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Baby's On Fire Cafe Abruptly Shuts Down After Workers Seek to Unionize

*Owners, who relocated to Portugal, close popular Baltimore cafe and record store
with only nine days' notice and no severance*

BALTIMORE, M.D. – Today, the **United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 27**, which represents essential workers across Baltimore and Maryland, released a statement in response to the closure of popular cafe and record store Baby's On Fire. Workers at the cafe in Baltimore's Mount Vernon neighborhood recently filed to unionize with **UFCW Local 27**.

The Baby's On Fire organizing committee said:

"This move by the owners, Shirlé Hale-Koslowski and David Koslowski, shows complete disregard for us as a staff and any willingness to operate in good faith. Many of us live paycheck to paycheck, don't have access to our pay stubs, and are panicking.

"We have been essentially running this business since they left Baltimore and moved to Portugal. Our goal has always been to make Baby's On Fire sustainable and stronger with a unionized staff, but the owners are denying us that chance."

UFCW Local 27 President Jason Chorpensing said:

"It's clear that the owners are shuttering Baby's On Fire because their workers would like to form a union. This has been a popular business for a decade, and there is no reason to shut it down, but it seems the owners would rather throw their workers out of a job than respect their right to unionize. It's union-busting 101."

BACKGROUND

- Baby's On Fire owners David Koslowski and Shirlé Hale-Koslowski opened the cafe and record store as a business and community space in 2016. Shirlé Hale-Koslowski also owns Four Corners Cuisine, a personal chef meal delivery service in Baltimore.
- Since opening, the owners have relocated to Europe, running the business from abroad in Portugal for more than three years. While the owners have been living in Portugal, Baby's On Fire workers have been managing day-to-day operations of the business.
- On their website, Koslowski and Hale-Koslowski sought to open a “cool and comfortable space where their community could get together for smart conversations,” which became Baby's On Fire. Now, Mount Vernon and broader Baltimore is losing that space.

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UFCW Local 27 is part of the UFCW International, the largest private sector union in the United States, representing 1.2 million workers and their families in grocery, retail, meatpacking, food processing, cannabis, healthcare, and other essential industries. Learn more about UFCW Local 27 at www.ufcw27.org.