



San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council

AFL-CIO

March 15, 2007

David Hirz
Ralph's Grocery Company
PO Box 54143
Los Angeles, CA 90544

Dear Mr. Hirz:

I cannot fathom why you would write to the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, a coalition of labor unions, seeking our support in your contract negotiations with the UFCW. This must have been a bureaucratic error by one of your support staff.

Nevertheless, your letter did raise some issues that deserve comment:

- Your employees and their families — the union employees who are represented by the UFCW — are indeed the reason for Ralphs' "longevity and success."
- You wrote: "With leadership comes responsibility." That's correct. But it raises this question: Did your company act responsibly when it unlawfully colluded with its competitors during the 2003-04 strike/lockout? Did your company behave responsibly when it hired locked-out workers under false names and Social Security numbers?
- You wrote: "Our people have opportunities for great careers with us." Under the two-tier system, this is no longer the case. Few employees who have been hired since the strike/lockout can make a career in the industry.
- You wrote: "Grocery retailing is a rewarding and challenging business. We don't just sell food — we are a part of our customers' daily lives." Your customers' positive experiences arise from the professionalism of UFCW members. Replacing that professional work force with poorly-compensated short-timers will erode, not enhance, the loyalty of your customers.

Kroger's quarterly profits increased 36 percent since last year. Fairness and common sense dictate that you share some of that success with the union members who, by your own admission, have been instrumental in that success.

By negotiating an agreement similar to the one signed by Stater Bros. and Gelson's, you can put your money where your mouth is. Eliminating the two-tier system will once again enable your employees to have "opportunities for great careers with us."

Do the right thing, Mr. Hirz. Sit down and negotiate a fair and equitable contract that rewards the very employees you credit for your company's success.

Sincerely,

Jerry Butkiewicz
Secretary-Treasurer

JERRY BUTKIEWICZ, *Secretary-Treasurer*

MICKEY KASPARIAN, *President*

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