

Locked-Out Sugar Workers Press For Jobless Benefits

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BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) -- More than 100 American Crystal Sugar Co. workers and their supporters rallied at the North Dakota Capitol on Monday.

They want the North Dakota Legislature to allow the workers to be paid unemployment benefits.

The Minnesota company locked out about 1,300 union-represented employees Aug. 1 when they couldn't agree on a new labor contract.

The jobless-benefits problem affects about 400 North Dakota workers. Derek Whetzel works at American Crystal's Hillsboro plant, and he says workers are "being starved out of house and home."

The Legislature is meeting in special session this week. Portland state Sen. Philip Murphy was blocked from introducing a bill that would allow American Crystal's North Dakota workers to get unemployment payments.

People at the rally said the Legislature should allow the bill to be introduced.

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