



MARK A. ESPINOSA  
President

UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS UNION

**L O C A L 9 1 9**

U.F.C.W.

6 Hyde Road • Farmington, Connecticut 06032-2802 • Tel. 860-677-9333

Outside Local Dialing Area 1-800-842-2215

[www.ufcw919.org](http://www.ufcw919.org)



JASON DOKLA  
Secretary-Treasurer

**October, 2021**

As your Union Leadership and Union Representatives visit the membership, one common complaint comes up more than any other; Wage Compression. Have you heard about wage compression? Wage compression refers to the situation where there is only a small difference, or in some cases no difference, in pay between employees regardless of their skills, experience or seniority due to the rapid increase of the State of Connecticut Minimum Wage. Understandably, Union members that have been working for their employer for 5, 7, and in some cases 10 years, find that they are now making as much as the new hire walking in the door. Wage compression causes low morale and increased employee turnover. Your frustration and your voice is heard, but let's take a closer look.

Just a few years ago, the CT minimum wage was \$10.10 per hour. Beginning October 2019, it went to \$11, September 2020 to \$12, and in August 2021 it went to \$13 per hour. In July of 2022 it will be \$14 and finally in 2023 it will reach \$15 per hour. Currently, there is no legislation to push it beyond \$15. Your Union, and your respective employer negotiate annual, and in some cases, bi-annual wage increases on your behalf. Your Union nor your Employer have any control over the minimum wage increases. However, we must work together, cooperatively and creatively to address the wage compression issue. For those of you who work at Stop & Shop when bargaining had ceased and the contract was ratified, there had yet to be any increases signed into law. In early 2019, we heard that pending legislation centered on increased minimum wages, but neither party knew when or how much. That is why the current contract, expiring in February 2022, had only one "compression bump" in March of 2020 to attempt to increase senior wages prior to any increase in CT's minimum wage. As we prepare for upcoming negotiations with Stop & Shop, Bob's Furniture, Burlington and Zara, we must find creative means to increase the wages of senior employees and separate the wage gap with new employees such as wage scales by years of service. This issue will be addressed, and you will have final say of its acceptance.

Compensation however, is not just about an hourly wage. Remember, with seniority comes many other guaranteed benefits that the new hire will need to wait to earn. New hires generally do not qualify for a one-year raise, they do not earn premium pay on Sundays, vacation pay, personal days, sick leave or holiday pay until at least a year. New hires must wait to vest in your pension and wait to potentially qualify for insurance. Seniority is an important part of being a Union member. Your seniority is usually based on your hire date. Most often, seniority relates to job postings, overtime, and layoffs. Often, overtime will be offered by seniority as well.

Your Union Leadership understands this is a very important issue to our membership. If we all work together, share ideas rather than criticize, we can work to reverse wage compression. All it takes is money.....your employers' money! Solidarity works! It is ALWAYS better to have a seat at the table otherwise you may be on the menu. Stay safe.....and stay informed.

Faternally,

Jason Dokla

Secretary-Treasurer

*Over 70 Years of Services To Its Members and The Community*

# **UFCW** **LOCAL 919**

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

## **UNTIL FUTHER NOTICE**

Meetings will be held on the  
Local's Face Book Live Page.

**Meetings start promptly at 6 PM**

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### **MEETING NOTICE**

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**Monday, March 22, 2021**

**Monday, June 28, 2021**

### **FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

#### **DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT YOUR UNION OFFICE.**

If you have a problem pertaining to your job or any  
problems where you feel your Union Office can help.

<u>PHONE CALLS</u>	<u>LOCAL</u>	<u>LONG DISTANCE</u>
Union Office.....	860-677-9333 .....	1-800-842-2215

#### **Health & Welfare and Pension Office**

Health & Welfare.....	860-470-8551 .....	1-888-750-1092
Pension Office .....	860-677-8671 .....	1-800-842-2214
Credit Union .....		1-877-696-3876

www.ufcw919.org ..... union@ufcw919.org



## **Strong. Healthy. Together.**

Providing you the security and  
peace of mind that comes from  
high-quality benefits and service.

