

Workers who clean Lunds & Byerly's rally for safety and job security

Written by

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On Tuesday February 8th, retail cleaning workers with CTUL (Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha) and their allies marched and called on Lunds & Byerly's to communicate with workers regarding serious safety concerns that have been reported in their stores, and the abrupt firing of about 12 workers that cleaned their stores. CTUL's rally was held outside the Lunds & Byerly's headquarters 4100 W. 50th St in Edina. From there, the rally marched to the Lund's Grocery Store at 3945 W. 50th St.

The rally follows a March for Justice in Retail Cleaning, three months ago that was attended by over 300 workers and allies. CTUL spokespersons said they are organizing to end human rights violations taking place in the cleaning of large retail stores across the Twin Cities. They want to establish Codes of Conduct with retail chains to ensure fair wages and working conditions for workers who clean their stores.

Most workers who clean Lunds & Byerly's stores work for National Floor Maintenance. For several months, these workers have organized to improve wages, working conditions, and specifically call for an investigation of a National Maintenance supervisor who amongst other complaints has been accused of sexual harassment. At least one female employee has expressed concerns about working alone with this supervisor, given his reputation. Six weeks after reporting these concerns, National Maintenance has refused to respond. Workers approached Lunds & Byerly's to inform them of the danger they felt that every woman working and shopping within their stores faced as long as this supervisor was not investigated. Again, workers were ignored.

During their night shift on Sunday February 7th, 12 workers who clean four Lunds & Byerly's stores, were informed that it was their last night of work. Workers were told that Lunds & Byerly's had changed contracts and would be bringing in Carlson Building Maintenance to clean those stores.

Carlson Building Maintenance also has a history of human rights violations in the Twin Cities, CTUL said in a press release. Workers in the Twin Cities who clean Cub Foods and are employed by Carlson Building Maintenance will be filing charges with the U.S. Department of Labor for unpaid wages in the next couple of weeks.

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CTUL said there is a widespread increase of human rights violations in the retail cleaning industry. The organization said it is calling on Lunds & Byerly's to play a leadership role in addressing these types of abuses by establishing a Code of Conduct ensuring fair wages and working conditions for workers who clean their stores, regardless of which cleaning company they work for.