



Teamster Talk



Members of Teamsters Local 117

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SUPPORT TEAMSTERS AT FRED MEYER! Hoffa rally buoys grocery warehouse workers



Teamsters General President Hoffa leads march in support of Teamsters at Fred Meyer on Sept. 9.

Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa rallied hundreds of union members and their community partners on September 9 in support of Teamster grocery warehouse workers in their fight for a fair contract at Fred Meyer.

Hoffa praised workers at Fred Meyer for their courage as they hold the line in a “war on workers” that is being waged by corporate elitists and radical politicians on the American middle class.

“Some of our people are paying \$12,000 out of pocket. Kroger is an \$80 billion corporation. They can afford to provide quality health care,” he said

Hoffa was joined by several International Vice Presidents of the Teamsters Union, representatives of dozens of community groups, and elected leaders, including Senator Steve Conway of the 29th Legislative District, who spoke out in support of workers at the rally.

The event was held across the street from the Fred Meyer distribution center in Puyallup, where 362 grocery warehouse workers are fighting for quality health care coverage for themselves and their families.

FRED MEYER WORKERS SPEAK OUT!

Josh Putnam, a 14-year employee at Fred

SUPPORT TEAMSTER GROCERY WORKERS

TEAMSTERS LOCAL 117 124 & 313

We Feed Washington's Families!

HOW YOU CAN HELP!

Support Teamster grocery workers at Fred Meyer in their fight of a fair contract!

- Sign up for strike support on the Local 117 website.
- Pledge not to shop at Fred Meyer or QFC in the event of a labor dispute.
- Lead a delegation to your local Fred Meyer or QFC.
- Turn out for community solidarity activities. (Check website for details.)

For more information, contact Brenda Wiest at 206-441-4860.

A message from your Secretary-Treasurer



Teamsters Local 117:

No one in our Union can deny that the war on workers is raging. Large, profitable corporations like Kroger (Fred Meyer) seek to reap greater and greater profits by denying their workers fair compensation and affordable health care. As the State budget deficit

climbs to an unimaginable level, more and more legislators seek to close the deficit gap by further cutting wages and benefits of state employees rather than closing tax loopholes for large corporations. The unemployment rate has persisted near 10% for so long that many of the unemployed are no longer receiving unemployment compensation. How are these families going to survive? Who is going to fight for working families?

We are. We must.

Unions were created to counter the greed of employers who sought to grow their own wealth by exploiting workers. Unions were created to harness the energy of the unemployed and dispossessed to fight for fair wages, humane working conditions, and a fair share of the profits that their labor generated. Our history informs our responsibility to act today.

Your Union is maximizing its resources to take on this fight. We have built a strong political program with a dedicated lobbyist to take our fight to the legislature; with the approval of the private sector membership we will have a strike fund to give us greater bargaining leverage; we have developed strong relationships with labor, environmental, faith-based, and other community allies and have committed to mutually aid our allies; and our membership is mobilizing as it never has before to fight not only for their own interests but the interests of all working people.

The fight is on, and the need for every member to engage is urgent.

In solidarity,

Tracey A. Thompson
Secretary-Treasurer

FRED MEYER RALLY

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Meyer, spoke on behalf of the workers.

"Fred Meyer is denying decent health care coverage for me and my family. When my kids get sick, I should not have to think twice about bringing them to the doctor. No parent should be forced to make that choice," he said.

Workers chanted "Teamster power!" and waved signs that read, "Stop the war on workers!" and "Quality health care now!" After the rally, the group marched across the street to the Fred Meyer distribution center that serves 140 stores in Washington, Alaska, and Idaho.

WORKING WITHOUT A CONTRACT

Teamsters at Fred Meyer have been working without a contract since August 15. Federal mediation between Teamsters Local 117 and Fred Meyer took place on September 7. The next round of mediation is scheduled for September 29.

Safeway, SuperValu, and Unified Grocers settled their contracts with the Teamsters in early August, leaving Fred Meyer as the only Teamster grocery warehouse in the area that has not reached an agreement with the Union. Fred Meyer is a subsidiary of Kroger, Inc., a company based in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Kroger reported over \$75 billion in revenue in 2010. In the first quarter of 2011, Kroger's profits were \$432.3 million, an increase of 16%. Teamsters Local 117 represents approximately 16,000 members, with over 1,000 members employed in the grocery warehouse industry.

