

Obama's Record Wins UFCW's Endorsement

On election day, voters will be faced with a choice. Give President Obama another four years to build on his record of standing up for workers or go back to the way it was before he took office. The UFCW believes the choice is clear and has endorsed Barack Obama for president. See page two for Obama's record of accomplishments on behalf of workers.

The Voice of 951

UFCW Prepares for Action; 2012 Election Critical for Workers

The November 2012 general election will determine the direction Michigan and the nation will take for at least the next four years.

In Michigan, the election will provide the opportunity for balance to be restored to the state legislature. Bringing a Democratic majority to the state House of Representatives will slow the legislative attack on workers.

Nationally, the election will result in one of two scenarios becoming a reality. Should the anti-worker Republican agenda become the law of the land, the attacks on workers will intensify. The American middle class will disappear while Wall Street executives, greedy CEOs and billionaires become even richer.

On the other hand, if proworker Democrats are allowed to implement their economic, social, and job creation plans, workers will prosper, the economy will grow and the middle class will expand.

"This is going to be a critical election, and Michigan voters' influence will extend beyond the state as Michigan could very well determine which party holds the majority in the U.S. Senate and who occupies the White House," Marv Russow, UFCW 951's president, said. "With so much at stake, the UFCW in Michigan has identified what we need to accomplish in this election to protect workers, and have

developed an aggressive plan to meet these goals."

UFCW Michigan's 2012 election goals will focus on electing a Democratic majority to the state House of Representatives, and re-electing Senator Debbie Stabenow and President Obama.

"If we can achieve our goals, we can preserve the middle class and a brighter future for all workers," Russow said. "However, if we fail, this country will quickly turn into a nation of haves and have-nots."

Members can help their union reach its political goals by becoming informed voters and educating their friends and family about the issues. They can also sign up to be a political volunteer and participate in a variety of activities including registering voters, phone banking, attending rallies, and going door-to-door for pro-worker candidates. To volunteer, or for more information, contact Chris Michalakis, UFCW Michigan Political Director, at 1.800.321.6406, extension 8644.

UFCW Michigan 2012 Election Goals

In order to protect members' livelihoods, preserve the middle class and grow the economy, UFCW Michigan will be working toward the following three election day goals.

Elect a Democratic Majority to the Michigan House of Representatives



The Republican-controlled Michigan legislature has passed several anti-worker bills and balanced the budget on the backs of working families, while giving tax breaks to corporations.

Electing a Democratic House of Representatives would restore some balance to the legislature, lessen the attack on workers and stop right-to-work and other anti-worker legislation from being passed into law.

Re-Elect U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow



The Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate has prevented the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives from implementing the anti-worker Republican agenda nationally.

However, the Republicans only need to win four U.S. Senate seats in 2012 to have total control of Congress, and have targeted the seat of Michigan Democrat and long-time worker advocate Debbie Stabenow.

Re-Elect President Obama



At a time when workers are under attack by corporations, special interests, and their Republican cronies in government, President Obama has stood up for workers. Re-electing Obama will give him four more years to build on his record of accomplishments for workers, and prevent disastrous legislation, including national right-to-work, from being passed should republicans control the U.S. Congress.

Kroger Members Overwhelmingly Ratify New Contract



Lansing area Kroger members prepare to cast their vote on the new contract.

In late December, UFCW 951 members working at Kroger turned out in large numbers to ratify a new three-year contract by a vote of 84 percent "yes" to 16 percent "no."

"The proposal had the full recommendation of the bargaining committee as it preserved members' health benefits and pension and provided top rate wage increases, which was a significant accomplishment given Michigan's challenging economy and high unemployment rate," Marv Russow, UFCW Local 951's president, said. "The bargain-

ing committee felt this was the best contract possible under these circumstances. By their overwhelming ratification of the contract, I would say the membership agreed."

The ratification follows members' overwhelming rejection of Kroger's earlier contract offer in November that was not endorsed by the union.

"The members here at Kroger believe we have great union leaders, and we trust our leadership and the bargaining committee to do the best they can for us," Chester Ward, a steward from Kroger #852 in Lansing, said. "We fully supported whatever they felt was best, and stuck together when it came to voting."

