

PriceRite Worker Speaks Out on Need for Employee Free Choice

Earlier today, a PriceRite worker involved in the UFCW's PriceRite campaign spoke out about the need for Employee Free Choice at a press briefing held at the National Press Club. Representatives from the UFCW, as well as the nation's top workers' rights groups, labor experts, and progressive leaders laid out the case for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act.



PriceRite employee Joe Sorrentino spoke about how difficult it is to talk to other employees about the union in the hostile environment his company has created.

“The company has made people afraid that they’ll lose their jobs when the union comes in,” said PriceRite worker Joe Sorrentino. He spoke about how the company has intimidated workers who support the union, by telling them that their store will close if they vote for a union, spying on them, sending out letters and even calling the police to arrest organizers who are legally handing out literature to the public.

Workers at PriceRite do not have a union, but many workers at another company owned/and or operated by the same parent company, Wakefern, are represented by the UFCW.

“We just want the same fair chance to choose a union and have the same union benefits that workers at most ShopRite stores have,” said Sorrentino. “Instead, the company won’t even give us the chance to talk about the

union. The Employee Free Choice Act would make it so the company couldn’t interfere with us or try to intimidate employees into voting against their own interests like they do now.”

Sorrentino emphasized the need for Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act. “To not pass Employee Free Choice,” he said, “would lead to another generation of low-paying jobs and uninsured Americans. The middle class would be a thing of the past.”

The event was organized by American Rights at Work, representing a broad coalition of labor and workers’ rights advocates, which also previewed new television ads as part of a nationwide \$3 million ad campaign in support of the Employee Free Choice Act.

Survey Finds Most Americans Support the Employee Free Choice Act

A new survey released last week found that the American public overwhelmingly supports the Employee Free Choice Act.

The survey, conducted by Hart Research Associates, found that 78 percent of adults favor legislation that would make it easier for workers to bargain with their employers.

After hearing the Employee Free Choice Act’s three main provisions, 73 percent of adults favored the legislation.

According to the survey, conducted from December 4-10, 69% of Americans agree that it is important to have strong laws that give employees the freedom to make their own choices about how they form a union in their workplace—which is a central tenet of the Employee Free Choice Act.

Meanwhile, the list of groups and organizations that support the Employee Free Choice Act continues to grow. For a current list of supporters, as well as sample letters to the editor to help you and your members voice your support, visit: www.ufcwforfreechoice.org

UFCW Women's Network Chair to Retire



**UFCW Women's Network
Chair Paulette Amodeo**

The UFCW Women's Network Executive Board recently announced the retirement of Chair Paulette Amodeo, which will become effective on March 1, 2009.



**UFCW Women's Network
Secretary Treasurer Rhonda
Nelson**

Women's Network Secretary Treasurer Rhonda Nelson, Local 1500, has been elected to fill Amodeo's unexpired term. UFCW Region 2 Coordinator, Peg Michalowski, Secretary Treasurer of Local 1360, has been elected as Network Secretary-Treasurer to fill Nelson's unexpired term.

UFCW Local 1500 Leads the Way, Governor Patterson Follows With Healthy Food/Healthy Communities Initiative

UFCW Local 1500 has spent the last two years working with State, County and City officials on the problem of disappearing supermarkets and its affect on the health and economies of communities.

They've worked to draw attention to this growing problem and find solutions that work for communities. Recently, they teamed up with the Building Blocks Project to give underserved communities access to a full-service, affordable grocery store.

Following the work done by Local 1500, Governor David Patterson recently announced a Healthy Food/Healthy Communities Initiative. Such an initiative includes \$10 million dollars for revolving loans to food markets interested in locating in "underserved"

communities. Local 1500 applauded the Governor for joining the effort to improve New York's communities by supporting supermarkets in those underserved areas.

A Voice at Work in Utah

This past November, more than 1,000 workers at the JBS/Swift plant in Hyrum, Utah, voted to join with their brothers and sisters in UFCW Local 711, and stand together for a voice at work.

This Tuesday, they got their first experience of what that means as they sat down with management to negotiate a first contract.

"It has been an amazing experience," said Isaias Lopez, a 22 year veteran of the plant who is now on the negotiating committee. "And we know we aren't alone in this... We stand together with our brothers and sisters at JBS/Swift plants across the United States, and UFCW members across North America."

The five-member negotiating committee represents workers from every section of the Hyrum plant. It was the last plant owned by JBS/Swift in the United States to gain UFCW representation, despite its more than 70-year history in Hyrum.

The organizing effort in Hyrum included an effort by other JBS/Swift workers from around the country to tell their colleagues in Hyrum about the UFCW union difference.

"This is an exciting opportunity for the Hyrum workers," said Max Aldama, a member of UFCW Local 1149 and an employee at JBS/Swift's Marshalltown, Iowa plant.

"JBS/Swift has always been willing to work honestly and openly with us in Marshalltown, and I know they'll live up to the high standards they have always set and kept for themselves."