

Locked Out, but Spirits High in Muscatine

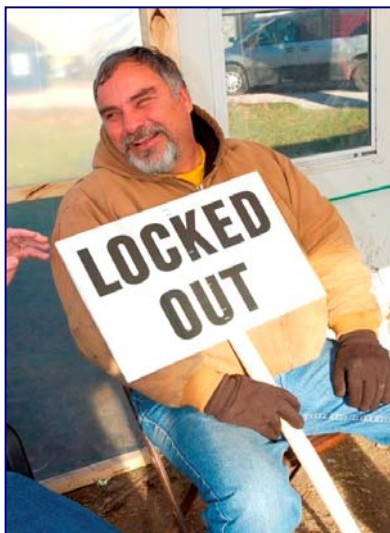


Members of UFCW Local 86D in Muscatine, Iowa are continuing to stand in solidarity with their union brothers and sisters since being locked out of work by their employer,

Grain Processing Corp. (GPC) on August 22nd. While the more than 300 members of 86D were willing to continue to work under the terms of their old contract, bosses at GPC locked the gates and wouldn't let them continue to work after the contract expired.

“We want to work,” said Local 86D President William Poggemiller. “We wanted to work while settling our contract differences, but GPC locked us out—and now more than 300 families have been without a steady paycheck since August.”

Contract negotiations broke down because GPC wanted the ability to outsource UFCW members' jobs—at any time, for any reason.



“It's really about keeping good jobs here in Muscatine,” said Bob Weatherman, one of 86D's vice presidents. “We need to stand up for job security—for our families and for Muscatine's economy.”

UFCW Local 86D Vice President Bob Weatherman says workers are standing up for good jobs in Muscatine

Support for Employee Free Choice

A recent *New York Times* editorial called the Employee Free Choice Act "vital legislation" and said that it "should not be postponed." The National Consumers League and other consumer groups, meanwhile, just signed on to a pro-Employee Free Choice Act letter that calls the bill "good for consumers, good for workers, and good for American society." The letter, co-signed by the National Association of Consumer Advocates, Public Citizen, Consumer Action, Consumers for Auto Safety and Reliability, and Alliance for Justice, was sent to every Congressional office.

UFCW partner American Rights at Work has new print ads supporting Employee Free Choice that will be appearing in *Congress Daily AM*, *Roll Call*, *Politico*, and *The Hill*.

For the full NYT editorial, sample letters, ads and other materials, go to www.ufcwforfreechoice.org.

UFCW Employee Free Choice Update

Free Choice opponents are not only spending millions—they're taking the fight to a grassroots level, and we have to do the same. The UFCW's voice must be heard in local papers nationwide. Important points:

- Employee Free Choice will expand the middle class, which is good for our economy.
- Unions are the engine of the middle class—since workers in unions earn 30% higher wages and are 59% more likely to have employer-provided insurance (www.bls.gov).
- Employee Free Choice would help level the playing field so that all Americans—not just those at the top—can earn decent wages and benefits. Last year, CEO salaries were 344 times that of the average U.S. worker (*New York Times*, 9/19/08).
- Opponents say Employee Free Choice eliminates the secret ballot—but it doesn't. It gives workers a choice in the way they vote for a union.

To download sample letters to the editor, go to www.ufcwforfreechoice.org.

White House Task Force Will Give UFCW and Other Unions a Voice in Government and Public Policy Issues

The White House Task Force on Working Families, coordinated by Vice President-elect Joe Biden's Chief Economist Jared Bernstein, will be an important channel for the UFCW and other Change to Win (CtW) unions to strengthen the voice of America's workers on public policy issues.

The Task Force agenda will include many issues that affect UFCW members, such as the Employee Free Choice Act, college tuition assistance, health and safety, and work and family balance.

In order to fully maximize the ability of the Task Force to promote collective bargaining and good jobs, the UFCW and other CtW unions will work to ensure that the Task Force develops public policy that leads to improved employment standards—by securing a commitment to improve the following:

Mission: Expand Task Force mission to leverage public spending to promote private sector collective bargaining.

Membership: Expand Task Force composition to include agencies with the greatest private-sector impact, including Treasury, Defense, Agriculture, Transportation, Interior, HUD, EPA and Energy.

Staffing: Staff Task Force with union growth experts who have experience leveraging public spending.

Rank and Filers Becoming UFCW Organizers

The UFCW is continuing to expand its organizing program to grow membership. Of the 51 newly hired organizers, forty percent have been rank-and-file members. If you know a rank-and-file member who would make a great organizer, please contact International Vice President and National Field Director Geralyn Luty at the UFCW International.

UFCW Locals and Jobs with Justice Rally in Rhode Island for Employee Free Choice and Good Jobs at PriceRite

UFCW Locals 328, 1459, 371, 919 and 1445 rallied along with Jobs with Justice in Rhode Island recently.

On December 18, the groups gathered to support workers at PriceRite stores who want to join a union, and to call for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. The rally was intended to help community members understand that the foundation of a strong economy is its workers, and that good union jobs are essential to



UFCW staff rallies with Jobs with Justice for PriceRite workers and Employee Free Choice

rebuilding and expanding our shrinking middle class.

The Employee Free Choice Act would bring justice to workers like the ones at PriceRite, whose parent company owns and/or operates some union stores—but refuses to allow PriceRite workers a fair choice on whether to join the union so they can have job security, a living wage, and affordable health care, making communities and our economy stronger.