



March 29, 2022

Mr. John Grant
President
UFCW Local 770
630 Shatto Place
Los Angeles, CA 90005

Ms. Andrea Zinder
President
UFCW Local 324
8530 Stanton Avenue
Buena Park CA 90620

Mr. Mark Ramos
President
UFCW Local 1428
P.O. Box 9000
705 W. Arrow Highway
Claremont, CA 91711

Mr. Jacques Loveall
President
UFCW Local 8 – GS
2200 Professional Drive
Roseville, CA 95661

Mr. Joe Duffle
President
UFCW Local 1167
P.O. Box 1167
Bloomington, CA 92316

Mr. Todd Walters
President
UFCW Local 135
2001 Camino Del Rio
South
San Diego, CA 92108

Mr. Michael Straeter
President
UFCW Local 1442
9075 S La Cienega
Boulevard
Inglewood, CA 90301

Dear Mr. Grant, Mr. Loveall, Mr. Walters, Ms. Zinder, Mr. Duffle, Mr. Straeter & Mr. Ramos:

On behalf of the Center for Individual Freedom (CFIF), I write to express concerns with what can fairly be described as a failure by leadership of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) and its Locals in Southern California to do your part to help support rank-and-file members.

Since March 2020, Southern California Locals have collected up to \$1,600 from UFCW members, which in 2020 alone exceeded \$71.5 million amassed collectively from your memberships. Those dues have funded perks, including automobiles, prepaid tickets, holiday luncheons, yoga instructors, and first-class travel, not to mention the generous annual salaries averaging over \$207,000 that each of you collected in 2020.

By continuing to subsidize those perks through their dues to the UFCW, rank-and-file members remain perpetually beholden to the union so long as they maintain their existing employment relationships. With cash ranging from \$400,000 to \$16.6 million in 2020, each Southern California Local could certainly relieve that burden and increase their generosity toward members during these challenging times.

To accomplish that, if UFCW’s focus truly remains the interests of rank-and-file UFCW members, there’s an obvious way in which you can match deed with word: Suspend collection of burdensome membership dues, which would have an immediate positive impact on hardworking frontline members who are struggling.



Furthermore, you can return to your members – both current and former – some of the dues money collected since the Covid pandemic began in March 2020.

Instead of continuing to rhetorically exploit members by publicly lamenting how they're unable to “afford new shoes” or how they “can barely afford to buy food and pay for utilities,” why not step up to help struggling members in this concrete way?

After all, some of your Locals maintain a “Hardship Fund” to combat adverse financial situations like the ones you describe.

Take UFCW Local 770, for example. It operates a Hardship Fund, but opted to disburse only approximately \$13,000 to struggling members in 2020. That sum appears woefully insufficient when one considers that Local 770 had over \$1.87 million in the bank.

That prompts a broader pressing question. Namely, does every UFCW Local in Southern California maintain a similar fund? Given the fact that Southern California Locals possessed a combined \$42 million in their accounts in 2020, members may wonder whether current UFCW practices recognize and protect their actual interests.

Continuing to extract dues from your members' paychecks while sitting on such amounts, and while leaders such as yourselves continue to enjoy generous salaries, should raise serious concerns among those members.

The Covid pandemic imposed an enormous strain on members, which was followed by mounting inflationary burdens, supply chain uncertainties, and other hardships. Fairness therefore dictates that UFCW Local leaders should do your part by promptly supporting members through immediate suspension of the collection of union dues, and by returning to your members some of the money collected since the Covid pandemic began in March 2020 – both current and former.

Through such actions, UFCW leaders like yourselves can demonstrate that you actually put the wellbeing of rank-and-file members – and their families – at the forefront of everyday decision-making.

Sincerely,

Timothy Lee
Senior Vice President of Legal and Public Affairs
Center for Individual Freedom