

Possible Strike Action at Safeway!

AUPE Members Encouraged to Support Grocery Workers

AUPE members could be seeing a picket line this summer at their local Safeway stores!

The workers at Safeway who are members of UFCW Local 401 took a strike vote on June 25 and 26, with 79 per cent voting in favour of strike action if necessary. This is because the employer wants to freeze wages despite inflation, cut benefits, and will not agree to improved job security.

This is in spite of incredible profits – in a 13-week period during the pandemic, Safeway's parent company's earnings were \$181 million higher compared to the same period last year!

The parent company, Empire Co. Ltd. also owns the mostly non-union Sobeys chain.

The Safeway strike vote got the company's attention, and this week the employer and union are back at the table. There's no guarantee of that happening, so pressure on the company can help get the workers a fair deal.

AUPE's Committee On Political Action (COPA) are encouraging all AUPE members who shop at Safeway or Sobeys to take action:

1. Tell your Safeway grocery clerk and other staff that you appreciate their work and support them in taking strike action.
2. In either Safeway or Sobeys stores, ask to speak to the manager and tell them you support the workers, and despite being a Safeway/Sobeys customer, you will not be shopping there in the event of a strike or a lockout. Workers don't cross other workers picket lines!
3. If a strike or lockout happens, join the UFCW Local 401 members on their picket line and help them talk to other customers about supporting the workers!

COPA are also sending a letter to Safeway stores to let them know they are committed to supporting the workers and will respect their picket lines.

As we say in the labour movement, "an injury to one is an injury to all." UFCW Local 401 members have been supporting AUPE members at Bill 9 rallies across Alberta, and AUPE works side-by-side with UFCW members in places like the University of Calgary and Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre.

With the challenges AUPE is facing at the bargaining table and in the legislature, the solidarity of other workers and unions will be part of our success. Let's do our part and support the Safeway workers!

A legal strike or lockout requires 72 hours notice and AUPE will provide further updates if and when that happens.

In Solidarity,

AUPE's Committee on Political Action:

Mike Dempsey, AUPE Vice-President and Chair of COPA

Rhonda Whitten, Vice-Chair and member of Local 046 in Leduc, AHS

Janice Drader, Local 057 member in Wetaskiwin, AHS

Brent Kelly, Local 002 member in Edmonton, Government of Alberta

Richard Lemaire, Local 002 member in Calgary, Government of Alberta

Mariah Monro, Local 047 member in Edmonton, Shepherd's Care

Jules Noel, Local 057 member in Lacombe, AHS

Jennifer Power, Local 043 member in Grande Prairie, AHS

Rose Read, Local 039 member