

UFCW Members from Across the Country Rally at Nation's Capital to Reform Health Care Now



Members and staff from UFCW Local 1059 traveled to Washington, D.C., to rally their Ohio representatives for real health care reform that includes a public option.

Members of more than 60 UFCW local unions across the country came out in force with thousands of other union members and health care advocates on June 25 in Washington, D.C., to rally and lobby for quality, affordable health care for all in 2009.

Health Care for America Now hosted the massive event that saw 10,000 activists converge on Capitol Hill to demand health care reform that includes a public option and shares the responsibility among employers, individuals, insurance companies, and the government. Actress Edie Falco, Congressional members, labor and community leaders, doctors, nurses, and other workers with health care stories spoke at the rally. Afterwards, constituents from 36 states and D.C. conducted almost 300 visits with their members of Congress, while more than a dozen town hall meetings were held.

“We’re here lobbying for a new health care bill that would include everyone,” said UFCW Local 1500 member LaToya Powell. “It’s important because it would give everyone an equal opportunity to get the health care and benefits they desire—for themselves and their family.”

UFCW Local 75 member Roberta Greaver traveled from Ohio because she believes everyone should have the health care coverage she has as a union employee working for Kroger. Greaver beat cancer three times and says it’s because she was able to focus on her treatment rather than worrying about how to pay her bills.

“I think anybody that has been sick in this country needs the same opportunity I’ve had to get well,” Greaver said. “And I’m very well!”

Health Care for America Now and its partner organizations, including the UFCW, will continue to meet with members of Congress in their home states over the July 4 recess to stress the urgency of passing legislation that guarantees health care for all. **OP**

Local 1208 Members Reach Tentative Agreement with Smithfield in Tar Heel

The UFCW Local 1208 bargaining committee has reached a tentative agreement with Smithfield Packing on a first contract for 4,500 workers at the Tar Heel, N.C., pork processing plant.

“We never would have gotten this far without the support of other UFCW Smithfield workers and local unions,” said Orlando Williams, a bargaining committee member who has worked at the Tar Heel plant for two years on the kill floor. “I’m confident my co-workers will be pleased with our new contract.”

The bargaining committee has been negotiating with the company since February after the workers voted for a voice with the UFCW in a December election. Workers vote on the contract today and tomorrow. **OP**

Ohio UFCW Locals Call on Senator Voinovich to Support Working Families

Members of UFCW Locals 75, 880, 1059, and the International Chemical Workers Council delivered thousands of postcards yesterday to the office of U.S. Senator George Voinovich (R-OH) urging him to support the Employee Free Choice Act.

The action is part of a coordinated nationwide effort of the UFCW to remind our lawmakers that the Employee Free Choice Act is the best way to expand the middle class and make the economy work for everyone. **OP**

Members of Local 7 and Local 400 Protest Colorado Governor in D.C.



UFCW Local 7 member Ashton Santos holds a sign shaming Colorado Governor Bill Ritter.

UFCW Local 7 members and Colorado union firefighters picketed two fundraisers held for Governor Bill Ritter. UFCW Local 400 joined in the Washington, D.C., rally against the Colorado Democrat's broken promises made to labor unions.

"I voted for Bill Ritter and encouraged my family to vote for him, too," said Ashton Santos, a UFCW Local 7 member and Safeway employee. "He said he would support Colorado's middle class, and he failed to do so. That's why I traveled all the way to D.C. to talk to him—

but ended up standing outside a luxury hotel while he raised money with his Beltway lobbyist buddies."

Last month, Gov. Ritter vetoed a bill that would have made it easier for workers who are locked out of their job sites to receive state unemployment payments. Prior to being elected, Ritter promised to support union workers, but has since vetoed four bills that would have strengthened workers' rights. **OP**

UFCW Local 5 Holds Conference on Immigration Issues

UFCW Local 5 recently co-sponsored a conference in Oakland, California, with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) to strategize and discuss immigration issues. UFCW Locals 101, 648, and 1428 attended the conference, along with leaders and activists in the immigrant and social justice communities.

Conference participants condemned worksite raids and supported the UFCW-led National Commission recommendations for immigration reform. They also pledged to work with the Obama administration to create a more humane immigration policy. **OP**



Pete Maturino, Director of UFCW Local 5's Agricultural Division (on right), talks to Freddie Capuyan, Salinas Regional Director of the Agriculture Labor Relations Board (on left), at Local 5's immigration conference in June.