



<https://doloreshuerta.org/>

Celebrating Dolores Huerta Day!

Labor Organizing: Organizing and Social Class

Thanks to support from:



Photo courtesy Special Collections, University Library, University of California Santa Cruz.

No notes

One-Day Lesson Goals

- Students will be introduced to Dolores Huerta's activism and Dolores Huerta Day
- Students will understand policy context that led to labor organizing actions and the resulting laws
- Students will be introduced to the United Farm Workers and the Delano Grape Strike and Boycott
- Students will examine the power of labor organizing and consider current day examples
- Students will be introduced to concept of class struggle and connect this theory to current labor structures in the United States

No notes

Introduction to Dolores Huerta

And Dolores Huerta Day
on April 10th

Are you familiar with Dolores Huerta?

Write down anything and everything that you know about Dolores Huerta

No notes

Who is Dolores Huerta?

Brief Background:

- Born in April 10, 1930 in Dawson, New Mexico
- Active in numerous school clubs
- Was a majorette
- Dedicated member of the Girl Scouts until the age of 18.
- Continued her education at the University of Pacific's Delta College in Stockton earning a provisional teaching credential.
- While teaching she could no longer bear to see her students come to school with empty stomachs and bare feet, and thus began her lifelong journey of working to correct economic injustice.
- Dolores left for delano from stockton in 1962
- Mother of 11



Photo credit: Kathy Murphy, used with permission.

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Who is Dolores Huerta?

What She Saw

- Segregation
- Discrimination
- Poor Social conditions of Farmworkers
- Poor economic conditions of farm workers

What She Did

- Quit teaching to fight farmworker oppression
- 1955 stockton chapter of Community Service Organization (CSO) with Fred Ross
- 1960 Started Agricultural Workers of America (AWA)
- Voter registration Drives
- Lobbied politicians to allow non-US citizens to receive public assistance, pensions, and Spanish ballots, Spanish driving tests



Photo Credit: Dolores Huerta Foundation, photographer Angela Torres.

notes Photo Credit Angela Torres



Who is Dolores Huerta?

Choose 1-2 videos to share:

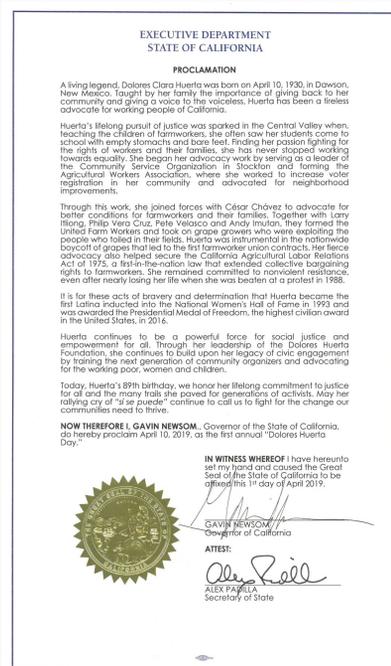
- [Hispanic Heritage: Who is Labor Activist Dolores Huerta?](#)
- [Portrait in Minute: Dolores Huerta](#)
- [Chicago Tonight: Latino Voices](#)

Celebrating Dolores Huerta Day!

- April 10th (Dolores Huerta's birthday)
- Established in 2019 in California
- Recognition of lifelong pursuit of justice



About image: used by the State of California to recognize the day. Graphic designer unknown.



Read proclamation: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2019/04/10/dolores-huerta-day/>

United Farm Workers (UFW) 1962 - Present



March to Sacramento, Cesar Chavez to the right. Photo credit © George Ballis, courtesy of UC Merced Library Archives, used with permission.

Point out that the Farm Worker movement was happening at the exact same time as many other social justice movements mentioned before yet is one of the lesser known movements.

Cesar Chavez at the Delano UFW rally in Delano, California, June 1974. Credit: Joel Levine, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cesar_chavez3.jpg

Dolores Huerta and the UFW

Right: September 24, 1965, Dolores Huerta on the Grape Strike picket line in Delano, California. Photo by Harvey Richards (© Paul Richards, Estuary Press).



Photo Credit:
Dolores Huerta
Foundation,
photographer
Angela Torres.

