. As customers entered the stores, UFCW members informed them about how Bottom Dollar workers could make their stores and jobs better if they had a union. After speaking with UFCW members, numerous customers voiced their support for Bottom Dollar workers. **OP**

AFL-CIO Releases Report on the State of Safety and Health for American Workers



The AFL-CIO released the 2014 edition of “Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect,” a report on worker safety and health issues.

The AFL-CIO released the latest edition of *Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect*, a national report with a state-by-state profile of worker safety and health issues in the U.S.

Some findings of the report include:

- In 2012, 4,628 workers were killed on the job in the U.S., and an estimated 50,000 died from occupational diseases, resulting in a loss of 150 workers each day from hazardous working conditions.
- North Dakota had the highest fatality rate in the nation (17.7 per 100,000 workers), followed by Wyoming (12.2), Alaska (8.9), Montana (7.3) and West Virginia (6.9).

- The lowest state fatality rate (1.4 per 100,000 workers) was reported in Massachusetts, followed by Rhode Island (1.7), Connecticut (2.1), and New Hampshire and Washington (2.2).

The full report can be read at <http://bit.ly/1mSdOX7> and a breakdown of report highlights with graphs can be found at aflcio.org/death-on-the-job. **OP**

2014 Legislative and Political Action Conference

UFCW local union leaders and legislative and political representatives from across the country met in Chicago last week for the 2014 Legislative and Political Action Conference. Conference participants learned about what’s at stake in the 2014 elections and how to strategize on key campaigns and statewide anti-union initiatives like Right to Work. Kentucky Secretary of State and candidate for U.S. Senate Alison Lundergan Grimes roused the crowd describing her plans to unseat Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Attendees also heard speeches from elected officials, candidates, cabinet members, and clergy. The conference was an opportunity for UFCW locals across the country to discuss important issues and prepare for the 2014 midterm elections.

Local unions weighed in at the conclusion of the conference.

“I particularly enjoyed Secretary Perez. I was really pleased with the connectedness he had with our issues and our members. As a political wonk, I also liked hearing all of Charlie Cook’s political predictions. It was great to hear realistic projections for all over the United States. Having two women open up the conference was something I appreciated. Both Wendy Davis and Alison Lundergan Grimes were excellent.” – Mary Lou Weymer, UFCW Local 1996

“My favorite part of the conference was walking on stage with Alison Lundergan Grimes and helping not just folks in Kentucky, but everyone in the room get excited for the fall and get ready for the hard work we’re about to do.” – Caitlin Lally, UFCW Local 227

“This conference overall was motivating. Secretary of Labor Tom Perez was fantastic. He broke everything down in common sense terms and proved that he understood labor issues.

ON POINT

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

He was able to put things together so that anyone can realize the importance of labor unions and the right to organize. Everyone who attended should be able to take back something useful to their members.” – Chris Naylor, UFCW Local 1776

“My favorite part was Reverend William Barber. He really put it in perspective why we all have to be more engaged and look at the long picture. This is our opportunity to bring out a base that was not there in 2010.” - Jeff Anderson, UFCW Local 555

More photos can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/LPAC2014> and additional photos will be posted in the coming days. **OP**

