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## Striking Asarco Workers Get Support from Union, Other Activists

By J.D. Wallace, KOLD News 13 Reporter

Chants of "One day... Longer" came from the sidewalks near Speedway and Stone on Thursday afternoon, as a crowd pledged support to the Asarco copper mine workers still on strike. About 1500 workers walked off the job in early July.

"We're going to be with them one day longer than we need to be, when the strike is over," said AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson.

"We give what we can give and then some in a lot of cases to help those companies survive and prosper and we feel it's important for them to return the favor when it's possible," said Raytheon machinist Scott Capullo.

But the rally of about 100 people went beyond the union family to human rights advocates.

"We're not going to allow them to think that they can commit these atrocities on our striking brothers and sisters," said Isabel Garcia, of Derechos Humanos.

Environmentalists also took issue with Asarco, and its parent company Grupo Mexico.

"Asarco's put up only seven million dollars out of like one billion for cleanup," said Daniel Patterson, of the Center for Biological Diversity.

All marched to Asarco headquarters, and invited president Daniel Tellechea to answer for labor violations charges about intimidating union members and spying on union meetings. If Asarco is found guilty of unfair labor practices, it will have to re-hire workers at the end of the strike. But ending the strike depends on a guarantee the workers will keep their job for a year, even if the mines are sold to another company.

"They should agree to our successorship language so that we can protect our rights to represent our members and we can protect our members' jobs in the event that it is sold," said union negotiator Terry Bonds.

With Asarco filing for chapter eleven bankruptcy, keeping good workers made perfect financial sense to Thursday's crowd.

"I mean we're talking about experienced people. Where are they going to get experienced people if not from this same community?" Chavez-Thompson asked.

Union leaders said that they've heard that the National Labor Relations Board has already decided that Asarco is guilty of fair labor violations, but that has yet to come out in writing.

That could be as soon as Friday. Asarco did not give a reply to requests to answer for the charges.