¡Si se puede!

- Most students will say Cesar Chavez is the activist they mostly or only associate with the Farm Worker Movement.
- Use this slide to connect how and why Dolores Huerta is given less credit for the United Farm Workers movement.
- Tell students that the phrase “Si Se Puede”, came from Dolores, not Cesar Chavez.

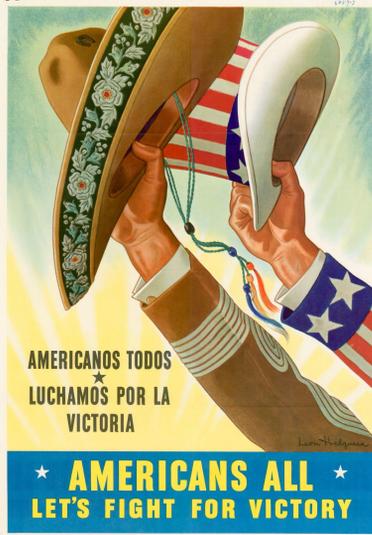
Rise of Labor Unions

- 1930s - Tremendous labor union gains due to pro-union stance of the Roosevelt administration and from legislation enacted by Congress during the early **New Deal**
- 1933 - **The National Industrial Recovery Act** provided for collective bargaining
- 1935 - **National Labor Relations Act** (aka **the Wagner Act**) required businesses to bargain in good faith with any union supported by the majority of their employees

[Labor Unions and the New Deal](#)

[The Wagner Act of 1935 \(National Labor Relations Act\)](#)

American Farm Labor and the Bracero Program



Credit: Helguera, Leon. Americans all, let's fight for victory: Americanos todos, luchamos por la victoria., poster, 1943; Washington D.C. Public Domain.

- Labor shortage during World War II
- Bracero Program allowed Mexicans to work temporarily on U.S. Farms
- Program officially ended in 1964

Mexican Workers Wanted in October

Farmers and orchardists in Washington state have placed orders for approximately 8000 imported Mexican workers for the month of October, according to reports sent to

Figure 14. A description of the demand for Mexican laborers (Source: Northwest Farm News, September 9, 1943).



Right: The first Braceros arriving in Los Angeles, CA by train in 1942. Credit: Dorothea Lange, working for the US Government., Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

[A Brief History of American Farm labor](#)

California became a major agricultural center after the Civil War. There, farm labor was mostly imported from Asia. By the 1930s, the immigrant labor force had begun to shift to Mexico, and during the World War II labor shortage the Bracero Program was initiated, which allowed Mexicans to work temporarily on U.S. farms. The program was ended in 1964, although Latin American immigrants—legal and illegal—continue to make up the vast majority of the U.S. agricultural workforce.

Poster credit: Helguera, Leon. Americans all, let's fight for victory : Americanos todos, luchamos por la victoria., poster, 1943; Washington D.C..

(<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc426/>; accessed April 15, 2025), University of North Texas Libraries, UNT Digital Library, <https://digital.library.unt.edu/>; crediting UNT Libraries Government Documents Department. <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc426/>

Photo credit: Dorothea Lange, working for the US Government., Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BraceroProgram.jpg>

United Farm Workers Union

- First genuine collective bargaining agreement between farm workers and growers in the history of the continental United States (1966 Schenley vineyards)
- The first union contracts requiring rest periods, toilets in the fields, clean drinking water, hand washing facilities, protective clothing against pesticide exposure, banning pesticide spraying while workers are in the fields, outlawing DDT and other dangerous pesticides, lengthening pesticide re-entry periods beyond state and federal standards, and requiring the testing of farm workers on a regular basis to monitor for pesticide exposure.

United Farm Workers Union

- The first union contracts regulating safety and sanitary conditions in farm labor camps, banning discrimination in employment and sexual harassment of women workers.
- The first union contracts providing for profit sharing and parental leave.
- Abolishing the infamous short-handled hoe that crippled generations of farm workers and extending to farm workers state coverage under unemployment, disability and workers' compensation, as well as amnesty rights for immigrants and public assistance for farm workers.
- The first union contracts eliminating farm labor contractors and guaranteeing farm workers seniority rights and job security.