### **Questions?**

#### **Connect with us:**

860-470-8551

888-705-1092 (toll-free)

[ufcwnewenglandhealthfund.com](http://ufcwnewenglandhealthfund.com)

#### **UFCW New England Health Fund Office**

290 Post Road West  
Westport, CT 06880-4703

## **IN PERSON STARTS**

# **UFCW** **LOCAL 919**

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**



### **DOUBLE TREE by Hilton**

42 Century Dr.,  
Bristol, CT 06010  
7:00 P.M.



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### **MEETING NOTICE**

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**JULY & AUGUST - NO MEETING**

**Monday, September 27, 2021**

**Monday, December 27, 2021**

*Over 70 Years of Services To Its Members and The Community*



# Legislative Update

## State Senator Jorge Cabrera

Brothers and sisters, it is my honor to serve you as a Business Representative for our Local. As some of you may know, I was elected to the Connecticut General Assembly this past fall 2020 serving district 17<sup>th</sup> which encompasses the towns of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bethany, Derby, Hamden, Naugatuck and Woodbridge. Many of you supported me and I truly appreciate it. I am one of only two current union members serving in the State Senate and the only UFCW member.

This past legislative session was very productive and we invested a record amount of funding towards Education, Health Care, Voting Rights, the Environment and making our Economy fairer and more competitive. On the budget front we passed a bi-partisan two-year budget totaling \$42.46 billion: \$20.8 billion in 2022 and \$21.66 billion in 2023. Despite severe pressure on our state's finances, we managed to keep our budget focused on what matters, and maxed out our Rainy Day Fund (the states emergency savings account) which currently tops over \$3 billion. Additionally, our fiscal discipline will allow us to pay more than \$1 billion to pay down our unfunded legacy debt saving taxpayers millions of dollars in the coming years. Additionally, we received a total of \$2.8 billion in American Rescue Funds from the federal government which enables us to help families and communities hurt by the coronavirus pandemic.

I also worked collaboratively with my colleagues to make sure that our historic cannabis bill included strong provisions (known as Labor Peace Agreements) to allow workers to join a union without interference from their employer. As the cannabis industry grows in Connecticut, I fought hard to make sure the rules of this new market protected workers rights to collectively bargain for good pay and benefits. We also passed new laws to strengthen prevailing wages in the construction industry and helped public sector unions protect their members.

As always, it is my pleasure and honor to represent you and I look forward to continuing the struggle for workers' rights in the Connecticut State Senate.

In Solidarity,

Senator Jorge Cabrera



# The UFCW Free College Benefit Just Got Better!



## Associate Degree Certificate Programs NEW! Bachelor Program

For more info: <https://www.ufcwfreecollege.org/degree-programs/>

LEARN MORE AT [UNIONPLUS.ORG/AUTO](https://unionplus.org/auto)

### EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS FOR UNION FAMILIES

#### CAR RENTAL DISCOUNTS

Save up to  
**25%**

Plus, look for added savings  
like free upgrades and special weekly  
or weekend rates.

AGENCY	DISCOUNT CODE	PHONE
Avis	B723700	1-800-698-5685
Budget	V816100	1-800-455-2848
Dollar	3042236	1-800-800-4000
Hertz	205666	1-800-654-2200
Payless	A071900	1-800-729-5377
Thrifty	3042238	1-800-847-4389

[unionplus.org/auto](https://unionplus.org/auto)

#### AUTO INSURANCE PROGRAM

Participating members save on average

**\$507**

a year, when they switch to Union Plus  
Auto Insurance\*

Get a FREE Online Quote!

\*Savings based on MetLife Auto & Home\* 2016 countrywide research  
of new call center customers' annual average savings in 2015.

[unionplus.org/auto](https://unionplus.org/auto)

#### TIRES AND CAR SERVICE

**Save 10%** off car service  
and new Goodyear tires

Includes auto maintenance, auto parts and new Goodyear tires.

**Save 5%** off Goodyear  
sale tires

Purchase at company-owned Goodyear and Just Tires stores.

Print coupon online and bring to participating stores.