"I want to thank the bargaining committee for all their hard work," Russow said. "They did a great job when we met with the company and in educating their coworkers about the tentative agreement and the importance of voting."

Approximately 1,000 UFCW members work at 11 Kroger stores in greater Lansing, Mt. Pleasant, Jackson and Hillsdale.

a VOICE for working America

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Leadership Message: Workers are Not the Problem

Put Lansing to Work for Workers



Mary Russow

We have all heard the saying "actions speak louder than words," and the actions of the Republican-controlled Michigan Legislature not only say volumes about their priorities, but contradict their words as well.

Lansing Republicans talk about creating jobs and the shared sacrifices required to move Michigan forward, but their actions tell a different story.

Since taking control of the Michigan legislature last year, the Republicans have not passed a single bill that created jobs. Instead, Governor Rick Snyder and his fellow Republicans in the state house and senate passed many laws that hurt working families so big business and the wealthy could become even richer.

The message from Lansing Republicans is clear, they think that in these economic times, workers are the problem -- that you have it too good, and that the path to prosperity should come at your expense. Just take a look at some of their actions.

One of the first actions
Republicans took when they
gained control of the state
legislature was eliminating the
requirement for retailers to put
individual price tags on items.
The Republicans claimed this
change would save consumers
approximately \$562 annually and
would not result in job loss.

As consumers, we all know our

food bills have not gone down. As a retail union, we know hours and jobs have been lost due to the repeal of item pricing.

Politicians weren't looking out for consumers or workers when they repealed item pricing, rather their business buddies. Retailers said eliminating item pricing would save them \$2.2 billion annually. This savings isn't being passed along to consumers or workers; where is it going? To corporate CEOs, making the rich richer at the expense of workers and consumers.

When it came time to balance the budget, Lansing Republicans increased taxes on low-income workers by eliminating Michigan's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and on retirees through a new tax on their pensions. They also cut funding for K-I2 and college students.

Shared sacrifice, they said, but only for struggling workers, seniors and public school students. While they all must pay more, Lansing Republicans decided corporations should pay less -- \$1 billion less -- thanks to their elimination of Michigan's business tax.

No jobs were created by these actions, but plenty of public school jobs were lost.

Snyder and his gang also cut vital safety nets for workers, slashing Unemployment Insurance and Workers' Compensation.

They held workers' unemployment checks hostage, threatening to allow the fund to go bankrupt unless corporate backed reforms that lowered benefits were passed. Through this political bullying, Lansing Republicans secured a reduction in unemployment benefits from 26 to 20 weeks, making Michigan the only state to offer less than 26 weeks of benefits. They also imposed a requirement that laid off work-

ers must take any job that offers 70 percent of their original pay, or (in some cases) any job paying over \$10.86 an hour, regardless of what may be best for them and their family. They deemed these changes necessary even though Michigan has the lowest maximum unemployment benefit amount of any mid-west state.

The state legislature slashed benefits for workers injured on the job to give political paybacks to CEOs and corporate special interest groups.

Under Michigan's new Workers' Compensation rules, a worker's benefit can be reduced by the amount a job within his/her restrictions would pay, regardless of whether the worker has been offered a job.

They also cut older workers' benefits by subtracting any pension they are eligible to receive from their Workers' Compensation benefit, regardless of their financial ability to retire.

While making changes to Workers' Compensation that hurt workers, Republicans made sure to help their corporate and business friends by giving employers more power to dictate which doctor workers see for medical treatment when they are injured on the job.

The message from the Republicans in Lansing is clear, workers and the middle class have it too good and must sacrifice their benefits and wages so the rich can get richer and big business can receive bigger tax breaks.

In 2012, your union intends to send a message to Lansing where the entire House of Representatives is up for election in November. By electing a Democratic majority to the house, we can stop the political attacks on workers. I would urge you to join in this effort, and help put Lansing to work for workers.

Bargaining Continues on First Contracts, Valley City Linen Looks to Break Union

Last year, workers at Valley
City Linen and JBS were
successful in completing the first
step in securing a union at their
workplaces -- they voted for
UFCW 951 representation in
union elections.

This year, their goal is to complete the final steps needed to become UFCW 951 members -- negotiating and ratifying their first union contracts -- which can prove to be very difficult.

