



California **Labor** Federation | AFL-CIO

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Statement by California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, Executive Secretary Treasurer Art Pulaski on the Grocery Strike Settlement

Following a long 137-day contract dispute, Southern California grocery unions and management announced a compromise settlement. The seven Southern California UFCW unions will now take the proposal to their workers for ratification.

Strikes and lockouts are always a battle of last resort. The dispute was long and difficult. Many workers lost their homes. Company shareholders lost hundreds of millions of dollars. Shoppers lost the reliable service of their local grocery clerks. Everyone suffered.

But in the 20 weeks that grocery workers were forced to the streets, they gave a strong message to corporations - any effort to dismantle affordable health care will face determined opposition.

We applaud the grocery workers for their sacrifice, determination and courage to fight for family health care, and we thank all who supported them.

As the Southern California union members review the settlement, the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO and its community allies will suspend our Boycott Campaign against Safeway.

However, the Federation and our unions will continue to strengthen our resolve with an ever-growing list of community, clergy, and health care consumer groups to oppose any attack on affordable health care.

Even now, as Southern California workers review their settlement proposal, grocery workers in Northern California, who are not affected by this tentative agreement, are preparing to fight the same companies should they try to again dismantle family health care in September when their contracts expire.

Any attempts by Safeway or other Fortune 500 corporations to end family health care, anywhere in California, will be met by even stronger and more unified opposition.

Californians need real solutions to address the health care crisis.

The ultimate answer for California is to vote to support the historic Health Insurance Act of 2003 (SB 2) on the November 2004 ballot. This law calls on all companies, except small businesses, to provide health care to their workers. SB 2 provides real answers to our health care crisis.

As Californians throughout the state rallied to fight for family health care, we will continuously come together to preserve affordable health for Northern California grocery workers in the summer, for SB 2 in the fall, and any time affordable health care comes under attack.