



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **GROCERY STORE UNIONS CALL ON KROGER TO CEASE PLANS TO CUT HERO PAY FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS, IMPROVE SAFETY IN STORES**

*AS GROCERY STORES ACHIEVE RECORD PROFITS AND CORONAVIRUS CONTINUES TO SPREAD, UFCW LOCALS REPRESENTING OVER 100,000 OF THESE #ESSENTIALHEROS ACROSS THE WEST URGE KROGER TO MAINTAIN HERO PAY AND ADDRESS SAFETY CONCERNS*

**DENVER** – Kroger-owned grocery stores across the West notified essential grocery workers that starting May 17th, the company will eliminate the \$2.00 an hour bonus called “Hero Pay.” Grocery store employees, deemed essential workers by the government, are a constant on the frontline in all natural disasters or national crises-- risking their lives to ensure America is fed no matter what.

In response to Kroger’s announcement, seven UFCW Local Unions are calling on the public to support these #EssentialHeroes in California, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming asking Kroger to maintain Hero Pay, improve store practices and provide testing to all employees as COVID-19 continues to plague local communities, and the UFCW membership. Together, these local unions represent more than 100,000 essential grocery workers in these five states and more than 55,000 of these are at Kroger stores. Unions have seen an uptick in cases of infection of COVID-19 amongst their respective grocery worker members. As of today, UFCW Local 7 in Colorado has confirmed 39 workers tested positive for COVID-19 and one death.

**Kim Cordova, President of [UFCW Local 7](#), which represents more than 21,000 grocery workers 14,000+ of whom are Kroger grocery-chain workers in Colorado and Wyoming, issued the following statement:**

“In any natural or man-made disaster, grocery workers never stop. For more than two months, these workers have put their lives and their families lives at risk to protect and serve the communities they live and work in. Kroger is the biggest retail grocer in the US, possibly the world, and during this pandemic it has experienced record profits because families and communities rely on grocery workers to feed themselves and their families. Taking away this hero pay from these essential workers disregards their continued heroism as they serve their communities in crisis.

“Just because states start to reopen doesn’t mean the dangers from COVID are less severe. Instead, grocery workers’ jobs become more dangerous as customer traffic increases. We’re already seeing a startling uptick in the number of essential grocery workers testing positive for COVID-19. These heroes provided and served their communities without hesitation. These #EssentialHeroes are asking for fair pay and safe stores.”

The decision by Kroger to rip away this well-deserved increase comes at the same time these essential grocery workers --American heroes -- are mourning the loss of their Union brothers and sisters to COVID-19. UFCW Local 7 has already said goodbye to one fallen hero who sacrificed their life working for Kroger:

- UFCW 7 of Colorado and Wyoming lost Union sister Karen Donna Haws of Brush, Colorado, a Courtesy Clerk at King Soopers owned by Kroger, on April 10th.

The seven UFCW Local unions across the West have united to bring attention to Kroger’s unjustified decision to take away Hero Pay as states reopen, encouraging customers to support grocery workers as these #EssentialHeroes continue to support them during local stay-at-home orders and the global pandemic. Locals are also continuing to call on Kroger to more effectively limit the number of shoppers in a store at one time in order to allow for safe six feet of distancing, and also have all workers and shoppers wear masks.

Please support your community grocery workers—our #EssentialHeroes—by telling Kroger how you feel about their takeaway of the Hero bonus.

The seven union locals joining together include: UFCW Locals 7, 21, 324, 367, 555, 770, 1439 and IBT 38.

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[Local 7](#), the largest Union in Colorado is affiliated with United Food and Commercial Workers International Union which represents over 1.3 million workers in the United States and Canada, and is one of the largest private sector Unions in North America. UFCW members work in a wide range of industries, including retail food, food processing, agriculture, retail sales, and health care.