Nationally, only 38 percent of unions are able to negotiate a first contract one year after the union election, and only 56 percent ever achieve a first contract. Local 951 is working hard to beat these odds and is currently in negotiations with both employers.

"Our goal is to have a first contract at both employers this year," John Cakmakci, UFCW 951's secretary-treasurer, said. "It's going to be a battle at Valley City Linen where it appears the company is continuing its union busting efforts."

Valley City Linen delayed negotiations until UFCW 951 filed charges against them and alerted some of their customers about the company's practices.

"Several of Valley City Linen's customers, which include restaurants and hotels, contacted the company and urged them to negotiate in good faith after we distributed handbills to their patron regarding Valley City Linen's anti-worker and arguably illegal practices," Cakmakci said. "This seemed to get their attention, and for a while they began to bargain in earnest."

Recently, the company has returned to its earlier delay tactics and has begun to talk to workers about giving them another chance without the union.

"The company knows that if they prevent a union contract from being in place one year after the May 2011 vote for union representation, they can request the government conduct another union vote," Cakmakci said. "With all the turnover at the plant in the last year, a second union vote would be like conducting a brand new union organizing drive."

The union would prefer to avoid this situation, and will use every means possible to obtain a contract prior to May.

"In addition to handbilling, there are other ways to exert pressure on an employer to bargain in good faith," Cakmakci said. "We would prefer not to utilize these tactics, but will if we are forced to do so."

On a much more positive note, the union anticipates negotiations will go much smoother with JBS since the company has contracts with UFCW locals in other parts of the country.

"While we are in the early stages of negotiations with JBS, we fully expect this employer to abide by its workers' desire for union representation and negotiate in good faith," Cakmakci said.

UFCW Endorses Obama

In December, UFCW International Union President Joseph T. Hansen announced the 1.3 million member union's endorsement of President Obama in the 2012 election.

"I am proud to announce that the UFCW is endorsing



President Obama's reelection campaign," he said. "President Obama has stood up for the jobless, the uninsured, the middle class taxpayer, Medicare recipients, working women, and accountability from Wall Street. Ours is an enthusiastic choice to stand with President Obama as he fights against political opposition that seeks to enrich a select few at the expense of millions."

UFCW Michigan has also endorsed President Obama, making his re-election a top priority.

"Four years ago, we endorsed Barack Obama because he shares our vision for America. A vision where good jobs, affordable health care, and economic justice are a reality, not just a dream," Marv Russow, UFCW 951's president, said. "The last four years have been tough. But President Obama has been fighting for us every day—despite virtually no cooperation from Republicans — and he will keep fighting for workers."

The accomplishments President Obama has secured for workers include the following:

President Obama saved the domestic auto industry from collapse.

While Republicans, including Mitt Romney, wanted to allow Detroit to go bankrupt by allowing GM and Chrysler to fail, President Obama took measures to protect Michigan's biggest employers, keeping thousands of Michiganders and millions in America working. While our economy is still struggling, it would have been much worse in Michigan and nationally had GM and Chrysler been allowed to fail.

President Obama has created millions of jobs.

President Obama has made jobs his top priority. His economic recovery program supported as many as 3.6 million jobs by cutting taxes, investing in clean energy, keeping teachers in classrooms, and investing in roads and bridges. Recently, the President proposed the American Jobs Act to get even more Americans working again.

President Obama has put the needs of Main Street above the greed of Wall Street.

President Obama passed the most sweeping financial reform legislation since the Great Depression, preventing an imminent and future financial crisis. He created an agency to protect consumers from unfair lending practices, reined in credit card companies, and provided mortgage relief to struggling homeowners.

President Obama passed historic health care reform ensuring health care is a right, not a privilege.

After generations of talk about health care reform, President Obama got the job done. His Affordable Care Act expands coverage to 32 million additional Americans, closes the Medicare prescription drug "donut hole," and ends the worst practices of insurance companies by prohibiting insurers from denying coverage to people with pre-existing conditions and cancelling coverage when someone is sick.

President Obama has protected and promoted the rights of workers to form a union, receive fair pay and benefits, and have a safe workplace.

