

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR UNION

Supermarket negotiations: UFCW members rally for fair wages and more

By Joe Duffle, President

More than a hundred union members rallied in front of a Ralphs store in Fontana on March 4 to demand fair wages and more for essential workers.

Among the speakers were UFCW Local 1167 members Gail Merki and Kari Perkins, both from Ralphs, and Local 1428 member Alcuyn Pitts of Vons. They joined California Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Reyes and former State Sen. Connie Leyva in calling on the major supermarket chains to reward their employees for their service

and sacrifice throughout the COVID pandemic.

Representatives of seven Southern California UFCW unions have been meeting with their corporate counterparts from Albertsons, Ralphs and Vons to reach a new contract to replace the last one, which expired on March 6. Union members are working under the terms of the previous agreement, at least for the time being.

Key union demands in these negotiations include, among others:

- Improved safety and security in the stores;
- Better staffing so the members can provide better service to customers;
- Wages that reflect the value these essential workers have provided for their employers and the public.

The employers can afford to meet these reasonable requests from the union negotiators. The grocery companies have made record profits during the pandemic because of the essential service that grocery workers provided to their communities, customers and employers during a time of uncertainty.

For example, Kroger, parent company of Ralphs, reported \$4.1 billion in operating profits in 2020, up from \$3 billion in 2019.



JOE DUFFLE

The grocery chains can and must do better for workers who have served them with loyalty and commitment.

We will continue meeting with the employers to press our case for fairness. Backing us will be the collective strength and will of 60,000 supermarket workers across Southern California, plus tens of thousands who work in other industries.

Our members will continue to hold rallies like the one in Fontana until we get a contract that fairly reflects the value of grocery workers.

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Rally in Fontana for a fair contract

