Continuing the Fight for Women’s Rights!

January 2018

Highlighting
UFCW Women
Page 4

Recognizing Black Women’s & Latina Equal Pay Days Page 7-8
We Must All Be Silence Breakers

Rhonda C. Nelson
Women’s Network International Chair

I remember back in 1991 when Anita Hill accused Clarence Thomas, of sexual harassment. Thomas was previously her boss at the United States Department of Education and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and was now a Supreme Court nominee. My eyes were glued to the television and I wondered how the hearing would end. Her life was on full display. However, as with most accusers, the media portrayed him as the victim.

As we all know, the hearing ended with Clarence Thomas becoming a Supreme Court Justice. Yet, Ms. Hill’s testimony started a national movement that gave many women the courage to stand up and speak out. Many companies began posting notices about what to do if workers are sexually harassed, held anti-sexual harassment workshops and trainings, immediately investigated charges of sexual harassment, and disciplined people who violated sexual harassment policies.

The accusations against Harvey Weinstein, Bill Cosby, Bill O’Reilly, Roger Ailes, Mark Halprin, and yes, the sitting President of the United States to name a few, reveals that twenty-six years after Anita Hill’s testimony, sexual harassment is still very present in working women’s lives.

Every day, I open my newspaper or turn on my television or computer and read new headlines that someone is being accused of sexual harassment or speaking out in solidarity, as they too allege that they were also abused. Upon reading their stories, it becomes clear that many of these incidents took place in the years since Anita Hill testified. Until recently, many of these women were afraid to speak out. They were ashamed about the incident or afraid to lose their job. Instead of raising the allegations and facing potential hostility, these women quit because they assumed no one cared or was willing to listen. Or, they might have thought that their abuser was “untouchable” because he was too powerful within the company.

We commend these women for having the courage to speak out and tell their stories, and the companies and organizations that have gotten better at addressing sexual harassment complaints. However, there are still too many workplaces where a culture of sexual harassment exists in addition to the entertainment and news industries.

When does it end?

To place the responsibility of taking action solely on women is not fair nor the answer. Too many who are in positions of power are turning their heads when other men make off color remarks or jokes. They’re making excuses for others’ inappropriate behavior, sweeping things under the rug, or only react when the accused becomes a financial liability to the company. Let’s not wait for another twenty-six years, or until the next group of women make sexual harassment allegations, before the situation is addressed. It’s every company’s responsibility to provide a safe and hostile-free environment for their employees. It’s time for companies to put an end to the excuses and take action now!
On September 7, 2017 the UFCW Women’s Network Executive Board held a lobby day to meet with our Congressional Representatives in order to discuss issues that affect working women and our families. It also gave us an opportunity to educate a number of Members of Congress about the work that we do as a Union and the daily struggles our members face.

The first issue that we discussed included the impact of uncertain schedules on working families and students alike. We advocated for the “Schedules That Work Act,” which would establish national fair scheduling standards that will help hard-working men and women have more control over their lives, including advance notice and allowing for schedule changes in order to meet the needs of childcare, a second job, continuing education or medical visits. We know all too well that when workers do not know in advance when they are scheduled to work, or for how many hours, it can be nearly impossible to manage basic expenses, arrange for child care, and run a household on a daily basis.

We also advocated for The Paid Family Leave Act, which would create a national paid leave insurance program to provide workers up to 12 weeks of paid leave to care for a new child, help a family member with a serious health condition, address a personal health condition. Like with unpredictable schedules, many families find themselves making the difficult decision between caring for a loved one and going to work in order to make ends meet. This legislation would ease the burden on working women and men who are caring for children, spouses or elderly parents.

The last issue we spoke to Members of Congress about was the DREAM Act. This particular piece of legislation was incredibly timely as only a few days earlier President Trump announced that he would be ending DACA. The DREAM Act would protect young people who immigrated to this country as children the opportunity to attend college and work without the constant fear of deportation. The DREAM Act is important to many UFCW members, but also makes sense as for many DREAMers as the United States is really the only country they have ever known.

