

9/26/2005 2:44 PM For Immediate Release

Contact Person: Mike Potter, Director of Communications, UFCW 951

Office: 800.999.0951

UFCW 951 To Challenge Department of Labor (DOL) Interference in Union Election

On September 19, 2005, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) filed a civil lawsuit in the United States District Court in Kalamazoo seeking to rerun the UFCW 951's officer election which was held more than a year ago. UFCW 951 is one of the largest local unions in the country and represents more than 30,000 workers in Michigan. The majority of UFCW 951 members are employed at Meijer.

The mail ballot election for UFCW 951 President and other offices and Executive Board members took place in August and September of 2004. Votes were tabulated and the results announced on September 7, 2004

"We look forward to proving in court that if there were improprieties here, they were carried out by the Department of Labor, its investigators and by other outside groups who interfered with the election in the first place, not by any officers or staff of UFCW 951, who did nothing improper in the election," commented UFCW 951 President, Bob Potter.

"This litigation is especially disappointing because it continues a years-long pattern of unprecedented interference into the internal affairs of UFCW 951," Potter continued. "Past charges by the Detroit DOL office have been shown to be baseless and we fully expect the same outcome for this bad faith lawsuit as well."

"We are not the only ones who believe that we did nothing wrong in our conduct of the 2004 election," Potter added. "Virtually identical charges to those being made by the Labor Department were also made to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Those claims were investigated and subsequently tried by an NLRB Administrative Law Judge. Judge Paul Bogas dismissed each and every charge and called the testimony by Russ Blunden, the candidate for President defeated by Potter, a 'product of his [Blunden's] imagination.'"

Attorney Jon Karmel, who represents UFCW 951, said, "I am confident that in this case, Blunden and his supporters will be exposed again as not believable and that the district court judge will dismiss the DOL's suit."

Potter, who is also a Vice President of the UFCW International Union, recently led ground breaking and complicated negotiations with Meijer and three other UFCW Local Unions over restructuring health care benefits that will provide more than \$2 billion in employee benefits for more than 125,000 people.

"We will fight these unfounded charges aggressively. But we will not be distracted from providing UFCW 951 members the leadership, support and innovative problem solving that have made us one of the largest and most admired unions in Michigan."