



Holding the Line

Strike Update
Issue #8

Unemployment Benefits

Albertsons and Ralphs employees should file for unemployment benefits immediately.

Applications are taken by telephone only at:
1-800-300-5616

Hold the Line for Health Care

Customer support has been strong—parking lots are empty and business is light. At many stores, friends and neighbors have brought refreshments to the picket line. Now, customers have a new way to show their support for the fight to save affordable health care.

Tell your customers, friends, and neighbors to visit:
www.ufcw.org/hold_the_line

There, they can:

- Contact Steve Burd and Safeway
- Get the facts of the companies' proposal
- Donate to the "Hold the Line for Health Care Strike Fund"

Legal News

UFCW Fighting for Your Health Benefits

On Wednesday, two federal lawsuits were filed in the U.S. District Court on behalf of workers to force Albertsons, Ralphs, and Vons to pay health care benefits for workers on strike or locked out. Ralphs, Vons, and Albertsons are refusing to pay for health benefits earned before the start of the strike and lockout.

Employees are also entitled to continued coverage under COBRA. Vons, Albertsons, and Ralphs are refusing to pay for COBRA coverage in November and December. Under COBRA, employees who lose coverage because of a reduction in hours worked are entitled to up to eighteen (18) months of continued coverage. COBRA applies to employees on strike or locked out by their employers.



Customer Messages

Supporters Speak Out

We support the workers and will not cross picket lines. My dad was a UFCW affiliate member. I am an active member of CTA/NEA. My family supports you wholeheartedly. We tell our friends and families to do the same. We live in Scripps Ranch and had to evacuate due to the fires but are now back in our home.

We saw that there were not any picketers outside our Vons, presumably due to health concerns with the air quality. We can not go out at all because of the air quality and the effect on our health.

We have to travel over 10 miles to find groceries elsewhere. We would try the online Vons service at this point if it were not for the strike. We normally spend over \$200/week at Vons. They will not get a penny from us until they pay workers fairly and cover the cost of medical benefits, no matter what the inconvenience to us.

I am sure workers and management alike know someone who lost their home in these fires. Can management be encouraged to see that life is short and they need to settle with workers so that all victims of these fires can get back to a normal life as soon as possible?

Monica Sorenson

I am writing to you to let you know what strike support means. My parents both work in the grocery business and have for over 20 years each. Growing up in the industry has taught me a lot about what it means to be union. Being union means more than just belonging to an organization, it means supporting each other when times are tough, sticking together to fight for something you believe in or for something that someone else believes in.

Over the past few weeks, I have heard a lot of different opinions from people in regards to the strike. I know that it is tough to not be able to run to your local grocery store and get what you need but people need to realize that what the workers are fighting for is more than a couple of dollars in health care. If they just stood by and let corporate America take over what they have worked so hard to get, where would that leave the rest of us—those with children who have to grow up and one day work? Why do people feel that just because they have to pay for something that everyone else should, too? Does that make it right for what these companies are trying to do to their employees or does that make them feel better about their own situations? I just don't understand why they wouldn't want someone to fight for what they believe in and fight for what is theirs because we can't go to another store for awhile and be inconvenienced! I mean isn't that what is really upsetting everyone so much?? Maybe we need to rethink our own values and the examples that we are setting for the future.

Pauline Hunt, Ventura, CA
(published in the Ventura County Star)