

**UFCW Local 3000 of WA & ID, UFCW Local 400 of MD, DC, VA, WV, KY, OH, & TN, UFCW Local 7 of CO & WY, Local 770 of Southern CA, UFCW Local 5 of Northern CA, UFCW Local 324 of Orange County, CA and Southern Los Angeles County**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **UFCW Local Unions Call on Regulators to Oppose Devastating Kroger-Albertsons Merger**

*Workers Highlighted Negative Impacts of Mega-Merger of Two Largest Standalone Grocers Ahead of Senate Judiciary Subcommittee Hearing*

Washington, DC – Local United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Unions – representing 100,000 Kroger and Albertsons workers in twelve states and the District of Columbia – came together today in Washington, D.C. to demand regulators halt the proposed merger between the country’s two largest grocery chains. The workers detailed the devastating impacts that will befall workers, suppliers such as farmers and ranchers, and consumers if the merger is approved by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

“Essential grocery workers have strongly opposed this proposed merger from day one because we knew it would cause stores to close, jobs to be lost, and prices to go up,” said Faye Guenther, President of UFCW Local 3000. “It’s clear after this hearing that Kroger and Albertsons have no plan on how to run this proposed mega-company and are just saying whatever they can to get it approved by the FTC without regard for the working families they employ and serve. We’re glad Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) convened this hearing to really dig into the impacts of the merger on our communities and hold the CEOs accountable for workers’ livelihoods.”

Frontline essential grocery workers [spoke out](#) before a [hearing by the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Competition Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights](#), where Senators scrutinized Kroger and Albertsons CEOs about the merger.

**Local UFCW grocery members present in DC shared the following:**

“In a few months, Hagen shut down. Thousands of my coworkers and I lost our jobs. I had to juggle two jobs: cleaning houses and waitressing to be able to pay my bills and feed my family,” said **Lugretzia Berg, a UFCW 770 member and a Vons (Albertsons) Front End Supervisor from Camarillo, California** whose store closed as part of the 2014 Albertsons-Vons merger. “We were all put on a waiting list to get our jobs back at Vons. We had to reapply for a new position. My coworkers were unemployed for a year or more and some never got their jobs back. Others came back at a lower wage rate and have never been able to recover the standard of living they had before that merger. We don’t want to go through the same devastating experience again.”

“I’m scared of what this merger will mean for me as a worker, and what happens to my job when hundreds and hundreds of local grocery stores are closed,” said **Andres Becerril, a Front-End Supervisor at King Soopers (Kroger) for 12 years and member of UFCW Local 7**. “But this is not just about me. The merger would create a ripple effect for potentially tens of thousands of grocery employees and their families: lost wages, lost benefits like hard earned pension plans, lost healthcare coverage, and higher grocery

prices. Our local suppliers, farmers and ranchers, who create jobs in Colorado and Wyoming, will also be hurt as this new mega company will control shelf prices with no competition. we call on the FTC to hear our concerns and stop the merger.”

“This merger is based on pure greed;I want the executives and Wall Street bankers who cooked it up to know how devastating it will be for both workers and customers,” said **Judy Wood, a cake decorator at Albertsons for 34 years and a member of UFCW Local 324.** “The stores are going to raise prices without consequence because they won’t face competition. Kroger will close down stores that are too close to one another, putting customers out of options and workers out of jobs. It’s estimated over 5700 workers could lose their jobs just in Southern California. So we need to do everything we can to fight this merger.”

“Over the last three years, we have lived through the COVID experience and me and co-workers have served our community and served our employers and provided essential services in a time of crisis. We have all helped make our stores run,” said **Naomi Oligario, a Front-End Checker at Safeway (Albertsons) for 37 years and a member of UFCW Local 3000.** “We are all concerned with this proposed merger and the \$4 Billion giveaway to rich shareholders instead of investing in us – the workers who helped make the profits. We need safer stores, our customers need lower prices, we need more competition – not less.”

"These private equity guys are not from the grocery industry. They have never worked in one of our stores. They do not know or care about our business – all they care about is making money for themselves,” said **Jane St. Louis, a Front-End Associate at Safeway (Albertsons) and a member of UFCW 400.** “And now, they are trying to give themselves a \$4 billion payday before this merger is even reviewed by the FTC. What does my future hold working for a company without any money? How will Safeway keep its promise to fund our pension? You can see why workers like me are worried.”

### **Background:**

From the first day the merger was announced, UFCW Local 5, UFCW Local 7, UFCW Local 324, UFCW Local 367, UFCW Local 400, UFCW Local 770, UFCW Local 1442, UFCW Local 3000 and Teamsters 38 have been taking action to intervene and stop this devastating deal.

Tuesday’s Senate Judiciary Subcommittee hearing is the latest in a series of ongoing efforts to scrutinize the proposed Kroger/Albertsons merger, along with an alarming, up to \$4 billion “special dividend” announced by Albertsons in connection with the merger agreement. In a letter to the Federal Trade Commission urging the agency to intervene, more than two dozen antitrust experts and local unions representing Albertsons’ workers decried the payout as “nothing less than an out-and-out looting of the company” and a brazen attempt to destabilize the company ahead of regulatory review of the merger.

Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson filed a lawsuit in state court seeking to stop the payout and a temporary restraining order was granted through December 9th until the matter can get a full hearing on antitrust grounds.

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*The UFCW is the largest private sector union in the United States. UFCW International represents 1.3 million professionals and their families in healthcare, grocery stores, meatpacking, food processing, retail shops and other industries. Our members serve our communities in all 50 states, Canada and Puerto Rico. Learn more about the UFCW at [ufcw.org](http://ufcw.org).*