

Local 540 Members Finally Begin Bargaining with Walmart—after Nine Years of Stonewalling by Company

After nearly a decade of legal maneuverings and circumventions of federal law, Walmart was finally forced to the bargaining table in Jacksonville, Texas.

More than nine years ago, workers in the meat department in the Jacksonville Walmart voted to be represented by Local 540. Walmart ignored the workers, refusing to bargain with them or provide information to the union. Only after the National Labor Relations Board issued a complaint against Walmart did the company try to move the goalposts, claiming workers in the meat department had lost the right to representation because skilled meat cutting jobs had been replaced by a prepackaged meat program. Eight years and several legal battles later, the United States Court of Appeals forced the company to bargain with these workers.

When the outcome of an election is uncertain for this long in other countries, it's called a coup. When it happens here, it's just another day on the job for the millions of American workers for whom a voice on the job is being unjustly denied.

This case illustrates why the Employee Free Choice Act must pass. If it were law, those workers would have had a contract years ago. In addition to majority sign up provisions, under Employee Free Choice if no agreement has been reached on a first contract after 90 days of bargaining, either employer or employees can request assistance from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. If there is no agreement after 30 days of mediation, the issues go to binding arbitration. The Employee Free Choice Act would level the playing field and make sure that when workers like those in Jacksonville vote for a union, they get a union—not a long, uphill fight against a corporate empire. **OP**

OnPoint Arrives Wednesday Next Week
In order to update you on the UFCW Lobby Day next week, we will be publishing OnPoint one day later than usual. Please expect it in your inbox on Wednesday, March 25.

UFCW Part of Historic Swearing-In of New Labor Secretary Hilda Solis



Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis with UFCW International President Joe Hansen. Solis will be a strong advocate for America's workers, and a major force in addressing our jobs crisis and strengthening the economy. **OP**

Historic UFCW Agreement with Mexican State to Protect Migrant Worker Rights

Last month UFCW Canada President Wayne Hanley and Governor Leonel Godoy Rangel of Michoacán, Mexico signed a landmark agreement to ensure that human and labor rights of agricultural workers from Michoacán, Mexico are recognized and enforced while at work in Canada. It is the first agreement of its kind in North America, where a state institution is partnering with a civil organization to extend assistance to its citizens. It is appropriate that the organization participating is the UFCW—which for years has been a leader in the campaign for migrant and immigrant workers' rights, in the United States and Canada. **OP**

Deadline Extended for UFCW Scholarships

The deadline for UFCW members and their unmarried dependents to apply for UFCW scholarships is now April 15, 2009. Scholarship winners will be notified by mail by Tuesday, June 19, 2009, and their names posted at www.ufcw.org after June 20. For more, visit <http://www.ufcw.org/scholarship>. **OP**

Bashas' Website Launched

While the employees of Bashas', Inc., eagerly await the outcomes of federal investigations into allegedly discriminatory employment policies and violations of labor law, UFCW members are shining a light on the Arizona grocer. On Monday, the UFCW launched www.HungryForRespect.org, which documents the company's mistreatment of its employees and the hypocrisy of a company that claims to treat its employees "like family."



Hungry for Respect is a UFCW-led coalition that includes UFCW Local 99 and other labor groups, concerned shoppers, Bashas' workers, and interested community groups.

The company is currently facing more than 70 charges of unfair labor practices before the National Labor Relations Board, and is being investigated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for allegedly paying Hispanic workers less than other employees. UFCW members can learn more about these charges and others at the website. **OP**

Employee Free Choice Opponents Claim Bill Will Cost Jobs, but New Poll Shows Americans Support the Legislation

The Employee Free Choice Act was introduced in the House and Senate last week, and already big business is trying to bury this legislation by claiming it would be bad for the economy. But a new poll shows Americans aren't buying it. The poll, conducted by Gallup, finds that Americans support legislation that would make it easier to join unions by a wide margin. Of Americans polled, 53% favor the law; 39% oppose it.

However, a new report has been seized on by business groups as proof that the bill would hurt the economy and destroy jobs. The study, titled "An Empirical Assessment of the Employee Free Choice Act: The Economic Implications," is based on decades-old data

from a handful of Canadian provinces. The study was published by an economist at the corporate consulting firm LECG—and funding for the study was provided by the Alliance to Save Main Street Jobs, a group that includes the American Hotel and Lodging Association; the Associated Builders and Contractors; the International Council of Shopping Centers; the Real Estate Roundtable; the Retail Industry Leaders Association and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Watch out for misleading studies like this—don't let your members be fooled. This one is funded by Employee Free Choice opponents who've invested millions trying to defeat the legislation, despite the findings of the new Gallup poll that a majority of Americans support it. Major media outlets have been reporting on the study while failing to note the funding, or the unsound methodology its conclusions are based on. The Institute for Southern Studies (ISS), however, has thoroughly examined the study and reports that, "Even as a piece of business research-for-hire...the study is shockingly weak—based on a thin set of old and irrelevant data." For more information on the study and findings of the ISS, visit www.southernstudies.org. **OP**

UNI Welcomes Employee Free Choice Act Introduction, Will Support Campaign

UNI recently welcomed the introduction of the Employee Free Choice Act into the U.S. House and Senate, and pledged to support a worldwide campaign.

"This is key legislation that will give American workers freedom from fear when it comes to organizing," said UNI General Secretary Philip Jennings. "The Employee Free Choice Act will let workers stand together in the U.S. to improve their lives and working conditions...and will help raise working conditions globally." UNI will be mobilizing its 20 million members in a worldwide solidarity campaign to support U.S. member unions.

"When it becomes law, the Employee Free Choice Act would be a huge boon to working people," said UNI President and UFCW Int'l President Joe Hansen. "It would turn the tide of anti-union, anti-worker attacks that have been stock in trade for many U.S. companies who have used every tactic at their disposal to intimidate workers who want to unionize." **OP**