



NEWS FROM

Teamsters Local Union 117

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UNFI UNLAWFULLY MOVES TO PERMANENTLY REPLACE 72 EMPLOYEES; STRIKE RESUMES

***72 Warehouse Workers Told that They Will Be Permanently Replaced After 3-Day Strike;
Workers Return to Picket Line; Union Files New Unfair Labor Practice Charges with the NLRB***

(Tukwila, WA) – United Natural Foods, Inc. (UNFI) announced today that it would permanently replace 72 warehouse workers who were prepared to return to work after a three-day strike. UNFI had accepted the workers' good-faith unconditional offer to return to work, but subsequently rescinded that commitment.

As a result of UNFI's unlawful actions, workers returned to the picket line at 9PM Thursday evening after a meeting at the Teamsters building in Tukwila.

"UNFI misrepresented its position regarding its workers' good-faith offer to return to work. The company's action to replace its employees is retaliatory, unlawful and frankly despicable," said Tracey A. Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 117.

163 drivers and warehouse workers, employed at UNFI, went on an unfair labor practice strike on Monday, December 10. Under federal labor law, workers on an unfair labor practice strike cannot be permanently replaced by their employer.

When UNFI employees arrived at the company's facility in Auburn to report to work today, however, they were told by security officers that "they were not on the list." The Union later learned through UNFI's attorney of the company's intent to permanently replace 72 of its employees.

"UNFI is refusing to uphold its side of the agreement. We committed to take down the picket lines and UNFI pledged to accept our offer to return to work. Now they are telling us that 72 workers are out of a job right before the holidays. It's a disgrace," said Robert Jurey, a 13-year warehouse worker with UNFI.

Teamsters Local 117, the Union that represents the workers, filed new unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB today over the permanent replacement issue. The NLRB is currently investigating UNFI for 45 additional violations of federal labor law.