It was a very successful lobby day for the Women’s Network and many of the Representatives and Senators we spoke to were very receptive and supportive of our agenda. We’d also like to extend a huge thank you to the UFCW Legislative and Political Department who coordinated the scheduled meetings with our respective members of Congress and their staff.
In Her Own Words
Denise Anderson, UFCW Local 367
Member, Activist and Council Member!

I have been a member of UFCW Local 367 for 16 years. I first started as a Deli Clerk at Swanson’s Foods in Aberdeen, WA and after 4 months I was promoted to Meat Wrapper. I also was a Meat Cutter for about a year during my Swanson’s career (where I spent 15 years in total). I have been with Safeway for one year now.

In my family we have a history of being Union, my Dad was a longshoreman with ILWU in Aberdeen for about 25 years, before retiring. I became a union activist when I really thought about the great benefits and rights we have as union members, all of which were handed down to us by previous union members. It became important to me that we preserve them and build upon them.

One of those benefits that specifically impacted me was our great medical plan. I had only been a member for two years when I got extremely sick and had to have emergency surgery. I was well taken care of at all levels of the healthcare that I needed. I felt it was because of the great medical benefits that my union negotiated for us. I also was able to use the sick leave benefit to help out financially. Another factor was the wages I was making, and knowing that I had progression steps towards making even better wages in the future.

But the main reason I became active was when our local Walmart was going to be remodeled into a Super Walmart. I felt it would be disastrous for our Union shops in the area as the potential loss of good union jobs to low wage low benefit jobs would be inevitable.

My decision to run for office was also because of the same reason I became a union activist; the expansion of our local Walmart. It was disappointing and frustrating that the sale of the property to Walmart was kept secret until it was a done deal. Through reading and research I was able to understand how that could happen, but also how it could be prevented in the future: by having a seat at the table. So, I ran for City Council in Hoquiam, Washington and WON!

I learned that through ordinances and legislation, the potential devastation of local small businesses by large corporations could be minimized. Ordinances could be proposed and enacted to help boost the quality of life of the workers and residents in our cities and counties. Yes, my Union played a big part in this because they have been at the forefront fighting for not only union jobs, but for the rights of all workers. I learned of the time and money our local union spent on fighting the initial building of this very same Walmart back in the 1990’s, and of the impact the Walmart has had on the business community and economy since then.

Being an activist & an office holder, I had to overcome a few obstacles. For myself, I’m not very outspoken, so I tend to do more listening than speaking. My best advice is to form opinions for yourself, and learn how to best communicate your opinions. Do not take everything personal because you cannot make everyone happy! Get to know your strengths and weaknesses and be honest with yourself about them. Step out of your comfort zone because you never know what you can accomplish for others until you do.

I really would like to continue in politics. I am continuing to learn about legislation and would like to make a positive difference in the quality of life for other people. I also would like to be able to inspire others to step up and find that one thing that would drive them to make a difference.

My inspiration comes from my heroes. For me, anyone who has fought for the rights of others, and those who continue to do so now are heroes. Anyone who takes a stand for what is right is a hero! Our military members, civil rights activists, LGBTQ activists, labor activists; that’s who I admire and would consider a hero.

For UFCW Local 367, I would love to see our union grow in strength and numbers. I’d like for the hard work of our staff and representatives to be recognized by the members they serve. Another thing I’d really like to see happen would be for the history of our union be taught to the new members coming in. I think it would help for them to understand how they came by the benefits they will soon be seeing as union members. I would also like membership to know how much good unions do in the neighborhoods we work in.
Jodi Spurgin

**UFCW Local 21 Member**
**Working at Holy Family Hospital**

Jodi Spurgin is a workplace leader at Holy Family Hospital. Five of her co-workers came to her saying they were not being paid the rest between shift premium (their contract states, you are allowed 12 hours rest before starting your next shift or you will be paid an additional premium for those hours worked). Management fought and retaliated against the workers by making scheduling more difficult. Jodi, with the help of the union and her co-workers, stood up and fought back. They received back pay for the premiums they were shorted, proper premium pay moving forward and HR helped them get a group together to talk about scheduling. By standing together they got the pay they deserve and an improved schedule that allows for better work/life balance.

