



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UFCW LOCAL 7 MOURNS THE PASSING OF DEDICATED SAFEWAY WORKER, UNION SISTER, AND LOYAL FRIEND

Rainey Gordon, Union Member and Safeway Worker for 18 years, Passed Away from Complications from COVID-19 on December 22, 2020.

DENVER – Today, UFCW Local 7 mourns the loss of another Union sister Rainey Gordon, one month after her death resulting from complications from COVID-19, which she may have contracted at work. Gordon worked at the Safeway in Castle Rock for 18 years, including her time as an Essential Worker during the pandemic. Gordon is the first Local 7 Essential Worker from Safeway to die from COVID-19. Since March, nearly 400 of her Union brothers and sisters at Safeway have tested positive for the virus because they continue to work in a pandemic, risking their lives each day to keep Coloradans fed and the country running.

To date, three Local 7 grocery members employed by Kroger/King Soopers have died after contracting the virus, and 576 members have tested positive.

Kim Cordova, Vice President of UFCW International and President of UFCW Local 7 in Colorado and Wyoming, which represents approximately 17,000 Essential Grocery workers from Safeway/Albertsons and Kroger/King Soopers, issued the following statement on Kroger's cease and desist letter and response:

“This is another dedicated Essential Worker, Union member, sister, and friend that was unnecessarily lost to this vicious virus. This is a loss for Rainey's family, including her Union family, and her beloved customers who lost a friendly face at their local grocery store. Rainey brought loyalty, dedication, and a bright smile to the workplace and was committed to working to keep her community running as the pandemic forced many of us to shut down. We are saddened by this loss and are committed to honoring her memory every day as we fight to protect our more than 17,000 grocery workers in Colorado and Wyoming.

“Rainey's death is yet another compelling reason require employers to properly protect the health and safety of their employees during this pandemic, especially highly-trafficked grocery stores. Without stringent, consistent cleaning protocols, PPE, and easy access to COVID-19 testing, employees and shoppers are being put at greater risk of contracting this debilitating disease. We have been dealing with the consequences of this virus for too long. There are no more excuses for employers not to make sure that employee safety is the number one priority, We all need grocery stores open right now, but not at the cost of Essential Worker's lives.”

Since the beginning of the pandemic, UFCW Local 7 has been fighting to protect it's 17,000 Essential Grocery Members in Colorado and Wyoming, demanding:

- Mandatory cart and basket cleaning;
- Enforcing the applicable state, county municipal health directives on mask usage;
- Scheduling workers more time to ensure cleaning and sanitizing is being completed thoroughly;
- More frequent bathroom, breakroom, and cash register cleanings;
- Adequate supplies for cleaning;

- More prominent signage for customers on safety rules;
- Have management ask unmasked customers to put on a mask, if applicable by law;
- Communicate to employees if someone has tested positive with COVID-19 or been exposed;
- Daily temperature checks when employees arrive at work;
- Improved staffing on all shifts to enable workers to take sanitation breaks to wash hands and disinfect the store;
- Retroactively reinstate “Hero” or “Appreciation” Pay (Hazard Pay);
- Limit on customer capacity and enforcement;
- Company needs to ensure safe social distancing;
- Grocery workers to have access to testing (at the companies’ expense);
- Company to pay for vaccine (admin cost) for those who want it

Leading up to the holiday rush, Local 7 [implored](#) grocery employers to enforce social distancing guidelines, enact hazard pay for employees, limit capacity in their stores, provide sufficient PPE for customers and employees, and enforce cleaning protocols. The Union is committed to fighting for its members’ health and safety and will continue to call on companies to enforce the above demands.

With a heavy heart, we say goodbye to our Union Sister Rainey Gordon. During her 18-year career at Safeway, Rainey was a true hero that demonstrated an unparalleled work ethic and, more importantly, shared her smile, laugh, and light with those around her.

Rainey’s love was pure, and she was joyful in all things. Rainey loved playing games with her family, had a smile that lit up every room and was a voracious reader. She brought joy to so many people through her exceptional photography skills.

Rest in power and in paradise our Sister.

“Our Union Family is a circle of love and strength, we will forever miss you.”

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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.

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