VOTE YES!

TEAMSTERS 117 STRIKE FUND



Great News!!

Because of the overwhelming support from the shop visits we are moving ahead to set up a Local 117 Strike Fund.

At the general membership meeting on September 15, members voted to establish the Strike Fund with one million dollars from the Union's general fund. But this will only happen if a majority vote YES for the Strike Fund. Now is your chance!

A Strike Fund at Local 117 will help build stronger contracts, Union power, and leverage at the bargaining table and in organizing drives. All members will benefit from having a Strike Fund.

The Strike Fund ballot has been mailed to members of Local 117 working in the private sector. Please vote YES and return it as soon as possible! If you have not received a ballot, contact the office at 206-441-4860.

Thank you for all your support!

I'M VOTING YES FOR THE STRIKE FUND!



Roderick Holmes
Allied Waste

"A STRIKE FUND gives us leverage and sends a message to the employer that we are ready to fight."



Gred Wiest
SuperValu

"A STRIKE FUND gives us the peace of mind that we can feed our families and keep a roof over our heads if we go on strike."



John Beck
Coke

"Having been on strike twice at Coke, I know firsthand the value that a STRIKE FUND brings to members of Local 117."



Matt Collins
Fred Meyer

"A STRIKE FUND gives us confidence to fight for our rights at work, fair pay, and benefits."

PORT OF SEATTLE: CLEAN UP YOUR ACT!

Abuses rampant at the "Port of Poverty"



Members of Teamsters Local 117, Local 174, and JC28 call for good jobs at the Port of Seattle at a noontime rally on September 16.



Teamsters Local 117 joined hundreds of community members on September 16 in downtown Seattle to demand that Port of Seattle CEO, Tay Yoshitani and his staff, do more

to ensure that the Port is a source of good family-wage jobs so that workers at the Port can provide a decent life for themselves and their families.

The rally took place in front of the Westin Hotel, where Port executives from around the country had gathered for the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) annual convention.

While inside the convention, highly-paid Port executives touted the Port of Seattle as a "Port of Prosperity," the scene outside told a very different story.

Rally participants chanted, "What do we want? *Good jobs!* When do we want them? *Now!*" Others held signs that read, "Port of Poverty" or displayed Yoshitani's photo with a caption that read, "Overpaid."

POVERTY EMPLOYMENT AT A PROSPEROUS PORT

With a salary of nearly \$400,000 a year, Yoshitani is the highest paid Port CEO in the country. By comparison, many airport workers earn poverty wages, with no health care, no vacation pay, and no retirement security.

These baggage handlers, skycaps, concession workers, janitors, and wheelchair pushers struggle to support their families by working multiple jobs in a hostile work environment.

At the seaport, independent truck drivers work for near minimum wage delivering the

goods that drive our economy.

CHANGE NEEDED NOW!

"We call on Tay Yoshitani and the Port of Seattle to take responsibility for the abuse of workers that is taking place on their watch," said Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer, Tracey A. Thompson, who emceed the rally.

"It's time for the Port of Seattle to stop polluting our neighborhoods and adopt a fair set of good jobs principles that include full-time work, the right to organize, and dignity and respect for workers," she said.

A WEEK OF ACTION AT THE PORT

The rally capped off a week of action aimed at drawing attention to the environmental hazards and the abysmal working conditions at the Port.

Throughout the week, Port workers spoke out at rallies, participated in leafleting actions, and led delegations.

"We are the heartbeat of the airport," said Hosea Wilcox, a skycap, who, after 30 years on the job, is still earning minimum wage. "I want to see to it that we get some respect."



TAY YOSHITANI
CEO, PORT OF POVERTY & POLLUTION

LOCAL 117 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

October 2 – Local 117 Soccer Tournament

November 19 – Blood Drive

December 15 - Holiday Membership Meeting

Sign up online to receive an electronic copy of Teamster Talk at www.teamsters117.org.