Amran Ibrahim

**UFCW Local 21 Member**
**Working at Hudson News Company**

After a number of workers at WhidbeyHealth had gone weeks without receiving responses to their calls and emails about FMLA requests, receiving their raises, and a restructure in the Diagnostic Imaging department, workers decided to take action. The members, including Amran Ibrahim (pictured right), came together and organized a march on Human Resources to demand answers. As a result, members had their FMLA requests approved, got their contractual raises, and have set up a series of meetings to discuss concerns in their department. By working together and standing up for their rights the workers at WhidbeyHealth got their voices heard.
UFCW Canada’s 16 Days Of Action Campaign in support of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

On December 17, 1999, the United Nations declared November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This annual day of observance calls us to act against the global and endemic nature of violence against women and girls. Violence against women is a human rights violation. It stems from discrimination and impedes progress and growth at every level of society. It physically and emotionally wounds women and girls, families and communities – and extends across race, class, socio-economic status, gender identity and religion.

Representing over 250,000 members across Canada, more than half of whom are women, at UFCW Canada we continue to advance health, safety, and protections against violence at UFCW-organized workplaces. We also support the work of organizations at every level of governance who focus on supporting women and girls who experience violence, and work to eliminate the systemic nature of gender-based violence.

This year, we encourage you to follow UFCW Canada on Facebook, Twitter, and our website (ufcw.ca) to find out more on how to work together to eliminate violence against women.

16 days of Activism to End Gender-based Violence will be featured on the UFCW Canada Facebook page from November 25 (The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women), up until to December 10 (the International Human Rights Day). Each day will feature a message regarding a Violence Against Women issue – packed with information, which is activism-focused.

For more information about the work of UFCW Canada’s Women and Gender Equity Committee, check out www.ufcw.ca/women.
Congratulations to Our Very Own, Kathy Finn!

We are so pleased to announce the promotion of Kathy Finn to the position of Secretary-Treasurer at her union, UFCW Local 770 (based in Los Angeles, California)!

Kathy has been with UFCW since 1997, serving as former Director of Collective Bargaining, Research and Education. She also serves on the Women’s Network Executive Board as Co-Chair of the Collective Bargaining Committee.

Kathy is very passionate about her members and ensuring that they have strong contracts that protect their rights and benefits. She is more than deserving of the recognition and the responsibility of her new position. Best wishes for your continued success in your new role!

Understanding Gender Based Violence and Workplace Harassment at the Packing House and Food Processing Chain Meeting

At the UFCW Packing House and Food Processing Chain Meeting that occurred in Omaha, Nebraska over the course of several days in November, the UFCW Women’s Network was invited to participate in a panel titled “Gender Based Violence.” The panel was comprised of Lois Honeycutt-Taylor from UFCW Local 431, Laura Kelly from UFCW Local 655, and Belinda Thielen from the UFCW International’s Health & Safety Department. The three women shared personal stories of discrimination and harassment they’ve witnessed inside and outside of the workplace. They also discussed domestic violence and the impact it has on the workplace for both the victim and her/his coworkers. The panelists also proposed the question of how the UFCW can best support our members who may be victims of domestic violence or workplace harassment, as well as samples of contract language Locals can use in their negotiations that address these important issues.
Black Women’s Equal Pay Day

