



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 20, 2021

Contacts:

Alaina Berner | aberner@skdknick.com | 703-915-7032

UFCW LOCAL 7 PRESIDENT STATEMENT ON KROGER'S HARMFUL COVID-19 POLICY CHANGES

As cases of COVID-19 continue to surge in Colorado, Kroger takes away support from Essential Workers in its stores.

DENVER – Even as COVID-19 cases continue to [overwhelm hospitals](#) in Colorado, King Soopers announces new COVID-19 policies that will hurt the Essential Workers who have worked at the store during the pandemic, often without protection or adequate compensation.

Effective January 16, 2022, unvaccinated King Soopers associates will no longer receive paid COVID emergency leave of absence, associates will no longer receive paid COVID personal leave of absence, and associates will no longer receive financial support for COVID-19 related expenses.

UFCW Local 7 and King Soopers' parent company, Kroger, are currently in negotiations for a new contract before the current one expires on January 8, 2022. This policy change comes despite paid leave being a mandatory subject to bargaining, which Kroger has unilaterally ignored.

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 in response to these policy changes:

"After one of the most difficult years our members have ever experienced and one of the most successful financial years for Kroger, the company and its leadership are showing once again how little they care for the Essential Workers who keep their stores running, shelves stocked, and customers happy. These new policies completely ignore the risk Kroger employees have taken during the pandemic, putting the health of their families and themselves on the line to continue serving their communities.

"While Colorado is experiencing an unprecedented surge, and tourists continue to visit this area during the wintertime, Kroger is encouraging a 'Work While Sick' culture. Without a livable wage to take care of themselves or their families who are suffering from COVID-19, these policies encourage associates to come into work or risk losing much-needed income, leading to a potentially increased spread of the virus to other associates and customers in their stores. Already, Kroger took away Hazard Pay only two months into the pandemic, leaving employees without adequate compensation for their work. Not to mention the company's failure to implement proper cleaning, enforce mask-wearing, or encourage social distancing in their stores, only further increasing the risk of transmission.

"As bargaining between Local 7 and King Soopers continues, we will fight for the pay, protection, and respect that our members deserve after working through such a difficult and risky time. Policies like the ones Kroger just announced are an essential part of those discussions and must be agreed upon by both parties before going into effect. Essential Workers deserve more than they are getting from the company right now, and we will do whatever it takes to show their worth."

###

[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.

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)