



## Supermarkets

# Ten thousand Kroger-owned grocery store workers strike in Colorado

Two-week strike begins as union for King Soopers alleges surveillance of workers and pushes to gut health benefits

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Ten thousand workers at [Kroger-owned](#) King Soopers grocery stores in Colorado begin a two-week unfair labor practice strike on Thursday.

The union, United Food and Commercial Workers local 7, whose contract expired last month, voted 96% in favor of authorizing the strike.

Unfair labor practice charges [filed](#) against the company by the union include allegations of interrogating workers about bargaining, surveilling workers, threats of discipline for wearing union pins or clothing, pushes to gut retiree health benefits, and refusing to furnish information.

The workers last [went on strike](#) in January 2022. That strike is at the center of a lawsuit against Kroger and rival grocery chain Albertsons filed by the Colorado attorney general Phil Weiser in November [alleging](#) the chains colluded an illegal no-poach agreement to undercut the leverage of the strike.

The strike comes after a proposed merger of Kroger and Albertsons was [blocked](#) in federal court in December.

“Being as understaffed as we are, it’s forcing a lot of people in different departments to race around. They’re doing the work of three to four people. In my department, I get pulled to go to other departments to do the work that needs to be done in those departments,” said Chris Lacey, a service manager at King Soopers in Littleton, [Colorado](#).

“They’re not addressing our staffing concerns, they won’t talk to us about staffing, and they won’t give us the information so that we can appropriately give them our staffing concerns.”

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He also criticized workers not being allowed to wear union pins, when they are allowed to wear pins with their favorite team or bands on them.

“Our wages don’t reflect the amount of work that we do for this company. It’s

astronomically unfair for us that we aren't valued," he added. "We are doing this to get better staffing in our stores, better wages for our employees, and ultimately, to get better stores for our customers. Our customers deserve better stores. They deserve a larger staff to handle the needs that they have on a day-to-day basis, and that's what we're fighting for."

The union said they have been in new contract negotiations with the company since October, and are holding strikes for two weeks to publicize their concerns for the contract and give the company time to address these issues.

"We urge local 7 to reconsider their approach and prioritize the best interests of our associates, their members, and the communities they serve. It is time to put aside their unreasonable demands, false rhetoric and headline-seeking tactics, and work towards a fair and timely resolution that increases associates pay while keeping groceries affordable," said Joe Kelley, president of King Soopers, in a statement shared by email.

"We want to make a fair investment in our union associates and this work stoppage only further delays adding more money to their paychecks."

King Soopers also disputed the unfair labor practice allegations, and claimed the company "prioritizes staffing".

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