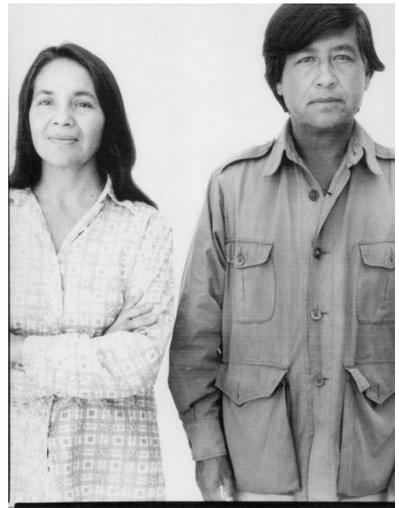


Photo credit: Richard Avedon; courtesy of Dolores Huerta Foundation, used with permission.

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Farmworker supports provided by UFW

- Health Benefits (RFK Medical Plan)
- Pension Plans (Juan De La Cruz)
- Life insurance
- 1st credit union of farmworkers
- Cooperative stores
- Immigration Paperwork
- Income Taxes



Credit: El Malcriado, © United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, used with permission.

- The image is an article highlighting the credit union established by the United Farm Workers, a first for farm workers
- The list is of supports offered by UFW to farmworkers

Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to be an organizer? A labor organizer?
 - What are examples of labor organizing in our current time?
 - What kind of power does labor organizing have?
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United Farm Workers

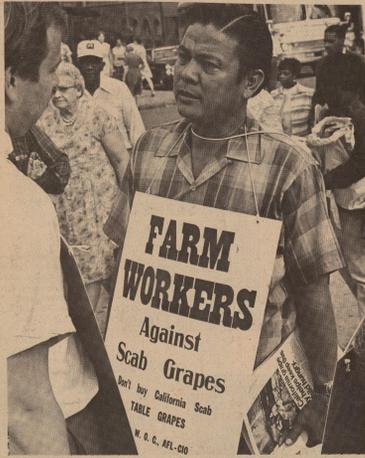


Photo credit: Victor Aleman, used with permission.

- 1962: Dolores Huerta founded NFWA with Cesar Chavez later to be renamed to UFW in 1965.
- 1963: First lobbying and negotiating victory by adding Farmworkers to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children ("AFDC") program, for the unemployed and underemployed, and disability insurance for farm workers in the State of California.

- Point out that the NFWA landed a huge victory within the first year of its foundation.

The Delano Grape Strike and Boycott



In September, 1965, over 4,000 grape pickers in the vineyards around Delano, California went on strike, when their employers refused to pay a living wage, sign a union contract, or recognize the workers' union. Soon after, over 10000 workers have joined in that strike. For four long years, these farm workers, led by Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, have struggled heroically for social and economic justice. Here is our story.

1965 grape boycott



Left: "The Delano Grape Strike and Boycott" 1970

This pamphlet published by the United Farm Workers (UFW) union publicized and sought support for a boycott of non-union table grapes. The pamphlet asks consumers to look for the iconic UFW union label before buying grapes.

Source: National Archives, Records of the U.S. House of Representatives

- Name it: this is one main example of Resistance against Agribusiness
- Make connection that AWOC came out of AWA which was formed by Dolores prior to co-founding the NFWA
- [Delano Grape Strike](#)
- [Dolores Huerta Speaks at Delano Grape Strike 50th Anniversary](#)

1965 grape boycott

- 5 year strike
 - Boycotts
 - Rallies
 - Marches
 - Non-violent resistance
 - Women and children more than ever on picket lines after seeing Dolores and Helen Chavez out there
 - 17 million people stopped eating grapes
 - Support from Europe and Canada

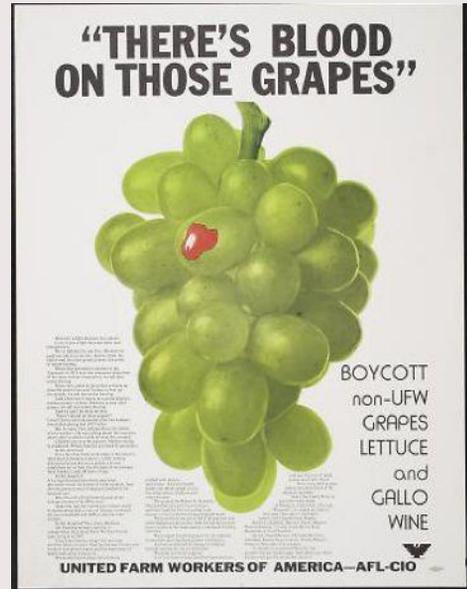


Image Credit: El Malcriado, © United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, used with permission.

