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Walmart moms announce new strikes

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Walmart moms—who experience constant financial insecurity because of Walmart’s poverty pay—announced today that many will walk off the job in protest of the illegal firings of co-workers who have been calling for more hours and better pay. The group, members of the Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart) will take their concerns and calls for change directly to the company at its annual shareholders meeting and to board chairman Rob Walton.

Workers plan to walk off the job in over 20 cities nationwide. Citing the company’s retaliation against workers, striking Walmart moms will join fellow workers, families, and community supporters nationwide who are calling on new Walmart CEO Doug McMillon to take the company in a new direction, one that will respect workers’ rights and help strengthen families and the economy.

The annual shareholders meeting will begin as Walmart workers—part of the three-year old national organization OUR Walmart—make significant strides in changing policies of the country’s largest employer, particularly in its treatment of women. Recently, Walmart improved its pregnancy policy after OUR Walmart members, who are also shareholders, submitted a resolution to

the company about its pregnancy policy. And, responding to OUR Walmart members’ growing calls on the retailer to improve access to hours, Walmart rolled out a new system nationwide that allows workers to sign up for open shifts in their stores online.

“We know that change is possible at Walmart. That’s why I’m joining other moms at Walmart and going on strike. We have the right to speak out for better futures, and when we do it together—

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we make progress,” said Lashanda Myrick who is a mother of two and works at Walmart’s Denver store 2752. “But when Walmart continues to fire my co-workers for standing up for good jobs and hundreds of thousands of us are paid less than \$25,000 a year, there’s more work to do.”

Workers plan to walk off the job in over 20 cities nationwide.

Recent policy changes come as same-store sales at Walmart have been negative for five consecutive quarters - in large part because many families do not have money in their pockets to shop at the company. Meanwhile, executives are moving the goal post to give themselves millions in bonuses despite missing performance targets.

Workers and economic experts say the country's largest private employer of women has created a financial crisis for women in America with low wage jobs that put the entire economy out of balance. The majority of Walmart workers are paid less than \$25,000 a year - forcing many to rely on food stamps and other taxpayer-supported programs to survive. Working women-increasingly the breadwinners and decision makers in households-make up the majority of Walmart's workforce and are often hit hardest by the employer's poverty wages.

The most common job in the country is a retail salesperson, and women disproportionately hold the retail industry's lowest paid jobs. Elected officials, women's groups and economic

experts point to Walmart, the standard-setter for the industry and employer of 825,000 women, as urgently needing to raise wages to boost the economy.

"Walmart moms-not the company's political designation, the real moms who work and shop at the mega-retailer-are facing constant economic insecurity because of the low-wage economy created by Walmart," said Ellen Bravo, director of Family Values @ Work and lifelong activist fighting for working women. Leading women's groups-including the National Women's Law Center, the National Organization for Women, a Better Balance, Family Values @ Work and the National Partnership for Women and Families-have been mobilizing through a petition, member activism and events on Capitol Hill. As concerns grow about wages, understaffing and alleged violations of labor law and the Foreign Corrupt Practices act, a number of shareholders and advisors are voicing their dissent for the company's leadership and voting against board chairman Rob Walton. Others have divested, including Portland, Oregon.

Help stop new U.S. military base in Okinawa

By PW Editorial

The mayor of Nago City, Okinawa, wants Americans to help him stop construction of a U.S. military base in his small city. He traveled to the U.S. last week to make his case. Susumu Inamine was overwhelmingly re-elected to a second term as Nago's mayor this January because of his strong opposition to the U.S. plan to build a massive new base in this environmentally sensitive coastal city of 62,000 residents. The base would replace the existing U.S. Futenma Marine Corps Air Station, which is located in a densely populated urban area in central Okinawa. The planned move is a response to long-standing pressure from local residents to close Futenma. Repeated polls show 74 percent or more of Okinawans oppose relocating the Futenma base within Okinawa. In fact, the overwhelming majority want all U.S. bases out of Okinawa. Nevertheless, both the U.S. and Japanese governments say they are forging ahead with the relocation plan.

Mayor Inamine is appealing to Americans to help stop it.

Visiting New York and Washington last week, Inamine met with government officials, congressional staffers and think tank policy experts, and spoke with interested Americans. He found some sympathetic ears, including at the libertarian Cato Institute, Inamine said. However "the reaction of U.S. officials was pretty tough," he said in a phone interview. "But we can still persuade." The mayor spoke in Japanese, with English provided by a translator. "Americans should know that local residents are not welcoming the base," Mayor Inamine said. "U.S. residents should consider the huge budgetary burden and environmental impact on the local community."

Inamine says he intends to use his rights as mayor to block the construction of the base. Japanese law stipulates the rights of local municipalities, he noted.

We should give the mayor's bid to stop the bases every support. Can peace loving Americans do less? Call the White House: let the president know what you think.

The mayor intends to use his rights as mayor to block the construction of the base.

Camden students protest teacher layoffs

By Mahdi Ibn-Ziyad

On May 16th several hundred students erupted spontaneously (prompted via the impetus of social media) and, without permission, left their schools at high noon and marched peacefully to the Camden School District headquarters where they met in protest. Many came from schools two to three miles away.

Their spirited speeches and long list of demands were biting, with student protest leaders launching their most bitter complaints at school superintendent Paymon Rohanifard, an academically unqualified hatchet man for his big boss, New Jersey Republican Governor Chris Christie. The students noted that Rohanifard had been hand-picked by the then state education commission chief Chris Cherf, a longtime stooge of Christie and former president of Edison Schools, Inc., a private school management corporation, to come in and dismantle the traditional public schools in favor of charter schools, many of which are scheduled to become privately run charters. To do his dirty work Rohanifard's main strategy was to claim that the traditional public schools and their teachers and administrative staff were failing, thus setting up a phony need for public school monies to be transferred to the charters.

