

Letter from Costco worker to rank-and-file meeting: “The working class is primed and ready for mobilization, it is now on us to act”

A Costco worker
25 February 2025

The following statement was written by a founding member of the Costco Workers Rank-and-File Committee (CWRFC) to be read at Sunday’s public meeting called by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, “Mobilize the working class to save the US Postal Service and other federal programs!”

The CWRFC was founded earlier this month to oppose a new sellout contract brought by the Teamsters for 18,000 workers. In its founding statement, it urged workers to reject the deal, and called on workers to “take the fight out of [the union bureaucracy’s] hands and build a mass movement independent of the union bureaucracy and both corporate-controlled parties.

To join or contact the CWRFC, email TeamstersRFC@gmail.com or fill out the form at the bottom of this article.

Hello everybody, I wanted to address you all to briefly speak about the kind of America we can anticipate under the Trump administration, particularly concerning my own industry—the retail industry. I am a ten year employee of Costco, a company that many in America see not only as a bastion for fair and trustworthy business practices, but as an employer that has historically treated their labor force with respect and fair treatment.

I originally planned on speaking to you all verbally, but due to a recent expansion of my department’s operating hours, for no other reason than corporate greed, I am forced to prepare myself to work this Sunday earlier than usual.

I am fortunate to say that my warehouse has the privilege of being one of the few warehouses that was formerly unionized by Price Club before being acquired

by Costco decades ago. However, I am sad to say that our warehouse representation by Teamsters has completely crippled union involvement to the point of stagnation and exploitation by Costco’s corporate elite.

At the beginning of February it was announced by Teamsters leadership that a tentative agreement was struck between the bargaining committee, a body composed of “rank-and-file” members hand-selected by Trump apologist and Union General President Sean O’Brien, and Costco’s corporate leadership.

In this agreement, along with your standard “no strike clause” that limits the mobilization of employees to conduct a strike or even participate in general strikes, are a variety of pay increases that the union has labeled as “big wins.” These increases include 50 cent raises across the board. If you are tenured enough to have reached the “top-of-scale” pay rate (reserved for those who have accumulated hours worked averaging 5-8 years of continuous employment), you are given a whole dollar raise. These raises will compound yearly for three years, totalling a \$1.50 increase for most, and a \$3 increase for top-of-scale employees.

Many of you will recall articles that came out a few weeks ago celebrating Costco’s dedication to upholding their current DEI policies, as well as praising their willingness to raise their top-of-scale pay rate company wide to \$30.

While on the surface this may seem like a benevolent move by Costco’s corporate leadership, to those that work at Costco in unionized warehouses, this is a clear case of corporate propaganda designed to cripple Teamsters ability to negotiate for a worthwhile contract for its 18,000 Costco employees by manipulating the public into pro-corporate sentiment before Teamsters

had an opportunity to mobilize their workers and call for a strike.

The tentative agreement that Teamsters agreed to is almost no better than the benefits bestowed to the rest of Costco's non-union warehouses. A pay raise to \$30 an hour is currently only 0.80 cents higher than what the top-of-scale union employees are already making (\$29.20). This amounts to a three percent raise annually for three years, totaling 10 percent by 2027.

This is not enough, as a majority of Union warehouses reside in large and expensive metropolitan cities who have already been crippled by inflation and cost of living increases. My own city of Los Angeles, according to the Consumer Price Index, has already seen a cost of living increase of over 20% since our last contract was agreed to and signed in January of 2022.

Teamsters' willingness to celebrate this contract as a win is the kind of nonsense and apathy that you can expect from the union bureaucracy under the Trump administration, that has already crippled our ability to fight for workers rights by gutting the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). It is now on us, the rank and file members of our unions, to organize in spite of unions like Teamsters' unwillingness to effectively organize and inform their working members.

Over the last couple weeks, with the help of our brothers and sisters at the *World Socialist Web Site*, I have been able to start disseminating information, planting the seeds of opposition for our terrible contract—and from what I can tell this is working.

Over the last several days I have probed some 50 of my workers on their thoughts on our current contract, their feelings towards Teamsters and how they have handled this negotiation, as well as their willingness to organize in spite of Teamsters to increase union activity, workers rights literacy, and overall participation. The response has been incredibly encouraging, as a large majority of those I spoke to voiced their willingness to vote 'NO' on the contract and their desire to do more to change their influence on Teamsters as a whole.

I am now in the process of organizing these members into a uniform body of Rank-and-File workers that will hopefully become large enough to influence the outcome of our battle against both the Teamsters Bureaucracy and their unwillingness to fight for their workers against oppression and poor working

conditions, as well as the Trump administration's actions to cripple the working class' ability to fight against fascism.

The working class is primed and ready for mobilization, it is now on us to act. The vast majority of the people in this country are working class, and are tired of struggling under a status quo that is getting worse and worse by the minute. With action and proper messaging we can tap into the majority of people's distaste for neoliberal oppression and organize a force that can and will revolutionize the current system of economic inequality and oppression.

Thank you for your time and your solidarity.



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