

## Employees at Bob's Discount Furniture Vote for a Collective Voice in Seven Stores



*Two workers from the Bob's Discount Furniture store in North Plainfield, N.J. Workers at seven stores have voted to join the UFCW for a voice on the job.*

Employees at seven Bob's Discount Furniture stores in Connecticut, New Hampshire and New York have voted for a voice on the job by joining UFCW Locals 888, 919 and 1445.

A majority of employees in seven stores have voted to join the UFCW with their co-workers, and soon will be negotiating a first contract for fair commission formulas, affordable health care options, and other working conditions.

Currently, Bob's Discount Furniture employees are paid strictly on commission, without any base wages. The company recently changed commission formulas that hurt longtime employees at the furniture company, while at the same time, employees had to contribute more toward their own health insurance premiums.

Bob's Discount Furniture employees in Manchester and Orange, Conn., were among the first to form their union, with employees in Stamford, Conn., Manchester, N.H., and Freeport, Glendale and Farmingdale, N.Y. following in recent weeks. The next union election is scheduled to take place on December 9 at the Bob's store in North Plainfield, N.J.

According to *Furniture Today*, Bob's Discount Furniture had "estimated 2010 sales of \$584.6 million..." at its 40 stores in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island. The company recently expanded with three new stores in Maryland and Virginia, and opened its third distribution center in Maryland.

Bob's Discount Furniture was formerly a privately held company, but is now controlled by Apax Partners, a London-based private equity firm. **OP**

## Republicans Attempt to Block NLRB's Proposed Union Election Rule Changes

On November 30, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is scheduled to vote on a modest but important set of rule changes to the union election process. The proposed rule changes will help modernize an outdated election system plagued by unnecessary employer delays and litigation, and ensure that workers have the basic right to vote on whether or not they want a union.

Brian Hayes, the lone Republican on the NLRB, has threatened to quit before the vote is scheduled in an effort to deny the board the quorum needed to make decisions. In addition, the Republican-led U.S. House of Representatives is expected to vote on H.R. 3094 this week. The legislation, misleadingly named the "Workforce Democracy and Fairness Act," aims to block quicker union elections.

Given these recent developments, the UFCW is emphasizing the following key points:

- This new rule will ensure that when a majority of workers want to have a voice on the job, they will be able to do so, free of interference. This rule removes unfair obstacles to give workers a fair chance to vote on whether to form a union.



- Eliminating excessive litigation is good for employers, employees, and taxpayers who foot the bill. These modest changes will clean up a system plagued by delays, bureaucracy and litigation. Currently, workers encounter delays of months and even years, and some never get to vote at all. This rule provides stability and a level playing field.

- Today, millions of Americans are out of work and struggling to get by, while CEOs are doing better than ever. Any bit of help for workers to get ahead in this economy is a good thing.

- This year, we have seen unprecedented attacks on workers' rights. Whether you're a teacher, firefighter or nurse's aide – right-wing legislators and corporate lobbyists have made it clear that their ultimate aim is to take away your rights on the job. Those who are protesting these modest changes are the same moneyed interests that have been attacking workers' rights across the country. **OP**

## UFCW Canada Is a Leading Force at the OFL Convention in Toronto

On November 21-25, UFCW Canada had an unparalleled presence at the 11th Biennial Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) Convention in Toronto. With over 100 activists in attendance, UFCW Canada represented one of the largest delegations.

At the convention, UFCW Canada proudly supported the election of Unity Team candidates Sid Ryan, Nancy

Hutchison, and Irwin Nanda to the OFL's Executive Board. Ryan was re-elected President of the OFL, while Hutchison and Nanda were elected Secretary-Treasurer and Executive Vice-President, respectively.

"UFCW Canada is fully committed to working with the Unity Team in building the Ontario labour movement and creating a higher standard of fairness for working families," said UFCW Canada National President Wayne Hanley. "Under the new leadership team, the OFL will raise the profile of organized labour in the province, attract new members to our movement, and foster alliances with social justice groups to defend workers' rights and promote family-friendly legislation."

UFCW Canada also solidified its role as a leading force within the OFL by electing Pablo Godoy as Vice-President for Workers of Colour, and Amanda Atwell as Vice-President for Young Workers. **OP**



On November 17, members and staff from UFCW Local 1473 delivered over 120,000 servings of protein to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin to help the food bank meet the high demand of food during the holiday season. The Milwaukee donation was part of the joint UFCW/Smithfield "Feeding the Hungry" tour, a three-year program to address the need for hunger relief and to donate and deliver more than 6 million servings of protein each year. Patrick Cudahy, a Smithfield company, and Roundy's Supermarkets also participated in the event.

## UFCW GEAR FOR THE HOLIDAYS

UFCW gear is available for purchase this holiday season at <http://www.shopufcw.com/>