

## Local 2008 Member Speaks Out for Employee Free Choice Today



**UFCW Local 2008 member Joe Ann Fowler, with Ark. Sen. Mark Pryor and President Hansen.**

Local 2008 member Joe Ann Fowler was on Capitol Hill today to share her story about trying to form a union. Fowler was a featured speaker at a press event sponsored by American Rights at Work to unveil a new grassroots campaign, “Faces of the Employee Free Choice Act,” and made her case for Employee Free Choice alongside several members of Congress as well as Hollywood actors Martin Sheen, Bradley Whitford and Richard Schiff of the popular television show *The West Wing*.

Fowler also urged Congressman Mike Ross (D-AR) to make passing Employee Free Choice Act a priority in the House. This is the second time in two weeks Fowler has met with her elected officials, including last week when she and UFCW International President Joe Hansen met with Senator Mark Pryor (D-AR) to share her story.

Today she spoke about the hurdles workers face when they try to unionize under current labor laws. “Under the Employee Free Choice Act, it will be the workers’ free choice to organize,” said Fowler. “You won’t have to worry about the company threatening you.”

A Certified Nursing Assistant at Lake Village Health Care in Wilmot, Ark., Fowler, along with her co-workers, became concerned about changes made by new administrators that limited their voice in patient care and made working conditions unfair. According to Fowler,

when they tried to organize, management threatened workers with layoffs and tried to bribe workers with raises if they would vote against the union. Fowler and her co-workers finally did get a union on the job.

UFCW members like Fowler and other workers across the country are writing letters, blogging, sending emails, calling their elected officials, and signing cards to urge passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. **OP**

## Gearing Up for National Health Care Push

The economic crisis has exposed what a burden our broken health care system is on families, businesses, and local governments. President



Obama recently said, “Health care reform cannot wait, it must not wait, and it will not wait another year.” That’s why people around the country are organizing to make it clear to Congress: we need real health care reform now.

Today marks the fourth White House regional forum on health care reform, designed to bring together working Americans, key health care stakeholders, and elected officials to discuss health care reform. The final forum will be April 6 in Los Angeles, Calif. The general public can submit questions and apply to attend by visiting: [www.healthreform.gov](http://www.healthreform.gov).

Throughout April, Health Care for America Now (HCAN), of which the UFCW is a founding member, is organizing events to put pressure on members of Congress to pass quality health care reform. HCAN has planned 94 events in 44 states, with 24 confirmed members of Congress. Every UFCW local union has a role to play in these events. To find out what actions are happening in your state and how you can get involved, contact your state HCAN representative. You can find the contact information for your representative on the website at: [www.healthcareforamericanow.org](http://www.healthcareforamericanow.org). **OP**

## New Court Ruling Finds Workers Locked Out During California Strike May Seek Unemployment Insurance

A California appellate court has reversed an earlier ruling that UFCW members who were locked out during the 2003-2004 strike were not eligible to try to recover unemployment benefits lost during that period. As a result, thousands of grocery workers who were employed at Albertsons during that 4 ½ months may be able to recover unemployment insurance for that time. A similar case involving Ralphs workers is pending before the same court. **OP**

## Local 222 Member Receives George Meany Award



UFCW Local 222 member Nick Harrington, with Local 222 Secretary Treasurer Chuck Clavton

Nick Harrington, a UFCW Local 222 steward working at Tyson Foods in Sioux City, Iowa, was recently presented with the George Meany Award for Outstanding Service to Youth. Harrington received the award for arranging to feed hospital staff and the families of those injured when a tornado struck the Little Sioux Scout Ranch last year. “My scouts and I felt compelled to do something to help,” said Harrington. “It

felt good to help not only my fellow brothers and sisters of Local 222 working at the hospital, but also to help the families of those boys.”

Harrington says the Scouts and the UFCW have positively shaped his values. “I am honored and humbled by receiving this award,” he said, “and I’m proud to be a representative of scouting and my union. I will continue to serve both to the best of my ability.” **OP**

## Bruno’s Workers Urge Company to Keep Its Promises

Last week UFCW members and Bruno’s employees spoke out to urge the company to respect the promises it has made to more than 2,000



Bruno’s-owned Food World worker and Local 1657 member Stacy Gibbon

workers. Bruno’s – which operates more than 60 grocery stores in Alabama and Florida – is in bankruptcy proceedings and has asked a bankruptcy judge to reject successorship language in the contracts with UFCW Local 1657. Bruno’s workers are eager to see the company succeed, but believe they must be part of the solution.

“We know that times are tough for Bruno’s, but they’re tough for the workers, too,” said Lisa Grimm, who has worked at the Bruno’s-owned Food World in Pensacola, Florida and been a member of UFCW for 18 years.

Bruno’s and the UFCW have agreed to temporarily delay the rejection hearing while all concerned parties seek a compromise. The hearing is currently scheduled to begin on April 2.

“We didn’t put the company in this position, and it’s a shame that they’re trying to make us pay for their mistakes,” said Darlene McDonald, who has been a UFCW member and worked for Bruno’s in Gardendale, Alabama for 28 years.

“I rely on my good wages and benefits to get my family the health care they need,” she said, “but now Bruno’s is trying to make it possible for a new company to take that all away. We’ve worked hard for Bruno’s through the good times and the bad, and we deserve to be treated better than this.” **OP**