



OUR Walmart Black Friday Protests, Strikes, Arrests Capture National Attention & Demonstrates Importance of Retail Jobs

On Black Friday, Walmart workers and community supporters across the nation held 1,500 protests calling for better jobs at the mega-retailer in one of the largest mobilizations of working families in recent history. Workers, members of OUR Walmart, and community supporters called for an end to illegal retaliation, for Walmart to publicly commit to paying \$25,000 a year and to provide more full-time work.

During the protests, workers and supporters engaged in peaceful civil disobedience in Los Angeles, Chicago, the Bay Area, Seattle, Dallas, Sacramento, Miami, Minneapolis, and Washington, D.C. The actions resulted in more than 100 arrests, making Black Friday 2013 the largest protest and civil disobedience action taken against Walmart.

OUR Walmart 2013 Black Friday actions began with a strike on November 6th in Los Angeles and continued throughout the month, culminating in nationwide actions on Black Friday. The 2013 Black Friday actions demonstrated how workers and the community are standing up in record numbers.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the OUR Walmart community including UFCW local unions, other local unions, labor groups like Jobs With Justice and American Rights at Work, civil rights groups, and faith and community groups, the 2013 Black Friday actions were even more widespread than last year. Building on the momentum from actions in the past year, tens of thousands of OUR Walmart members and community supporters held protests across the country on Black Friday. Hundreds of thousands more joined by taking action online.

The massive collaborative action garnered national attention and brought workers' calls to end retaliation and also for better wages to the forefront of the media. The message of retail workers and their fight to better their jobs and the economy dominated the national conversation over the holiday.

As CNN said at <http://cnnmon.ie/1fRTCop>, in only two years the courageous efforts by Walmart workers have made protests a "tradition that's becoming as much a part of Black Friday as the shopping."

- A "movement that was picking up momentum," the *New York Times* called it. <http://nyti.ms/1goF8K9>
- Workers and supporters "took back the shopping holiday," in turn "redefining Black Friday," said *Colorlines*. <http://bit.ly/1jQEswM>
- The "economic justice movement of the 21st Century; the new civil rights movement," labor expert Ed Ott told MSNBC's Melissa Harris-Perry. "The equivalent of those General Motors strikes in the '30s to create a middle class for all, to create an American dream for all Americans," Columbia University's Dorian Warren added. <http://on.msnbc.com/1g36xDR>
- The "biggest push we have seen in years, even maybe decades, are low-wage workers protesting that, we really need to raise wages," Steven Greenhouse said on PBS Newshour Friday. <http://to.pbs.org/1gqktW5>

By taking action, OUR Walmart members are fighting for changes that will protect their right to speak out, improve customer service, and create better jobs for themselves, their families, and for the country. Even in the face of Walmart's aggressive anti-worker campaign, OUR Walmart members are speaking out for 1.3 million workers at the company, most of whom are not even earning \$25,000 a year.

At a protest in Massachusetts, Walmart employee Lisa Lacroix said, "I'm mostly here for respect and acknowledgment of my hard work, which I don't ever get here. I love my co-workers and I enjoy working here. I would just like to be treated better by Walmart as a whole." <http://bit.ly/1dHSP9t>

In San Leandro, California, former Walmart employee Natasha Bercher had this to say, "I made \$8.65 and it's hard to pay rent. You know, once you pay your bills you have nothing left." <http://bit.ly/1gBCINz>

At a New Jersey protest, Elaine Rozier, 51, spoke of hardships she faced as a Walmart employee for eight years. "I've had six surgeries so far from working at Walmart, lifting 25 to 50 pounds of freight, and I went on strike in June," she said, crying. "I was bullied, I was mistreated." Like many of the protesters, Rozier said the fight would go on, "I'm going to keep fighting until the end." <http://bit.ly/1fTw966>

Even Santa was arrested in California, saying that his peaceful civil disobedience against Walmart was for the kids, who



