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ONE YEAR AFTER TAKING AWAY HERO PAY FROM EMPLOYEES, KROGER GIVES EXECUTIVES A BIG PAY RAISE

After Keeping Stores Open During Global Pandemic, Essential Workers Deserve More

DENVER – At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kroger Co. [implemented](#) a Hero Pay bonus of \$2/hour for Essential Grocery Workers, calling grocery workers “heroes” because of their extraordinary sacrifice and dedication to the Company and its customers. On May 17, 2020, the Company stripped away the Hero Pay bonus program and began relaxing safety protocols in stores. Now, one year later, the Company is treating these employee heroes like zeroes.

Kim Cordova, Vice President of UFCW International and President of UFCW Local 7, which represents more than 17,000 grocery workers in Colorado and Wyoming, and over 22,000 Essential Workers, issued the following statement:

“A year of the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that in any natural or human-made disaster, our grocery store workers never stop working. They showed up to work every day-- even at significant risk to their health and that of their families-- to keep the economy moving and the country fed. Instead of recognizing their sacrifice, retail grocers, including Kroger, decided to take away Hero Pay only two months into the pandemic while the virus continued to rage. This callous move to take away hazard pay came on the heels of one of the most profitable years for Kroger, with its top executive receiving a 21% compensation increase in 2019.

2020 appears to be no different. While Kroger’s bosses remained in the safety of their home during the pandemic, the top executive received the most considerable pay increase of his career, a \$22.4 million pay package or [6% higher](#) than the year before. At the same time, pay for the median employee at Kroger [dropped by 8%](#). This is an insult to the millions of Kroger employees who continue to struggle to stay healthy, feed their families, and make ends meet during the most challenging year of their lives.

Kroger should have taken care of its workforce with enhanced safety measures and compensation. Instead, like a reverse Robin Hood, the Company chose to take from its selfless essential heroes and instead line the pockets with the profits of the CEO and wealthy shareholders. If you are a family member of one of the 137 grocery workers who have died of COVID in the US, and the more than 30,100 that were infected or exposed to the coronavirus in the past year, the news of Company leadership receiving pay raise is an insult to their memory.

This is not the way to value the hard work and sacrifice of our Essential Workers. As people continue to get vaccinated and the country continues to open, grocery store workers should be commemorated and compensated for their service. Kroger has just signed a big IOU to the workers who deserve the credit for its record-breaking profits.”

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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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