

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 23, 2020

Doug McMillon
President and Chief Executive Officer
Walmart Inc.
702 S.W. 8th St.
Betonville, Arkansas 72716

Dear Mr. McMillon:

We write to express our concerns about the challenges many Walmart workers are facing as they attempt to continue working while keeping themselves and their families safe from COVID-19. These concerns have only grown with the news that multiple Walmart employees have died from coronavirus, including multiple employees from the same Walmart facility.¹ While many retail stores are experiencing financial hardships due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Walmart has seen its demand skyrocket, causing Walmart to hire an additional 150,000 employees since the public health crisis began in order to keep up with demand.²

We write today to strongly urge you to do more to prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of your employees who are also our constituents, friends, family members, and neighbors. We understand that Walmart has attempted to implement positive changes, many of which were outlined in a memo dated March 31st. However, reports from several Walmart workers suggest those changes have not been fully or properly implemented.³ Specifically, we have heard from constituents who are Walmart employees that the personal protective equipment provided is in short supply, of poor quality, and that the gloves and masks only come in one size that is often too small for many of the workers who have to use them. Workers at other Walmart locations have reported that the store in which they work has not implemented a number of the safeguards announced in the March 31st memo, including conducting regular temperature checks and installing plexiglass shields at checkout stations.⁴ Additionally, workers at other facilities report that the store in which they work is not limiting the number of customers allowed inside, despite Walmart announcing that they would as a new policy, undermining efforts to allow for social distancing.⁵ We are also concerned by Walmart's paid sick leave policy—we believe it is absolutely critical that those who are experiencing symptoms and those who feel the need to self-quarantine are able to access paid leave. No worker should be forced to choose between their paycheck on one hand and the health and health of their colleagues and your customers on the other—a choice that many Walmart employees find themselves having to make.

¹ <https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/family-of-walmart-employee-who-died-from-covid-19-files-lawsuit/>

² <https://www.theverge.com/2020/3/20/21188093/walmart-hiring-employees-bonuses-coronavirus-demand>

³ <https://prospect.org/coronavirus/unsanitized-walmart-no-protection-only-a-stupid-blue-vest/>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

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We recognize the fast-moving nature of this pandemic, and we appreciate Walmart's attempts to implement certain necessary workplace protections. But every day that goes by without these protections fully and properly implemented puts the lives of more and more Americans at risk. Given the size of your operation, any failure of Walmart to keep its workforce safe does not only put your employees at risk, it puts the entire country at risk.

We ask that you provide a written response to the concerns raised in this letter, and to the questions listed below, no later than April 27th.

- Will Walmart agree to provide paid sick leave to all workers who are experiencing symptoms or feel like they need to self-quarantine without requiring a formal diagnosis?
- What steps is Walmart taking to ensure that all of your facilities are adopting the prescribed changes meant to keep your workers safe?
- Will Walmart agree to temporarily close any store for deep cleaning whenever a worker tests positive and provide 14 days paid leave to all workers who were potentially exposed to allow them to quarantine before returning to work?
- Please share a copy of Walmart's policies and protocols for informing workers and customers when another worker or customer in a store tests positive for coronavirus.
- How many Walmart employees have tested positive for coronavirus? Please provide a list of Walmart facilities in which more than one worker has tested positive for coronavirus.
- Does your Leave of Absence (LOA) policy ensure that employees are able to come back to their jobs and salaries after taking leave?

Sincerely,

/s/ Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

/s/ Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

/s/ Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator