

One United Voice

By **DAVID COOK**
President



COOK

Last week, more than 2,000 of you carpooled, organized busses, found babysitters, and rearranged your schedules so you could come to the Family Arena in St. Charles. Some of you stood in long lines, patiently shuffling through the doors and registering with our volunteers. Some of you sat with us for hours, listened intently, and talked to your coworkers.

And then, 89 percent of you spoke together with a single voice, and you rejected the contract proposal from Schnucks. You cast those votes knowing it meant authorizing a potential strike. You cast those votes knowing it could result in long days standing on a picket line holding signs and not collecting a regular paycheck. You cast those votes knowing it could mean your brothers and sisters at Local 655 working at Shop 'n Save or Dierbergs could be locked out of their store by their employer. You knew the risks. But you voted that way anyway.

Let me share a little information regarding the attendance of the meeting. I had some members say they were disappointed that just under half the 4,700 members showed up to vote. Let me clarify that for those that are disappointed. Of the 2500 that were not able to attend less than 600 have worked for Schnucks for more than three years. Putting that in perspective 88 percent of the workers with over three years of experience showed up (unheard of with today's busy lives) and of those, 89 percent voted to reject the proposal. I would say that the attendance was not good it was GREAT!

First, I want to say, from the bottom of my heart, how proud I am of all of you. For coming, for reading, for listening, for bringing co-workers, renting busses, and making arrangements to spend an evening away from home. It is no small thing in our busy lives to find the time to come to St. Charles and pour over a complex contract surrounded by more than 2,000 fellow Union members. And, it is no

small thing to stand up to your Employer and say "I have sacrificed enough."

Your vote should send a crystal clear message to Schnucks: this contract was absolutely unacceptable. This is the message I will take back to negotiations with Schnucks when I tell them that they now have a responsibility to put a contract proposal on the table showing that they value the work you do for them.

There are so many problems with this proposal, we could fill this entire page with its flaws, and we wouldn't have enough room. This proposal would force everyone to see their health benefits go down or be eliminated entirely. It would eliminate full-time jobs, erode seniority rights, and doesn't even give you raises that keep up with the cost of living.

It is disappointing that all three Companies have been less than honest with you, their employees, about negotiations and the proposal. They gave you letters and built websites to tell you how wonderful the proposal is. Their actions are reminiscent of the old snake-oil salesman trying to sell you something that isn't what it is pitched to be. Shame on them. They should know better than that.

On our website, we have posted the entire proposal, in full, for the world to see. We have included brief explanations under each proposal pointing out the good, the bad, and the irrelevant. You can review it in its entirety at www.ufcw655.org.

It is sad that in 2016 we're still forced to have to fight and scrap just to get hard-working families a fair deal. It's sad that in 2016 we still have to convince people that a company that did \$2.7 billion in revenue in 2015 can afford to give their employees a real raise. It's sad that in 2016 we have to fight just to keep your benefits intact.

But I promise you: we are ready to fight. We know a strike is a significant burden. We know how hard it is on our members. A strike is not our goal. It is not what we want. But if it is what must be done to force Schnucks to treat their employees with respect and give them the contract they've earned by making their employer successful, then so be it.

We will continue to go to bat for you. We will continue to exercise every option to bargain a fair contract for you. But most importantly: we will continue to work for you.



**AN EXCLUSIVE
TWICE MONTHLY
REPORT FOR**

UNION PROUD

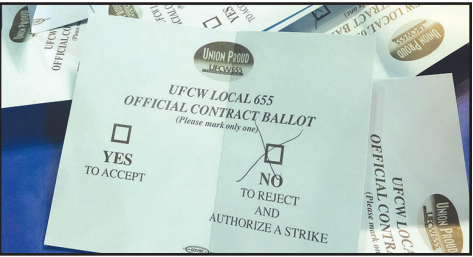
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**UFCW 655
MEMBERS &
THEIR FAMILIES**

www.ufcw655.com



Thousands of Schnucks employees came to the Family Arena in St. Charles on Monday, September 26, to vote on whether to accept the contract proposal from Schnucks or reject it and authorize a strike. Members voted to reject and authorize a strike by a massive 89 percent, and sent a clear message that the proposal was unacceptable.



Shop 'n Save, Dierbergs partners, keeping close eye on Schnucks contract

Local 655 continues to urge Shop 'n Save and Dierbergs partners to keep a close eye on the progress of negotiations with Schnucks. This is not just because they could potentially be locked out of their workplace if Schnucks employees strike. Negotiations with Schnucks, the largest employer by far of Local 655 members, will have an economic impact on ALL members of the Union.

If Schnucks doesn't offer to maintain health benefits by increasing their contributions to the Local 655 Health & Welfare Fund, benefits would have to be reduced for ALL Local 655 members.

Because Shop 'n Save and Dierbergs say they will sign the same economic language that Schnucks eventually agrees to with Local 655, Schnucks' wage rates, pension contributions, health care contribution, raises, bonuses, and more will be applied virtually word-for-word to Shop 'n Save and Dierbergs employees.

Local 655 is prepared to negotiate separate economic packages with all three companies to prevent one company from driving the other two toward a potential job action like a strike or a lockout, but so far those companies have declined that offer.

"I would strongly encourage anyone in Local 655, but in particular Shop 'n Save and Dierbergs employees, to keep up-to-date on the status of contract negotiations with Schnucks," said UFCW Local 655 President, David Cook. "We'll use every single tool in our belt of communications to keep you informed, but you also need to take the initiative and be engaged with those tools."

Cook encourages every one of his members to 'Like' the Local 655 Facebook page at [Facebook.com/Local655](https://www.facebook.com/Local655). You can find us on Twitter at @UFCW655. You can also sign up for our texting program, the fastest, most efficient way to quickly release information to members. All you have to do is text "Join" to 738-674 to sign up. Leadership also asks everyone to check the Local 655 website at ufcw655.org for all the latest information

Share Your Pride: Share this page in your break room.