[unionplus.org/auto](https://unionplus.org/auto)

#### AUTO BUYING PROGRAM

**\$100** rebate when you purchase a new,  
qualifying union-made vehicle

**\$200** rebate when you purchase a new  
qualifying, union-made, EPA  
Green Car

With TrueCar auto buying service, you get a  
better buying experience and rebates. Use the  
service to find a fair price for the vehicle you want.

No hassles or negotiation.

[unionplus.org/auto](https://unionplus.org/auto)

#### ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

**Receive  
\$40** in gas rebate vouchers  
when signing up  
for initial one year  
of service

Get 24/7 roadside assistance  
for just \$69 a year for all drivers  
in your household.

[unionplus.org/auto](https://unionplus.org/auto)

# Discipline and Discharge Grievances: *The First Meeting*

## -WEINGARTEN RIGHTS -

### KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK –

#### *Ask for Union Representation If You Are Being Questioned*

Did you know that you have the right to have a Shop Steward or other Union Representative present if you are being questioned by your employer and what you say could lead to discipline?

Especially in closed-door meetings, supervisors, security guards of “loss prevention officers” who have been trained in interrogation techniques will try to scare employees or force them to confess to wrongdoing.

The U.S. Supreme Court has said that employees have the right to have a Union Representative present when the employer or its agents are questioning them to get information that could be used to discipline or terminate them, or when employees are asked to defend their conduct.

This is one of the most important functions Shop Stewards serve – to prevent threats and intimidation by management. But this right, known as “Weingarten Rights,” is not automatic – you have to ask for it, and the employer does not have to tell you that you have this right.

#### *Here is what you should know and what you should do:*

1. If you are being asked, or you think that you will be asked, questions that could lead to discipline, ask to have a Union Representative present. It is against the law for the employer to punish you for asking for this.
2. You should say, “If this interview could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I request that my Union Representative or Shop Steward be present. I choose not to answer any questions until my Union Representative is present.”

#### *Once you make this request, the employer can do any of the following:*

1. Grant your request and delay questioning until the Shop Steward/Union Representative is present and has a chance to consult privately with you.
2. Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or
3. Give you the choice to either have the interview continue without the Shop Steward/Union Representative – **but never choose this option** – or end the interview.

Remember, if the employer continues the interview without the Shop Steward/Union Representative being present, you do not have to answer any questions. **While you cannot get up and leave the meeting, the employer cannot discipline you for refusing to answer questions under these circumstances.** If the employer does that, it is breaking the law.

But if you do not ask for the Shop Steward/Union Representative, the employer has the right to go ahead with the interview and use any information it gets in any way it seems fit.

Once the Shop Steward/Union Representative is present, here is what she/he can and cannot do during the interview:

#### Abilities of Shop Stewards When Involved in Another Employee's Interview Because of Weingarten Rights

Shop Stewards <u>MAY</u>	Shop Stewards <u>MAY NOT</u>
✓ Speak in the interview and give employees active assistance	✗ Turn the interview into an adversary contest
✓ Be informed by the supervisor of the interview's subject matter	✗ Attempt to bargain during the interview
✓ Take the employee aside for a private conference before the interview begins	✗ Interrupt the employee from speaking during the interview
✓ Request the supervisor clarify his/her questions	✗ Prevent the employee from answering questions, if he/she chooses to do so
✓ Interrupt a question to get more clarity	✗ Prevent the employer from clarifying or rephrasing questions
✓ Advise the employee on how to answer a question ✓ Advise to refuse to answer a question because it is too abusive ✓ Advise to refrain from answering a question until it is clarified ✓ Remind employees of their defenses	
✓ Provide additional information to the employer at the end of the interview	

The next time you are called to the office and questioned about something that could lead to discipline, don't forget to exercise your Weingarten rights and ask to have a Shop Steward or Union Representative present.



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*“Dedicated to Serving Its Members and the Community for Over 70 Years”*

Local 919  
It doesn't cost - It pays to belong to

C-126

Return Service Requested



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WHEN YOU MOVE ...  
Please Notify Your Local  
Union Immediately

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