

**For Immediate Release**  
 November 2, 2021

## **Curaleaf Dispensary Workers Want a Voice in their Workplace!**

*Curaleaf Mokena workers voted to join Local 881 UFCW, the union for cannabis workers in Illinois.*

**Mokena, IL** - On November 2, 2021 cannabis workers at the Curaleaf dispensary in Mokena won their union representation election and will join Local 881 of the United Food and Commercial Workers, the union for cannabis workers in Illinois. Curaleaf, one of the largest multi-state cannabis companies, currently operates 10 dispensaries in Illinois.

“Nearly a year into legalization, cannabis workers across Illinois are starting to see the underbelly of working in the industry. Dispensary workers report low wages, lack of benefits, significant scheduling issues, favoritism, and union-busting,” said Steve Powell, Local 881 UFCW President. “Although the cannabis products and environment seem progressive and cutting edge, **the cannabis industry business methods are direct from the old school big corporation playbook, doing all they can to make a buck, while squeezing their employees.** The cannabis industry needs to be held accountable for how they treat their workers, and the best way to do that is for cannabis workers to join Local 881!”

The National Labor Relations Board will certify the results of the election in seven days barring objections. **Curaleaf Mokena dispensary workers voted 19-3 to join Local 881 UFCW.** A wave of Curaleaf workers in Illinois are voting to join Local 881’s Cannabis Union to bring improvements to their dispensaries. Just last week on October 20<sup>th</sup>, workers at the Curaleaf in Worth, IL voted overwhelmingly to join Local 881 in their Union Representation Election. Later this month, Curaleaf workers at the dispensary in Skokie, will also have their opportunity to join Local 881.

“I work for one of the one of the largest cannabis companies in the United States yet make about the same wage as an Amazon worker. **Our CEO buys a \$14 million dollar mansion in Florida, while denying his workers a living wage.** This industry is new and growing and I believe it is important for us to protect the workers, the backbone of this industry by unionizing our workplaces,” said Patrick Vinson, Patient Care Specialist, Curaleaf Mokena. “I can say from the bottom of my heart that I believe every dispensary, cultivation site and processing facility should be unionizing for proper wage increases and benefits as this industry continues to boom. **Today my coworkers and I from Curaleaf Mokena came together to make sure we have just as much of a voice about our workplace as the shareholders do.** Union Strong!”

Local 881 is proud to be the first and only Union to negotiate Cannabis contracts in Illinois with Cresco Labs in Joliet and with the Sunnyside Dispensary in Chicago (Lakeview). Local 881 has been successful in negotiating wage increases, more paid leave, increased employee product discount, a robust grievance procedure, and stronger protection language for cannabis workers. Local 881 is committed to ensuring that the cannabis industry lives up to the promises it made to the communities when it lobbied for their support for legalization. For more information about the fight to improve the Cannabis industry in Illinois, visit:

[ILcannabisworkersunited.org](http://ILcannabisworkersunited.org)

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*Local 881 UFCW represents 34,000 members employed in retail food and drug stores throughout Illinois and Northwest Indiana, cannabis workers in Illinois, 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, CVS Pharmacy, Kroger, Cresco, Sunnyside, Schnucks, Conagra Brands, 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.*