President Obama took George Bush's Department of Big Business and made it the Department of Labor again. President Obama appointed pro-worker members to the National Labor Relations Board, despite Republican attempts to stop any appointments to the Board. The first bill that President Obama signed into law was the "Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act" that ensured women would be paid the same as men for doing the

President Obama honors the service of veterans.

President Obama pushed for new tax credits to encourage businesses to hire unemployed and disabled veterans.



To achieve a victory for workers on election day, a large turnout for proworker candidates is needed at the polls. The first step in making this happen is to make sure eligible voters are registered to vote.

UFCW 951 will have a list of members at each workplace who are not registered to vote. If you would like to register your coworkers who are on the list, contact Chris Harthen at 1.800.321.6406 extension 8655.

A Day un the Lufe of ...

Rob Hunter, Health and Safety Advocate



Rob Hunter, from Meijer #70, receives his Health and Safety certificate after completing OSHA training.

UFCW 951 member Rob Hunter, who works at Meijer #70 in Woodhaven, has always enjoyed helping people. It's this attribute that led him to get more involved in the union, eventually becoming a UFCW 951 steward and later an assistant representative. It is also what encouraged him to speak up and volunteer to participate in a three day Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training in Seattle, Washington.

The brand new training seminar, powered by OSHA, was called "Training the Trainer" and focused on how workers can spot safety hazards in the workplace. He learned how to set up safety committees in any kind of scenario, from industrial plants and the food processing

"There are a lot of things you may be overlooking in your store and this course will help show you what to be on the lookout for."

Rob Hunter, Meijer #70

industry, to retail units like the one where he currently works. Hunter received a great deal of helpful health and safety information, further expanding his knowledge of his rights as a worker, that he was able to share with other stewards at his store.

"I've already used a lot of the information from the seminar in my store," Hunter said. "I was able to help with a safety issue concerning the loading dock and in another area where damaged flooring needed to be repaired in order to meet health and safety standards."

This new information also helped Hunter feel more confident in his work as a steward.

"I feel more comfortable filing health and safety griev-

ances since attending the seminar," he said. "I'm a lot more sure of myself now and can spot health and safety problems in my workplace a little better than I could

Health and safety training is something Hunter believes every UFCW 951 member should participate in to improve their workplace.

"I highly recommend others to go to training such as this, whether you are a steward or not," he said. "There are a lot of things you may be overlooking in your store and this course will help show you what to be on the lookout for."

Stewards who are interested in learning more about health and safety issues in the workplace are invited to attend UFCW 951's new Health and Safety steward training in June. At this training stewards will receive information on state and national health and safety protections, and will receive help identifying violations in their workplace. There will be tips for resolving health and safety violations, and members who attend will receive a Health and Safety Training Certificate upon completion of the course.

Show Your Union Pride & Win a Prize



Sarah Payton, Meijer #122 Union Pride winner.

We're proud of our union and want you to be, too! That's why UFCW 951 recognizes members who wear their UFCW 951 buttons, badge holders, or pins.

Union representatives and officers visit two units every month in each of the local's three regions and award the first member they see wearing one of these items a Union Pride prize package.

Winners receive a UFCW 951 t-shirt and a \$25 gift card. They also have their photograph displayed on the union bul-

UFCW 951 buttons, badge holders and pins are available from union representatives.

Date

March 7

March 7

March 14

March 21

March 21

March 21

March 28

March 28

Steward Education a Top Priority for 2012

During 2012, UFCW plans to bolster its steward education program in several ways, including conducting training sessions prior to the union's regularly scheduled quarterly membership and reporting meetings.

"I believe one of the most effective ways to strengthen UFCW 951 is to strengthen our steward group. Stewards are the base upon which this local union is built; with a stronger base, UFCW 951 will be more effective," Mary Russow, UFCW 951's president, said. "There is no better way to create a stronger steward group than to provide them with continuing education."

Since many stewards already attend the quarterly and reporting meetings, the Local felt it made sense to combine the training with these meetings.

"We know our stewards are very busy people. By pairing the training with union meetings they were already attending, we are hoping to make it more convenient for them to receive additional training," Russow said. "We also know stewards enjoy meeting in smaller groups to receive more personalized training, an oppor-

tunity these regional training sessions will definitely offer."