“need a place where their family can get a decent wage.”
<http://wapo.st/1j4xmY3>

Seven Democratic lawmakers spoke out in solidarity with protesting workers, noting that “With as many as 825,000 workers making less than 25,000 a year and a single Walmart store costing taxpayers nearly \$1 million in public assistance, the need for change is clear.” <http://bit.ly/1fPL94W>

And countless elected leaders across the country supported Walmart workers. As Betsy Hodges, mayor-elect of Minneapolis, where 26 were arrested Friday, put it, “Now, low-wage workers are united in courage: they are determined to lift their wages above poverty levels and protect dignity and respect in the workplace, and Minneapolis is joining cities across America in standing with them.”
<http://bit.ly/183aYtp>

The federal labor board recently announced it would prosecute Walmart for widespread violations of its workers’ rights, providing additional protection for Walmart’s 1.3 million employees when they are speaking out for better jobs.
<http://bit.ly/1etnJQ>

Earlier this month, a photo from a Canton, Ohio store went viral as workers, customers, and commentators pointed to a food drive set up for Walmart’s own employees as proof that the retailer pays its workers poverty wages.
<http://bit.ly/1bUa2qP>

Retail analysts, economists and the media agree that putting more money in the pockets of Walmart workers is the right thing to do.

On Fox Business, Brian Sozzi, CEO of Belus Capital noted that Walmart is at “war with itself,” because their very business model is operate for less, buy for less, sell for less, and pay their employees less.” <http://bit.ly/18EvcKD>

And Dan Gross of the *Daily Beasts* wrote about Walmart’s “downward spiral of a business model.” “It wouldn’t surprise me to see foot traffic fall again in the fourth quarter. Thanks in part to low wages that Walmart and other service companies pay, the people who work and shop at Walmart don’t have sufficient firepower to make a big impact on Christmas.” <http://thebea.st/1cchrno>

Since then, the company has been on the defensive. When Walmart announced that Doug McMillon would replace

Mike Duke as CEO, numerous business analysts highlighted that the incoming CEO would have to address Walmart’s failing business model and pay its workers more.
<http://bit.ly/18jWimT>

And as countless others have noted: Walmart can afford to do it. A *Fortune* article showed that Walmart could easily raise wages by 50 percent without affecting its stock value.
<http://bit.ly/1brLlnm>

The *New York Times* argued that Walmart employees deserve both raises and to have the federal government behind them.
<http://nyti.ms/18n8wuC>

And public policy organization Demos released a report finding that Walmart could easily pay every employee \$14.89 without raising prices by simply not buying its own stock to further enrich the Walton family. <http://bit.ly/1gYv1ys>

By challenging Walmart on Black Friday, OUR Walmart workers sent a clear message that the time has come for the company to change. The Walmart model hurts workers and their families and the Waltons and Walmart executives need to recognize that it is time to work together to make better choices for a better America.

A full review of the Black Friday actions, along with photos and videos, are posted at <http://blackfridayprotests.org/>. **OP**

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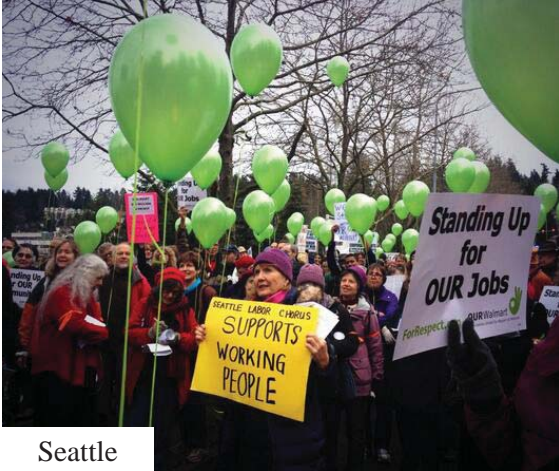
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