



your voice at work

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United Food and Commercial Workers Canada Union, Local No. 401

October 4, 2021

Roger Bockstael
Labour Relations, Loblaws
2332 160th Street
Surrey, BC, V3S 9N6

Dear Roger,

RE: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

I want to express my disappointment in your response to our LOU in regard to reconciliation. For decades, Indigenous people - my people - have continuously fought to be seen, to be heard, for justice, and for safety. So much has been taken away from Indigenous peoples, a genocide has occurred, and women have gone, and continue to go, missing and are ultimately found to have been murdered. More than half of those murder cases are in western Canada. The government has made so many promises that have yet to be fulfilled.

The government has failed us. The community has failed us. And now, Superstore has failed us.

The calls to action speak about meaningful consultation with Indigenous communities. On your Loblaw website, Zebrina Kassum - Sr VP HR was quoted saying, "They are looking to us to create change. We value them and we are listening". Well, clearly you are not listening, and you are not committed to creating change.

Do you not realize what an impact you would make with not only your indigenous employees, but other employees and within the community as well???

The Loblaw website also states this:

"We are a proud Canadian company, and we understand and acknowledge this country's past and ongoing challenges, and our relationship with the Indigenous peoples who called Canada home long before us. The confirmation of children who were taken from their families and lost their lives in the residential school system, and stories told by survivors, leaves us with heavy hearts and a greater urgency to strengthen our commitment to truth and reconciliation. We've been doing the work to learn and unlearn, build relationships with Indigenous peoples, and contribute to broader social change and healing."

You fall short in regard to that statement. If there was a true and genuine commitment to reconciliation, then either yourself, or someone higher up in the company, would show up here, on Truth and Reconciliation Day, and have meaningful conversations about that. For me, and many others, having September 30th as a stat is not about the double time and the banked stat. It's not about money and I am insulted, hurt, and disappointed that you immediately went to money and that is all that you see. If this company wanted to be better - to be better than Sobeys, Safeway, Save on Foods – then, to put it simply, be better. Recognize it as a stat, close your stores early, or close them for the day. Show that you are truly committed to reconciliation because, right now, I don't see it. When people in the Indigenous community hear what your response was, they will agree with me and will be disappointed in Superstore and Loblaws.

I have been disappointed in this company before, but not like this. My respect for the company that I have given 20 years to has been diminished and I feel undervalued and not respected because of my Metis heritage. I know I am not alone in that feeling.

Your comments have weighed heavily on me since they left your mouth, and quite frankly it has broken my heart, but I shouldn't be surprised in your response as I said earlier, Indigenous people continue to fight for respect and acknowledgement. We are trying to heal and how can that happen when individuals, governments and company keep throwing up roadblocks.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'C. St. Germain', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Charmaine St. Germain
Recording Secretary
UFCW Local 401

Cc:
Thomas Hesse
Richelle Stewart
Chris O'Halloran
Galen Weston Jr.
Mark Wilson
Dave Graf