The educational workshops will also offer stewards the opportunity to improve their skills as a workplace union representative, regardless of their employer or how long they have been a steward.

The Local also plans to conduct additional trainings to supplement the quarterly sessions with more in-depth training on a variety of issues including; Organizing, Health and Safety, Women's Leadership and Community and Labor Advocacy.

2012 Dues Recalculation

Member dues will be recalculated only one time during 2012. The formula for your dues is your rate of pay for two hours of work plus \$13, or the UFCW International minimum which is currently \$28.08. Your dues stay fixed at that level even if you get a raise during the next 12 months. This annual recalculation of your dues will be your dues rate for the remainder of the year.

On the first day of the month as indicated below, your employer will adjust the dues deducted from your paycheck to correspond with your rate of pay on that date.

> February Meijer and Polly's

April Orchard Grove Nursing Facility

> Healthcare Services May Harding's #383

June Kroger New Market and Plumb's

Harding's #356 and #903

*Fry Krisp and Knouse Foods recalculate dues throughout the year.

9:00 a.m. / 5:00 p.m.

9:30 a.m. / 4:30 p.m.

September

Kroger

October

Harding's #400

November

Rite Aid

December

The UFCW 951 Executive Board established, and the membership approved, guidelines for members who request the refunding of an overpayment of dues or fees. Members seeking a refund must request it within one year of any overpayment. You can call the UFCW 951 Membership Records department at 1.800.999.0951 for information regarding your dues payments.

If you have any questions or would like more details regarding your dues recalculation, contact the union office.



One of UFCW Michigan's most popular events, a day a Battle Creek's FireKeepers Casino, is back for 2012! Order tickets today as this event will sell out.

UFCW Michigan FireKeepers Casino Trips

W Michigan FireKeepers Casino Trips	Get in on the
FCW \$10 Ticket Includes \$25 to Spend at the Casino and Round-trip Bus Transportation!	Action! the

	The state of the s		
Bus	Pick-Up/Return Locations	Departur	e/Return Times
Gra	nd Rapids: UFCW 951 3270 Evergreen Dr. NE	9:00 a.m.	/ 4:00 p.m.
Ben	ton Harbor: Meijer #41 1920 Pipestone Rd.	9:00 a.m.	/ 4:00 p.m.
Port	tage: Meijer #196 8850 Shaver Rd.	10:00 a.n	n. / 3:00 p.m.
Mad	ison Heights: UFCW 876 876 Horace Brown Dr.	9:00 a.m.	/ 5:00 p.m.
Ann	Arbor: Meijer #64 3145 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd.	9:30 a.m.	/ 3:30 p.m.
Jack	son: Meijer #30, 2777 Airport Rd.	10:00 a.n	n. / 3:00 p.m.
Lans	sing: Meijer #24, 6200 S. Pennsylvania Ave.	10:00 a.n	n. / 4:00 p.m.

Due to limited seating, members may purchase one guest ticket. Tickets will be sold on a first come, first serve basis. Incomplete forms
will be returned without tickets.

Note: Casino regulations require individuals be at least 21 years old and present valid picture ID matching the information on the order form below.

Saginaw: Meijer #43, 3360 Tittabawassee Rd.

Flint: Meijer #28, G-4333 W. Pierson Rd.

Member's Name	Birth Date	Email:	@
Address:	City:	Zip:	_ Phone:
Guest's Name		Birth	Date
Address:	City:		_Zip:
I/we will ride the bus from (list location):	I/we would like to	o ride the bus with:	

Mail completed form with a check or money order made payable to UFCW 876 to: UFCW 876, 876 Horace Brown Dr.; Madison Heights; MI 48071. You will be mailed your bus boarding pass(es). Casino cash will be issued upon arrival at FireKeepers Casino.



UFCW Members Hop Aboard the Polar Express!



Many fun memories were made at UFCW Michigan's fourth annual Children's Holiday Party on December 15. Members and their families celebrated winter with a Polar Express themed party with crafts and activities, pictures with Santa, and food.

"The holiday party was a great way to end a year of fun, affordable events for UFCW 951 members," Mary Russow, UFCW 951's president, said. "Our hope is that 2012 brings with it a full calendar of even more enjoyable events."





Join UFCW Michigan in Hockeytown on April 5!