- Point out the ways in which the UFW and the public resisted.

While this was happening...

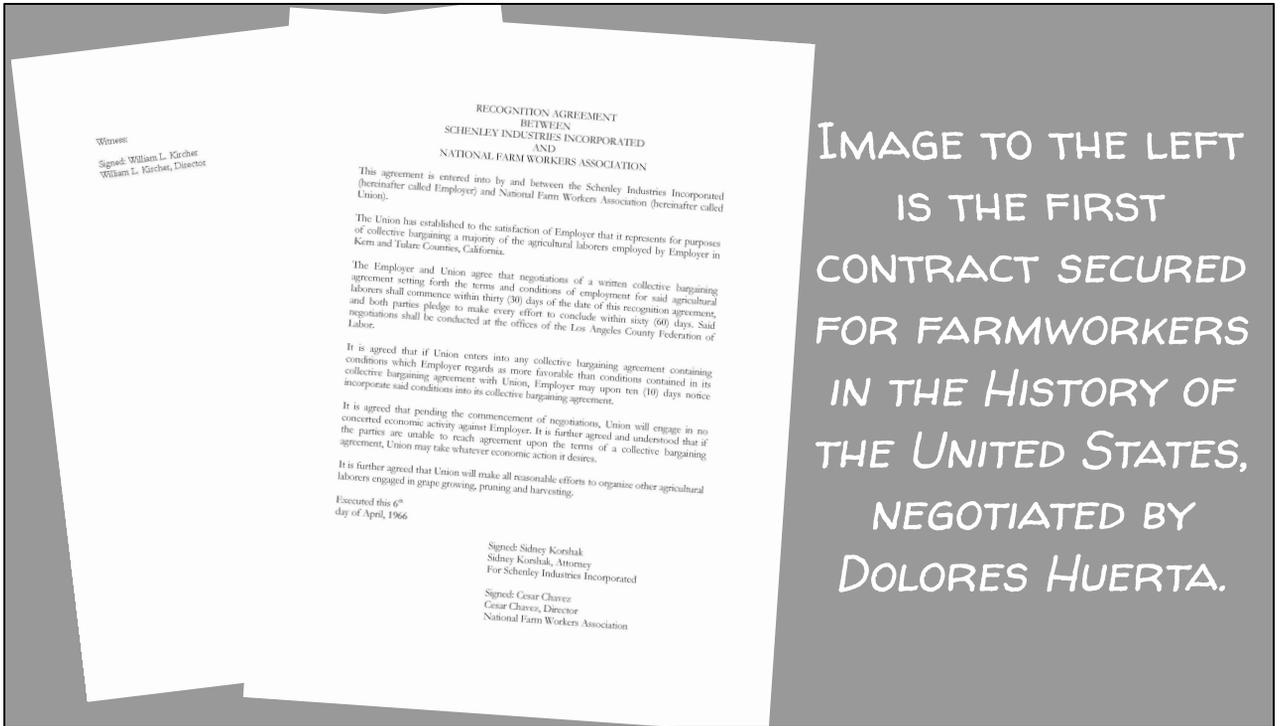
March on Sacramento 1966

(still part of 1965 - 1970 grape boycott)

Source: Harvey Richards, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#),
via Wikimedia Commons



- Talk about the importance of the infamous 25-day, 340-mile march to Sacramento, but while that was happening, Dolores was still working behind the scenes with a major grower in California.
- <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/marching-for-justice-in-the-fields.htm>



- Emphasize that while a major march was taking place, Dolores landed the first contract with a major grower, Schenley Vineyards.

