

Unions and Employers On The Move in 2022



LABOR DAY PARADE RETURNS

The first post-pandemic Labor Day Parade filled Manhattan's Fifth Avenue with thousands of working people from dozens of unions on September 10th. Organized by the NYC Central Labor Council, the march was led by Grand Marshal Marty Walsh, U.S. Secretary of Labor, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond, NY State Commissioner of Labor Roberta Reardon, Governor Kathy Hochul and Mayor Eric Adams.



STARBUCKS

On October 26th, workers at Starbucks huge Manhattan Roastery on 9th Avenue staged a walkout over health and safety conditions. According to the striking workers, the building was infested with bed bugs and equipment was covered with mold. Employees at the city's "showcase" Roastery, across the street from tourist-packed Chelsea Market, voted to join Starbucks Workers United (SEIU) in April 2022. On Oct. 3rd, they won an NLRB-brokered agreement that management remove retaliatory disciplinary charges from pro-union workers' files.¹

The NLRB has issued nearly two dozen official complaints against Starbucks over 81 allegations of labor law violations, including multiple firings of union activists. Since the union won its first Starbucks election in Buffalo in December 2021, almost 250 stores nationwide -- of which seven are in NYC and three on Long Island -- have now voted for union representation. But none have so far won a first collective bargaining contract with the company. With some 6,000 locations across the U.S., the company has mounted fierce resistance to unionization efforts.



TRADER JOE'S

Growing union organizing at New York-area Trader Joe's stores has so far been less successful. On August 11th, days before workers say they planned to file for a union election at its flagship Union Square wine shop, the company abruptly closed the store with no advance notice.² The store was the company's only wine shop in all of New York City. But management claimed it was strictly a business decision unrelated to ongoing union organizing. Such store closures have also been used by Starbucks, Wal-Mart and other companies fending off union activism. Two months later in Brooklyn, the company succeeded in beating UFCW in a union election at the Williamsburg Trader Joe's. Across the country so far this year, unions have won elections in just two stores: one in Hadley, Massachusetts, the other in Minneapolis.

NOTES:

- ¹ "Starbucks Settles Labor Board Charges at New York Roastery," Bloomberg Daily Labor Report (10/03/2022).
- ² "Trader Joe's shuttered NYC wine store to snuff out union drive, workers say," Irina Ivanova, CBS Moneywatch (8/19/2022).