Join UFCW Michigan as the Detroit Red Wings take on the New Jersey Devils on Thursday, April 5 at 7:30 p.m. The special, UFCW-discounted \$30 ticket includes a seat in Section 227A and a food voucher (a slice of pizza or hot dog, and a soda). A limited number of tickets will be sold on a first-come first-serve basis. In fairness to all members, there is a two ticket limit per member. Be one of the first 7,500 fans to enter the arena and you will receive a free Nicklas Lidstrom bobblehead!

Detroit Red Wings Ticket Order Form -- Orders Must be Received by March 22, 2012

Name	_ Local	Phone Number _	
Street AddressCity		State_	Zip Code
Email		_@	
Ticket QuantityX \$30 = Total Enclosed Choose your delivery option: Mail the tickets to the addre I will pick my tickets up at the UFCV		3 between 8 a.m.	and 7 p.m. (address below).
Mail the completed order form with a check or money order r	' '		V 876; 876 Horace Brown

Test Your Knowledge: Right-to-Work Edition

True or False?

Making Michigan a right-towork state will help decrease unemployment.

False: According to December 2011 unemployment rates, six out of the 10 states with the highest unemployment rates are right-to-work law states.

Some politicians who are pushing for right-to-work legislation in Michigan claim this legislation will mean more jobs for our state. Don't believe the lie. Right-towork isn't about rights nor work, rather is aimed at weakening unions' ability to represent workers and silencing workers' voice at the workplace.

The following is a list of the 10 states

with the highest unemployment rates in the U.S.* Right-to-work states are in bold.

- 1) Nevada 6) Illinois
- 2) California 7) Florida
- 8) South Carolina 3) Rhode Island
- 4) Mississippi 9) Georgia
- 5) North Carolina 10) Michigan

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. (2011).

UFCW 951 Quarterly Membership Meetings

Meetings occur on different days for each region. Regions will rotate the day of the week they hold Quarterly Meetings. Membership meetings are one way you can ask questions, get involved and hear what's going on with your employer, your industry, and your Union! All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.

West

UFCW 951 Office 3270 Evergreen Dr. NE Grand Rapids, MI 49525

April 16, 2012

North

All Seasons Resort 760 S. Cedar Street Kalkaska, MI 49646 April 17, 2012

Central

UFCW 951 Office 3490 Belle Chase Way (lower level) Lansing, MI 48911 April 18, 2012

East

UFCW 951 Office 30150 Telegraph Rd., 3rd floor Bingham Farms, MI 48025

April 19, 2012

Reporting Meetings Follow up on Quarterly Meetings

At Reporting Meetings, you will hear reports on the topics discussed at the Quarterly Membership Meetings. All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.

Woodhaven

Holiday Inn Express 21500 West Rd.

April 24, 2012

Birch Run

Best Western 9087 East Birch Run Rd. April 24, 2012

Kalamazoo

Holiday Inn West 2747 South 11th St.

April 25, 2012

Brighton

Homewood Suites 8060 Challis Rd.

April 25, 2012

For directions and more information, go to www.ufcw951.com.

UFCW Scholarships



The UFCW International Union

has administered a Scholarship Program for over 45 years, supporting higher education for UFCW members and their unmarried dependents.

For 2012, at least six UFCW International scholarships worth up to \$8,000 each over four years will be awarded.

The International will accept online applications from January 16, **2012 through April 16, 2012** from students who have graduated from high school, will be graduating in the spring of 2012, or have received their GED.

For more information, complete rules and eligibility requirements, or to apply, visit www.ufcw.org/scholarship.

In 2012, UFCW 951, through its Foundation, will award 19 \$2,000 scholarships and five \$400 textbook scholarships to eligible members or their dependent children attending a college, university, community college, or posthigh school vocational program.

UFCW 951 scholarship applications, with a short essay, must be received by March 30, 2012.

Applications, eligibility requirements and more information regarding the essay and UFCW 951 scholarships can be found on the UFCW 951 website at www.ufcw951.com, or by calling the UFCW 951 office at 1.800.999.0951.

Mark Your Calendars **Upcoming Union Events**



Spring Celebration April 3 **Madison Heights**

Detroit Tiger Game May 17

For information on these and other union events, go to

