

Five Simple Ways You Can Support the Grocery Workers

Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union have been on strike against Vons since Sunday, October 12, and have been shut from working at Ralphs and Albertsons as well. The issues revolve around management plans to slash health coverage, pensions and other benefits. While corporate profits go up in America, access to affordable health care by working Americans is at a crisis level. The front lines of the battle to preserve health care are right here in Southern California, at our local grocery stores. People of conscience have to work together to support the unions, because if the corporations can break this strike, the repercussions will spread throughout society.

The Inland Anti-Empire Web site presents this short list of easy ways you can support the union members who are fighting to preserve not only their health care, but ours -- as well as the benefits of our children and future generations.

1. Don't Cross the Picket Lines

Please don't shop at Vons, Ralphs, or Albertsons. Beyond the fact that you'd be hurting the unions by doing so, the quality of service and of food will be lower than you expect. The replacement workers simply aren't as trained as the striking and locked-out workers who often have five, ten, twenty years or more on the job. Are you sure that meat is fresh? Has the milk been handled safely? Don't take a chance -- shop at Stater Brothers, Costco, or other local grocery stores. See <http://www.saveourhealthcare.org/> for a list of other places to shop.

2. Tell a Friend

Friends don't let friends cross picket lines! The success of the union action will ultimately depend on us, the grocery-buying public. We need to unite behind those people we see every week, and support them in their efforts to retain benefits. Let your friends know that you're supporting the union, and urge them to do the same. You can download and print a copy of this flyer from <http://inlandantiempire.org/> and hand it out to people you know.

3. Contact the Media

Large corporations control our media outlets in Southern California, and that makes it harder to get fair representation. As citizens we can make our voices heard by writing letters to the editor, by calling in to radio talk shows, and by emailing television stations. Let them know that you support the union workers, and correct them, politely, when they get the facts wrong.

4. Provide Moral Support

It's not easy walking a picket line. When you drive by your local grocery store, beep your car horn to show that you support the workers. Even better, park your car and get out and talk to them. Don't be afraid -- they're the same people you saw last month when you bought food. Tell them you support them and are respecting their picket line. They need encouragement, especially when other people -- who have bought into the management lines pushed by the corporate media --- show up to hurl abuse at them. It helps the grocery workers to know their loyal customers stand by them.

5. Bring Water and Snacks

It's hot out there this week, and spending eight hours in the sun just isn't fun. If you can spare \$5.00 (or less), you can buy a 24-pack of bottled water at Stater Brothers and drop it off at the union table outside a store. Fruit, cookies, and other munchies can help the workers make it through a day without having to buy food while their money is tight. They are fighting for all of us -- you can help with a simple gift of drinking water.