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Gummi Bear Employer Leaves a Bad Taste in its Workers' Mouths

Des Plaines, IL – Workers at Albanese Confectionary, Inc., the maker of Gummi Bears, are organizing to be represented by Local 881 United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). Opposed to the Union drive, Albanese owners and management have cracked down on its workers. In response, Local 881 has charged Albanese at the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) with committing numerous violations of federal labor law and has asked the NLRB to seek an injunction in federal court against Albanese.

The unfair labor practices committed by Albanese are intended to intimidate and discourage the Albanese workers from exercising their federal right to organize. A brief description of the charges filed by Local 881 is as follows:

- The mass discharge of workers and crackdown on worker discipline in retaliation for the workers' organizing activity;
- Making threats to close the plant if the workers organized;
- Threatening workers by interrogating them and threatening to reduce their wages and benefits;
- Installing security cameras to monitor the workers' organizing activity, instituting locker-checks and increasing pocket and body searches to intimidate workers; and
- Prohibiting the workers from discussing organizing activities.

Please visit http://www.local881ufcw.org/pdfs/press/04172018_Charges.pdf for a complete list of unfair labor practice charges filed against Albanese by Local 881.

In February, workers at Albanese decided to unionize to improve their working conditions. Among the many workplace issues at Albanese that have been ignored are health and safety, low wages, and favoritism. The workers are tired of the broken promises from the owner to address and fix these issues and decided to reach out to Local 881 to help them organize and improve their working conditions.

"Structure, competitive scale, and accountability, as employees of Albanese Confectionery, this is what we crave," said Josh Davis, an Albanese Production Department worker. "These simple things not only guarantee you the world's best candy, but also the world's best employer."

"While seeking a better life for their families, through the power of a Union contract, these workers are facing threats, being bullied, and having their rights violated by their company," said Ron Powell, Local 881 President and UFCW International Vice President. "We are committed to stand with the workers of Albanese Confectionary in their fight to have a voice in their workplace and to ensure that their rights and dignity are respected."

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Local 881 UFCW represents 34,000 members employed in retail food and drug stores throughout Illinois and Northwest Indiana, as well as a professional division comprised of health and nursing home workers, barbers and cosmetologists, and workers in other retail and service industries. Among the companies under contract with Local 881 are Jewel Food Stores, Osco Drug, Mariano's Fresh Market, CVS Pharmacy, Kroger, Schnucks, Pinnacle Foods, and many smaller chains and independent stores, as well as nursing homes and other business establishments. Local 881 is among the largest affiliates of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, which represents 1.3 million members in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.