



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 29, 2021

Contact: James Araby, Director of Strategic Campaigns, (510) 599-0488

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

Join labor and elected leaders on Wednesday, June 30th at 9am at 4811 Geary Blvd, San Francisco to hear from recently re-instated cannabis worker Jo Billups.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - Jordan (Jo) Billups, a budtender at a cannabis dispensary, is being reinstated by order of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), after being fired illegally for union activity. Beginning in the fall of 2020, workers at the dispensary began to organize a union with UFCW Local 5. Jo was a leader of the effort to organize the union. After recognizing workers were organizing, Urbana management began to run an anti-union campaign. In January 2021, despite federal protections guaranteed under the National Labor Relations Act, and local mandates guaranteeing "labor peace", Urbana management fired Jo Billups.

Jo Billups, decided to fight their firing and worked with UFCW Local 5 to file charges at the NLRB and because of these efforts, the NLRB issued an order on Wednesday, June 9, 2021, compelling Urbana to reinstate Joe Billups to work, pay them nearly \$15,000 in backpay for lost wages and post, where workers can see, that the company was at fault and that it is workers' federally protected rights to organize a union.

On Tuesday June 22, 2021, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution brought forward by Supervisor Chan celebrating Jo's win and their courage in the face of illegal anti-union activity by their employer. This Wednesday, as Jo returns to work, UFCW Local 5, the San Francisco Labor Council, labor leaders from the Bay Area, and Supervisor Chan will stand in solidarity with them and present Jo with a Proclamation commending their fight against workplace retaliation and strengthening the voice of their co-workers inside the dispensary.

This situation also makes clear that we need to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act in Congress. Under current law, the penalties against employers who illegally fire or retaliate against workers who are trying to form a union are a drop in the bucket. As a result, employers routinely retaliate against pro-union workers, because they know it will undermine the organizing campaign and they will face no real consequences. To them, it's simply the cost of doing business. Although Jo was reinstated, most workers face severe retaliation and termination, and usually do not get their jobs back.

For the first time in modern history, however, we have the chance to turn this around. The PRO Act would hold employers accountable and institute civil penalties for violations of the law, including back pay and damages. The PRO Act would put the decision of whether or not to form a union back where it belongs—in the hands of workers, free from employer interference.

Jo is a shining example of what it means to be a leader amongst their peers, and what it takes to win when you have bad management. Urbana is an example of the incumbent cannabis industry in San Francisco which believes they still not need follow the law.

"I am happy that after six months of fighting my case at the NLRB, that Urbana management has to respect the rights of workers and by my coming back to work shows that you have the right to organize a union." – Jo Billups, budtender, Urbana on Geary

###