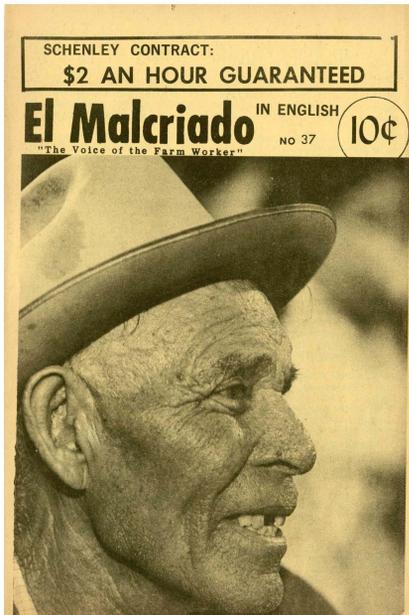


Image Credit: El Malcriado, © United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, used with permission.

At a time when minimum wage was \$1.25 an hour nationally, the contract guaranteed:

- ❖ Between \$2.00 - \$3.50 depending on position
- ❖ Workers voted and decided on \$8-\$12 per ton of wine grapes depending on the field
- ❖ That Schenley would fire all contractors who cheat workers
- ❖ 6 paid holidays
 - Time and half if did work on holiday
 - 50% more working 48 hours in a week
- ❖ 3 days for funerals and sick days
- ❖ Schenley would pay for tools, equipment and clothing for sprayers
- ❖ A health and Welfare plan

- Highlights from article out of El Malcriado, the unofficial newspaper of the UFW and another form of resistance.
- More info on El Malcriado [here](#).



THE SCHENLEY CONTRACT!

The first week in June, 1966, is an historic week for farm workers. For the first time in history, a major grower signs a contract with the National Farm Workers Association. For the first time in history, farm workers are protected by a written contract guaranteeing a wage of not less than \$2 an hour. For the first time in history, the farm workers are protected by a union. Here is what that protection means:

The F. W. A. demands that Schenley industries pay all farm workers at least \$2 an hour, guaranteed throughout the year. Irrigators will get \$2.25 an hour. Tractor drivers will get \$2.50 an hour. Sprayers, truck drivers, and pipe men will get \$2.75 an hour. Mechanics will get \$3 an hour. Swappers, who load boxes on the trucks, will get 9¢ a box for a crew of four. The crew leaders will get 25¢ above what the crew is receiving on an hourly basis.

In the pruning season, pruning by hand will pay \$2.50 per hour plus a bonus of \$1.50 per row in cane and \$1 per row in spur pruning. (A row is 80 vines.) Pruning by machine will pay \$3.50 per hour plus a bonus of \$1 per row.

The Schenley workers were not sure how they wanted to be paid for the wine grapes (for gondolas). At first they wanted \$4 an hour guaranteed, plus \$1 per ton for the grapes picked. But then the workers voted to ask for a straight piece rate of \$8, \$10, or \$12 per ton picked, depending on the field and picking. BUT IT WAS THE WORKERS THEMSELVES WHO DECIDED WHAT THE WAGES WOULD BE!

Wages are only a part of the story. Schenley will fire all its contractors (including Frank Herrera) and promise not to use any more contractors who cheat the workers. Instead, the union will set up a hiring hall. Schenley will call up the union and say, "We need 3 crews, 60 workers this week" and the union will send over the workers needed. Everyone who works at Schenley's will be protected by the union.

The workers will get six paid vacations. They get the day off but they still get paid the same wage as if they had worked. The vacations are Mexican Independence Day (Sept. 16), Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year, and Fourth of July. If they do work on these days, they get their wage plus a 50% bonus. They also get 50% extra wages for all the time they work over 48 hours per week.

Workers will be allowed 3 days off (with pay) for funerals of members of their families, and days off (with pay) when they are sick.

Schenley will pay for all tools and equipment used by the workers, and will also pay for special clothing for sprayers.

Still to be worked out is the special "Health and Welfare Plan" to provide medical insurance and pensions for the workers.

But wages, vacations, and pensions are still only part of the story. For at last the worker, protected by the union, can work with dignity and pride. No boss, contractor, or crew leader can treat these workers like animals, insult them or look down on them. The boss can't fire the worker just because the boss doesn't like him. And the bosses know that if they are unfair to any worker, or try to shove anybody around, they will have the whole union to deal with.