As you may know, Black Women’s Equal Pay Day is on July 31st. Observed each year, this day marks the day when Black women’s pay finally catches up to the pay of White, non-Hispanic men from the previous year. While Equal Pay Day for all women is in April, Black women – who are paid only 63₵ on the $1 paid to White men, must work 19 months to be paid what White men are paid in 12. Over a lifetime, this gap robs them and their families more than $800,000. Many factors contribute to the gap, some unlawful, some just unfair, but they all must be addressed and corrected if America is to fulfill its promise of equal opportunity for all. Here are some UFCW women’s thoughts on the gender pay gap and why it’s important to recognize Black Women’s Equal Pay Day.
Although Latinas make substantial contributions to the U.S. economy, they have the largest wage gap; typically earning only 54 cents for every dollar earned by White, non-Hispanic men. This wage gap means that Latinas must work more than 22 months to earn what White men earn in 12 months. This disparity in pay hurts not only Latinas, but also has a significant impact on the families and communities they support. On November 2nd, UFCW women highlighted why they and their colleagues have earned equal pay and stood in solidarity with other Latinas who all too often get left behind financially.
Supporting Children in Need with Katie’s Kids

On September 27, 2017 UFCW Local 99 Women’s Network (based in Arizona) held their 5th Annual Bowl-a-thon to raise money for backpacks and school supplies. The event was sponsored by UFCW members, other members of the labor movement, community partners, and elected officials. 1,000 backpacks full of school supplies were distributed to school children in need at Local 99’s office.

This year, Local 99 named the backpack drive, “Katie’s Kids” in memory of Katie Fannon, who served as the Executive Secretary to Local 99’s President Jim McLaughlin and passed away in June after a long-term illness. Katie was a true trailblazer who believed deeply in the value of education. She also helped administer Local 99’s backpack drive and scholarships programs. Katie is truly missed!

UFCW Women Making Strides Against Breast Cancer!

October 28, 2017, UFCW Local 99’s Women’s Network participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer in Phoenix, Arizona. Over 20,000 people participated the walk, which benefits the American Cancer Society and raises money for breast cancer research. Unfortunately, cancer does not discriminate and the only way we can put an end to it is by raising awareness!

Thank you to the members of Local 99 for making a difference!
**2018 UFCW Women’s Network Membership Application**

☐ NEW APPLICATION  ☐ RENEWAL

Name: _____________________________________________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________________________________________
City: _____________________________________ State/Province: ____________________________
Zip/Postal Code: ___________________________
UFCW Local No.: __________________________ Occupation: _______________________________
Work Location: ____________________________ Home Phone: ______________________________
Work Phone: ______________________________ E-Mail Address: ____________________________

Active membership, open to all UFCW members in good standing, includes voting rights in Network activities. Associate membership, open to those who aren’t active members but support the goals and purpose of the Network, is open to all other supporters, including former members, retirees, and members of other unions. Women’s Network membership renewals are due each January.

Active Member
☐ Regular member - $25 for one year
☐ Regular member - $70 for three years*
☐ Contributing member - $50 for one year
☐ Sustaining member - $100 for one year
☐ Retired member - $10 for one year
☐ Lifetime member - $350 one-time payment

Associate Member
☐ Associate member - $25 for one year
☐ Associate member - $70 for three years*

*Members wishing to pay for three years may do so at reduced rates

Please attach your check made out to **UFCW Women’s Network** to this form and return to:
UFCW Women’s Network
425 Merrick Avenue
Westbury, NY 11590
ATTN: Rhonda Nelson

THANK YOU!
Name: _____________________________________________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________________________________________
City: _____________________________________ State/Province: ____________________________
Zip/Postal Code: ___________________________
UFCW Local No.: __________________________
Title: ______________________________
Phone: ______________________________  E-Mail Address: ____________________________

Sponsorship Level
☐ Bronze - $250
☐ Silver - $500
☐ Gold - $1,000
☐ Platinum - $1,500
☐ Diamond - $2,000

Please attach your check made out to UFCW Women’s Network to this form and return to:
UFCW Women’s Network
425 Merrick Avenue
Westbury, NY 11590
ATTN: Rhonda Nelson

THANK YOU!