

# Setting the Record Straight: Why We Are On Strike

## You're Not Getting the Whole Story From the Supermarket Giants!

Dear Customer:

The corporate executives of Vons, Albertsons and Ralphs have taken out full-page ads in local newspapers to tell "their side" of the current labor dispute.

Unfortunately, in their attempts to blame the strike and lockouts on the workers, these profitable corporate giants have resorted to half-truths and outright lies about their plans to slash wages and benefits. That is why we want to set the record straight.

● **Health Care:** The employers say that they just want their employees to share a "reasonable" portion of their health care costs — only \$5 a week for individuals and \$15 for families. ***This is a lie.*** The employers also want to increase co-payments, institute deductibles and place caps on payments for prescriptions and surgeries. This amounts to a ***50% cut in medical benefits*** that would ***shift almost a billion dollars in health care costs onto the workers*** over the term of the contract.

● **Wages:** Arguing that their employees are well-paid, the employers selectively cite the highest wage levels of full-time food clerks — as if these wages are typical. They don't tell you that ***many employees earn less than \$10 an hour.*** They also don't tell you that ***75% of supermarket employees work part-time*** and must keep their schedules open so they can be called in to work when needed. On the average, ***these workers only make \$312 a week.***

That's not all: In their newspaper ads and handbills, the supermarket employers don't tell you that they intend to ***slash wages for new employees.*** This would create a new "second class" of employees who would be paid much less than their coworkers. Current employees would be subject to harassment and unfair firings so that store managers could replace them with cheaper labor.

● **Retirees:** The employers don't mention that they refuse to adequately fund their workers' pension plans. This would put the future of retirees — people who have dedicated their careers to these profitable companies — in doubt. Medical costs paid by retirees would increase by hundreds of dollars a month.

When pressed, the supermarket companies try to excuse themselves by blaming a "new competitive environment" created by Wal-Mart and other non-union discount chains. This argument doesn't make sense. Wal-Mart has a tiny presence in Southern California's urban areas and none of its stores sell groceries. Even if it carries out its threat to build 40 SuperCenter stores in California, Wal-Mart would only capture 1% of market share in the state.

**The fact is that the giant supermarket companies aren't suffering at all. Their profits have increased by 91% over the last five years. What they really want to do is slash their labor costs so they can increase their profits even more and raise their values on the stock market. *Don't let the hardworking supermarket employees be the scapegoats for rampant corporate greed!***

Please support our strike and honor our picket lines.

**Thank you for not shopping at  
Vons, Albertsons and Ralphs!**

# Facts about the Supermarket Strike

- The supermarket companies want to cut our health benefits in half — and charge us more for it! Over the next three years, their policies would shift almost a billion dollars in health care costs to employees.
- Many supermarket employees earn less than \$10 an hour. Most workers average only \$312 a week.
- The supermarket companies want to slash the wages of new employees. This would create a new “second class” of employees who would be paid much less than their coworkers.
- The giant supermarket companies are healthy and profitable. Over the past five years, their profits have increased 91%.
- The supermarket companies try to excuse themselves by pointing to competition from Wal-Mart and other discount chains. But Wal-Mart doesn't sell groceries in California. Even if it carried out its plans to build 40 SuperCenter stores in California, Wal-Mart would only capture 1% of the market for groceries in the state.

**Don't let hardworking supermarket employees  
be the scapegoats for rampant corporate greed!**

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