

Protest planned to support Walmart workers on "Black Friday"

Written by Bill Fletcher, Jr., NNPA Columnist
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The day after Thanksgiving, so-called "Black Friday," will be a moment for national protests over the conditions faced by thousands of Walmart workers. You may be one of many who go regularly or periodically to Walmart, looking for the good deals. Well, this November 29, things will be a bit exciting and informative outside of Walmart facilities.

If you have any questions regarding why these protests have been happening; why they will take place on November 29; and why they will continue to unfold, just consider the following: almost two-thirds of the Walmart's workforce of approximately 825,000 earn poverty-level wages (less than \$25,000/year). Now, contrast this fact with another fact: six of the Waltons, the major shareholders in the company, are collectively worth more than \$144.7 billion, putting them ahead of the combined worth of 42 percent of the people of the United States.

In other words, for all of their platitudes we regularly hear on television and radio commercials, Walmart stands as a stark example of the wealth polarization that we have been witnessing in this country, a wealth polarization unlike anything that we have seen since 1929.

The conditions of Walmart workers are insulting, not only to the Walmart workers but to the rest of us. Workers find it difficult to obtain full-time schedules, thus making it impossible for them to earn the sort of wages needed to survive. Like many other retail workers, they are then forced to either try to assemble more than one part-time job and/or depend on governmental assistance.

The Walmart workers, joined together through an organization known as OUR Walmart (Organization United for Respect at Walmart), seek public support. They are seeking justice in their workplace and they know that the attitude of the Walmart customer is critical in that regard. The message that you, as a customer and consumer, convey to the Walmart management; your willingness to stand with the Walmart workers; and the attitude elected officials in our cities and towns take towards the expansion of and requests for assistance by the corporate owners of Walmart, will all make a world of a difference.

If you think of nothing else, just stop for a moment and remember that \$25,000/year does not take anyone very far these days. How can a family worth more than \$144.7 billion not believe that improving the wages, benefits and working conditions of those who make it possible for their family to be so wealthy is a burdensome request?

Just asking...

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