In addition hundreds of students organized a mass march and rally at Camden City Hall.

Like the earlier more spontaneous protests, the students, now organized as the Save Our Camden Schools Youth United, along with some brave teacher union members of the Camden Education Association, the Camden Save Our Public Schools Coalition, a retired educator, parent and community based support group, representatives of the NJ NAACP, members of the Philadelphia Area Black Radical Congress and spokespersons for Rev. Al Sharpton's National Action Network South



Jersey affiliate came forward with a whole list of demands aimed this time at Camden Mayor Dana Redd, the Camden City Council and South Jersey Democratic Party political boss and corporate heavyweight George Norcross.

The local movement in Camden to protest Gov. Christie's takeover of the public schools was formally begun in April 2013 with the first mass community meeting of the Camden Save Our Public Schools Coalition. Originally it was called together by longtime community activist R. Mangolis Davis, retired teacher Joyce Carter, retired school principal Claudia Cream, and community arts promoter Rob Dickinson and his Unity Community Center (the parent organization of the world renowned Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble).

The next stop for the student led protests is Gov. Christie's office in Trenton, the NJ state capitol. There the students and their adult supporters hope to impress upon the scandal-plagued governor that the founding principle of democracy is that the people, not corporate profits or party politics, are sovereign. In education, as in all institutional arrangements, the people united will never be defeated. This is the clarion call for an "honest discussion" on race and class educational issues on the road to Trenton.

Students demanded public school teachers be rehired.

LOCAL NEWS

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Portland, Oregon, dumps Walmart bonds

By PAI

Cheered on by OURWalmart - the group of Walmart workers who campaign for better wages and working conditions nationwide at the monster retailer - and United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, the Portland, Ore., City Council voted May 15 to dump Walmart.

The council instructed the city Treasurer to get rid of \$9 million worth of Walmart bonds in its investment portfolio that just matured and to dump the remaining bonds when they mature, too. That's another \$27 million in bonds, the last of which matures in April 2016.

City Commissioner Steve Novick's resolution also bans any future Walmart bond buys. The legislation makes Oregon's largest city a leader in putting its money where its mouth is, by ridding itself of securities in a firm known for its low prices, rock-bottom wages, bad benefits and rampant labor law-breaking. Novick says it's the first city to do so.

"From what I can tell, no other U.S. city has looked at socially responsible investing in quite the same way as Portland," he told a May 15 press conference. "I'm hopeful other cities and states take note and adopt similar investment principles to hold companies accountable and align our investment policies with our values."

Portland's investments average \$1.1 billion yearly, so Walmart is approximately 3 percent of that total.

Aplauda las protecciones contra de cambio climático

Por El Sierra Club

La Agencia de Protección Medioambiental (EPA) emitió hoy una propuesta de creación de las primeras protecciones contra la mortal contaminación de carbono procedente de las existentes plantas de combustión de carbón. Esta contaminación es la principal causa de la disrupción climática, incluyendo supertormentas, inundaciones, incendios forestales y calor extremo. Este nuevo estándar, la piedra angular del Plan de Acción Climática del Presidente Obama, limpiará las industrias que emiten la mayoría de la contaminación de carbono en nuestro país. Las nuevas protecciones también ayudarán a reducir la mortal contaminación de mercurio, hollín y smog, la cual afecta desproporcionadamente a la comunidad hispana. Como respuesta, el Director Ejecutivo del Sierra Club, Michael Brune, emitió el siguiente comunicado:

"Hoy, el Presidente Obama cumplió con su promesa al pueblo norteamericano de que su administración atacaría la crisis climática, y modernizaría nuestra producción de energía.

"Estas son buenas noticias particularmente para la comunidad hispana, la cual sufre desproporcionadamente las consecuencias de la contaminación de carbono y los efectos de la disrupción climática en todo el país. La salud de los hispanos queda dañada diariamente por la contaminación de combustibles fósiles, la cual se traduce en índices extremadamente altos de asma, enfermedades coronarias, cáncer y muertes prematuras. "No

es de extrañar que los hispanos hayan mostrado consistentemente un apoyo abrumador por las protecciones contra la contaminación de combustibles fósiles y la disrupción climática, y esta propuesta es hasta el momento la demostración más tajante de que el presidente está comprometido a proteger la salud pública". "La disrupción climática es el reto de nuestra generación. Hasta ahora, a las plantas energéticas de carbón se les ha permitido emitir ilimitadas cantidades de contaminación de carbono en nuestras comunidades, lo que ha desatado un clima cada vez más errático, como graves sequías, incendios forestales, calor extremo y supertormentas. Esta disrupción climática y los costos a la salud y las billeteras de los norteamericanos, particularmente los hispanos, se agravarán a no ser que actuemos ya. Con estas nuevas protecciones, el Presidente Obama y la EPA han actuado".

A inicios de mayo, un informe de la Casa Blanca expuso que el cambio climático, considerado un problema del futuro, avanza firmemente en la actualidad y con efectos dramáticos sobre cada parte de esta nación nortea. Las observaciones revelaron en forma inequívoca que el clima está cambiando y que el calentamiento de los últimos 50 años se debe principalmente a las emisiones antropogénicas de gases que retienen el calor. John Holdren, asesor científico de la Casa Blanca, estimó que el estudio es la alarma más fuerte y más clara hasta la fecha sobre los impactos del fenómeno.

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