

UFCW Members Oppose New USDA Poultry Plant Rule



Local 540 members at work at the Pilgrim's Pride (JBS) poultry plant in Lufkin, Texas.

UFCW members are urging opposition to a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rule that could hurt workers in poultry plants. The proposed rule would throw out the current method of inspecting poultry. Instead, it would reduce the number of Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspectors and allow big poultry companies to increase line speeds to a maximum of 175 a minute.

No comprehensive effort has been made to determine the effect this new poultry inspection system will have on the health and safety of workers in these plants. The USDA did not contact the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the agency responsible for protecting the health and safety of American workers, before publishing this proposed rule.

Many UFCW members have already called on the USDA to pull this rule in its entirety until adequate safety studies are conducted and OSHA creates the necessary standards to protect workers. Encourage your staff and members to urge the USDA to pull the rule until worker health and safety on the job is adequately addressed by going to <http://bit.ly/10eK9z> before April 26, 2012. **OP**

Locals 400 and 27 Ratify New Contract for Giant and Safeway Workers

Last week, Giant and Safeway workers from UFCW Locals 400 and 27 overwhelmingly ratified a new collective bargaining agreement. The contract runs from April 1, 2012 through October 31, 2013, and covers over 27,000 workers. Key contract provisions include across-the-board wage increases, full funding of health benefits with no increase in members' out-of-pocket costs, continued retirement security with all current pension benefits maintained and new steps to resolve funding issues for at least the next ten years. Local 400 says the contract contains no concessions affecting current or future members of the bargaining unit.

"This is a fantastic contract," said Chris Bell, a receiving manager for Giant in Stafford, Va.

Additionally, both locals were able to preserve retiree health care for current and future retirees (approximately 7,000 members) hired before specific dates in 1983.

Stan Hart, a clerk at Giant 310 in Bowie, Md., is happy with the new contract. "We're not done here," he said. "It's not just about this contract, but about getting other workers into the union." **OP**



Giant and Safeway workers from UFCW Local 400 attend a hearing on the provisions in their new contract.



OUR Walmart Members Share Their Stories as Retail Giant Turns 50



As Walmart turns 50 this year, Making Change at Walmart is collecting stories from around the country and posting them on a new “Walmart at 50” website. In the next few weeks, we’ll be featuring the stories of Walmart associates, community activists, union members, and other people who are trying to make positive changes at the world’s largest retailer.

Last Thursday, members of the Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart) hosted a telephone town hall encouraging their fellow associates to share their stories about hard realities they have faced while working for the retail giant. Thousands of participants joined the call to share their experiences of what it’s like to work for Walmart and why they are fighting to change the culture of company by advocating for respect and better schedules; better wages and benefits; success for the company; and outstanding service and value for the customers.

“It was a wonderful feeling to have thousands of participants on the call last week, because hearing stories from so many associates confirms that many people want to share their stories,” said Dawn Littman, an OUR Walmart Member in Sacramento, Calif. “It’s important for us all to get word out about Walmart’s impact on our lives so the company can make positive changes to ensure that the next 50 years will be uplifting.”

Retail jobs are the jobs of the future. In fact, retail is one of the few sectors in our economy that is growing. Walmart can and should lead the way in making sure that retail jobs are good jobs—the kind that come with good benefits and wages for all workers. If Walmart would listen to and respect its workers, it could not only reverse the downward trends that have plagued the company, it could also help to rebuild our country’s economy and strengthen America’s middle class.

“Everyone here works paycheck to paycheck and we have to stretch every dollar,” said Venanzi Luna, an OUR Walmart member in Pico Rivera, Calif., who has shared her story on the “Walmart at 50” website. “I’m fighting to make Walmart a better place.”

Together, we have the power to make change at Walmart. For more information about the “Walmart at 50” campaign or to share a story, please go to <http://walmartat50.org/>. **OP**

UFCW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Your union is about more than your paycheck and benefits.

That's why each year the UFCW awards several SCHOLARSHIPS of up to \$8,000 each to UFCW members or their unmarried dependents.

The application will be available online from January 16 - April 16, 2012.

For more information, and to find out if you're eligible, please visit:

www.ufcw.org/scholarship



If you are unable to apply online, you may request an application by writing to:
UFCW International Union, Attn: Scholarship Program, 1775 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20006
If you need the scholarship rules or application in another language,
please contact us (1-800-551-4010) and we will obtain assistance for you.