HOW TO END A STRIKE: Schenley officials sat down at this table with leaders of the Farm Workers Association and workers from Schenley's Ranch to work out a contract. Left to right are: Gil Padilla, Dolores Huerta, Alex Hoffmann (lawyer) and Cesar Chavez, leaders of the FWA; Bill Basset and Bill Kircher of the AFL-CIO; Sidney Korshack, high official of Schenley Industries; and five members of the Farm Workers Association who are now workers at Schenley Ranch near Delano, Srs. Alviso, Ariola, Garza, Sanchez, and Jordan.

EL MALCRIADO SAYS: VIVA SCHENLEY INDUSTRIES, which have the good sense to recognize the Farm Workers Association and sign a fair contract. And VIVA CESAR CHAVEZ, and the ASSOCIATION, and the STRIKERS, who won this great victory. The 250 years of feudal agriculture and grower tyranny in California are ending, and the campesino is winning his long struggle for justice.

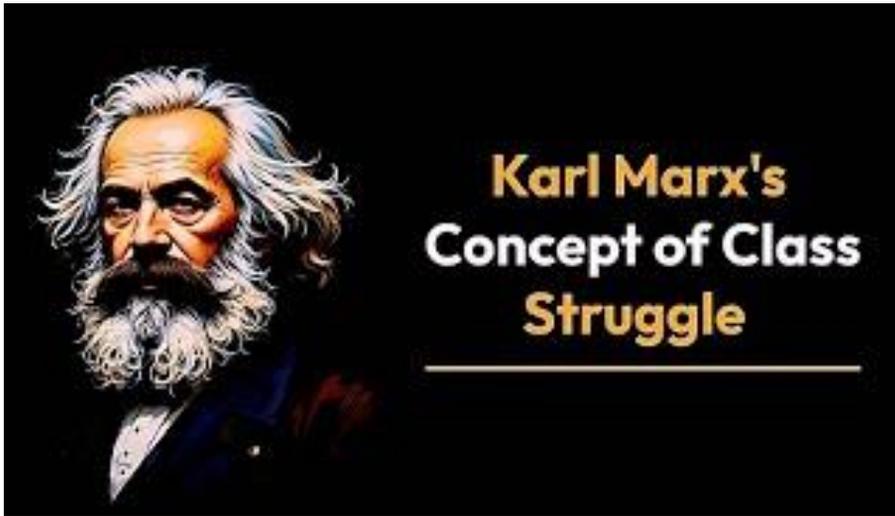
Schenley Industries, Inc.

Image Credit: El Malcriado, © United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, used with permission.

- This is the official article in the June 1966 issue of El Malcriado.
- Notice Dolores and Cesar are at the table, but are hard to see in the picture.

What is the
relationship between
labor organizing and
social class?

Consider making this more about [class struggle unionism](#) by Joe Burns rather than social reproduction theory, focus on capitalism? On correspondence theory only?



Karl Marx: Class Struggle

First 3 minutes most important at defining concept of class struggle



Proletariat and Bourgeoisie

Society is divided into two classes: the proletariat (working) class and the bourgeoisie (ruling class).



Exploitation of Labor

Capitalists exploit workers by extracting surplus value from their labor.



Class Conflict

The inherent tensions between classes lead to social conflict.



Revolution and Change

The struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie will lead to revolutionary change.

Class Struggle Explained

This image includes land-owners which you don't necessarily have to go into

What do you labor unions have to do with this?

Power of the people

- When working class people join together to make demands, they increase their power against the bosses

Strike and boycotts as powerful tools

- Refusing to produce profit for the bosses (by withholding labor or striking) is key to wielding this power by stopping production
- Boycotts withhold profits of a product (after it has already been produced) and allow for participation outside the union

No notes

Community Engagement: ¡Sí Se Puede!

How can you be involved??

- Research local/national labor union activity and consider ways to participate
 - Boycotting
 - Protesting
 - Calling/writing letters of support to elected officials
 - More!



Photo Credit: Victor Aleman, used with permission.

[Five calls app](#) - Identifies local representatives, provides scripts for calling reps and bringing attention to relevant current issues

[Find your Congress members](#)