

CHICAGO TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 25



NEWS»

TEAMSTERS PROTEST U.S. FOODSERVICE'S LOBBYING EFFORTS **Rosemont-Based Firm Fighting to Weaken Food Safety Laws**

The Teamsters sent a strong message about U.S. Foodservice at the annual Southwest Foodservice Expo on June 29, highlighting the company's hypocrisy of claiming ethics and integrity while lobbying against stronger food safety regulations.

During the Expo, a 4.5-foot-by-5-foot banner, reading "U.S. Foodservice Serves Misery" and tied to two large balloon bouquets, floated to the ceiling of the Dallas Convention Center, sending the message loud and clear.

Robert Aiken, chief executive of U.S. Foodservice, is a director of the International Foodservice Distributors Association, which has publicly opposed the Safe Food Act. It has objected to measures like mandatory recall authority and an expansion of U.S. Food and Drug Administration inspections. It has described expanded regulatory authority as "the greatest danger."

The Teamsters also raised awareness about the plight of thousands of workers across the country who work at U.S. Foodservice.

Over the past 10 years, U.S. Foodservice has been cited 128 times by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for health and safety violations in the workplace, and more recently, by Region 28 of the National Labor Relations Board for almost 200 violations of U.S. labor laws. The Teamsters Union represents 4,000 workers at 26 U.S. Foodservice distribution centers.

When U.S. Foodservice helps to weaken food safety laws in the United States, consumers will choose to eat at home and the entire industry will suffer. This leads to further demands by U.S. Foodservice and other companies for weaker pay and benefit provisions in Teamster contracts.

U.S. Foodservice, based in Rosemont, Ill., is owned by private equity firms Kohlberg, Kravis Roberts & Co. (KKR) and Clayton Dubilier & Rice Inc. (CD&R), and is one of the largest food distributors in the United States. U.S. Foodservice supplies food to millions around the country, including the U.S. Defense Department and the U.S. Veterans Affairs Department.