

## **Pennsylvania-American Water Illegal Conduct Provokes Pittsburgh Work Stoppage**

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**Pittsburgh, Pa.** Utility workers were forced onto picket lines at four worksites throughout Pittsburgh today due to illegal conduct by Pennsylvania-American Water and its New Jersey-based parent company American Water.

One hundred fifty members of Utility Workers Union of America System Local 537 joined picket lines protesting a series of unfair labor practices committed by management, including illegal cutbacks in family healthcare benefits, threats by Pennsylvania American to retaliate against workers for exercising rights protected by federal labor law, and additional concessions recently imposed by management in Pittsburgh employees' working conditions without good faith negotiations required by law.

"Every effort utility workers have made to resolve this dispute at the bargaining table has been thwarted by persistent, illegal conduct by American Water and Pennsylvania American," stated Kevin Booth, System President of UWUA Local 537. "Working families have been suffering from this company's unlawful attacks for too long, and our members have been given no choice but to take a stand against corporate greed."

UWUA members in Pittsburgh voted nearly unanimously on June 2 to reject Pennsylvania American's demands for painful cutbacks in workers' existing employment conditions. Almost immediately, management unilaterally implemented its concession demands, despite the union's offer to continue working while the parties continued negotiations for a new labor agreement.

Under Pennsylvania law, a labor dispute is considered a lockout if management unilaterally imposes new terms despite the union's offer for employees to continue working under their existing terms of employment.

Illegal actions by Pennsylvania American and American Water have resulted in a series of orders and complaints by the National Labor Relations Board. In June 2013, the NLRB ruled that Pennsylvania American had threatened UWUA members in Pittsburgh and across Pennsylvania for exercising rights protected by the National Labor Relations Act. In October 2012, an NLRB administrative law judge held that American Water had illegally slashed healthcare and other benefits for 3,500 utility workers in Pennsylvania and in fourteen other states throughout the U.S.

Local 537 has also filed charges with the NLRB over the company's recent unilateral cutbacks in Pittsburgh, citing a failure by management to bargain in good faith during negotiations with UWUA. Those charges are under investigation by the Board's regional office in Pittsburgh.

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