

## UFCW Local 400 Calls on D.C. Mayor to Stand Up to Walmart

On June 22, UFCW Local 400 joined the Respect D.C. Campaign to rally to “Demand Our Seat at the Table with Mayor Gray and Walmart.” The coalition called on Mayor Gray to listen fully to the community’s concerns before negotiating any deals with Walmart to open stores in Washington, D.C.



“In an era of politics that requires transparency in politicians, we are demanding that the community has a voice in the negotiating process of moving Walmart into this city,” said Marina Streznewski, Coordinator for D.C. Jobs Council. “We have to continue to push for fairness within our communities or no one will.”

More than 200 people attended the rally to call on Mayor Gray to create a seat at the table for community members in the negotiations for a Community Benefits Agreement. Following the rally, a smaller delegation delivered handwritten messages about why having the community’s concerns for good jobs, living wages, safety, and small and local business heard at the negotiating table is so important. **OP**

## Workers at Queens Macy’s Furniture Store Vote “Union Yes”

Workers at a Macy’s furniture store in Elmhurst, Queens voted to become members of the RWDSU this past weekend, just days after more than 4,000 workers at four other Macy’s stores in the New York City area, including the global flagship at Herald Square in Manhattan, ratified a landmark new contract.

The victory in the NLRB-conducted election comes on the heels of Macy’s workers represented by the RWDSU winning a general wage increase of \$3.05 over the next five years, lower healthcare costs, more control over scheduling and hours, and other job improvements.

“The contract victory the week before was a powerful reminder of the difference a union can make—which these workers understood,” said Stuart Appelbaum, President of the RWDSU. “The victory in Elmhurst, Queens is part of a larger story about working people standing together to achieve more for themselves and their families.”

“These Macy’s furniture store workers will now have a more powerful voice on the job,” said Joseph Dorismond, the RWDSU organizer who ran the Elmhurst, Queens unionization campaign. “They understand that the union exists to fight for the shared interests of workers.” **OP**

## Rite Aid Workers Rally for Fair Contracts

On Thursday, June 23, Rite Aid workers from UFCW Locals 880, 1776, RWDSU Local 101, Students Against Sweatshops, and unions from all over the country took their case to the annual shareholders’ meeting in Harrisburg, P.A., urging the company’s board of directors and executives to give them fair contracts.

Appearing first at a rally outside the site of the company’s annual shareholders’ meeting, and then inside at the meeting, the coalition of labor sounded a consistent theme – Rite Aid is biting the very hand of the workers it needs to achieve success.

“Our proposal,” said Wendell W. Young, IV, President of Local 1776, “is entirely reasonable. It would put health and welfare costs at 2008 levels, and keep them there for the next two or three years.”

We want to settle this contract and get back to the business of building a successful company. We don't want to have to come back to another annual shareholders' meeting like this."

Young was joined at the directors' meeting by Local 1776 member Donna Weber, a 16-year veteran worker in the Rite Aid store in Tobyhanna, Monroe County, P.A. Weber, a pharmacy technician, described how the company has cut staffing to dangerously low levels.

"Many days I'm working on the phone with insurance companies to resolve a customer's prescription problem while other customers are waiting to be checked out," Weber said. "These jobs take a lot of concentration. It seems that if we can afford these high executive salaries and a free jet plane we should be able to adequately staff the stores."



Photo: UFCW Local 1776 member Donna Weber (left) with members Elsie Romero (center) and Christina Fyrmier, of UFCW Local 880 in Cleveland, where the local has been unable to reach a contract agreement with Rite Aid and is on strike against the company.

Before entering the board of directors meeting, Weber and Young stood outside the hotel in solidarity with three UFCW Local 880 members who traveled to Harrisburg to represent striking Rite Aid members in Cleveland, OH. Unable to reach a contract with the company, Local 880 has been on strike there for more than seven weeks.

Those at the rally voiced their support for the three women from Cleveland and for representatives of Longshoremen from Lancaster, CA, who only last month won a five-year battle to gain recognition and secure a contract at a Rite Aid distribution facility in that west coast city.

Inside the meeting, the unions found support from more than one shareholder. Leading the way was Steven Krol, a shareholder activist from Florida. He sharply criticized the board members for their lack of independence from the company's executives, and asked why the highly paid executives should enjoy the free use of the corporate jet for personal travel.

As the owner of a large number of Rite Aid shares since 1999, Krol has visited company stores all across the United States.

"The issues that the union members have raised are the same issues I've seen in the stores," he told the board of directors. **OP**

## New Online Degree Programs with National Labor College

UFCW members are now eligible to apply for three new online degree programs through the National Labor College (NLC) in Silver Spring, MD:

- Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration
- Bachelor of Arts in Construction Management
- Bachelor of Science in Emergency Readiness & Response Management

Congratulations to Anthony Zollo from UFCW Local 1776 who just graduated from the NLC with degrees in Union Leadership and Administration and Political Economy of Labor. He and the rest of the Class of 2011 were awarded their hard-earned degrees at the commencement ceremony on June 25, 2011. Barbara Ehrenreich and Frances Fox Piven delivered the commencement addresses.

In 2011, UFCW members interested in furthering their education can apply for 60 scholarships for the new online degree programs through the Union Plus program. Members will be eligible for these scholarships as part of the NLC enrollment process.

Each year, \$25,000 is also awarded to eligible students through the new Union Plus National Labor College Scholarship. Awards are determined and administered by the National Labor College; they typically award roughly 12 recipients with financial need every quarter, including January, April, July and October. Check [www.nlc.edu](http://www.nlc.edu) for details. For scholarship information, go to [www.unionplus.org](http://www.unionplus.org). **OP**

