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January 10, 2013

Open letter to Walmart's Board of Directors

Mike Duke, CEO
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
702 SW 8th Street
Bentonville, Arkansas 72716

Dear Mr. Duke,

We are deeply concerned about the intent and sincerity behind Walmart's reported plan to monitor domestic warehouses that handle Walmart goods.

If what was reported in the *Wall Street Journal* on December 28, 2012 is accurate, Walmart intends to launch a new program modeled after the system it uses to monitor supplier factories overseas.

Unfortunately, Walmart's international monitoring program has failed, with tragic consequences. Only a few months ago, 112 workers perished in a Bangladeshi garment factory that was producing goods for Walmart. On December 29, *The New York Times* ran a devastating critique of Walmart's monitoring program. This failed system simply cannot be a model for fixing supply chain problems in the U.S.

In the U.S. warehouses that comprise a critical part of Walmart's domestic supply chain, there are well-documented instances of stolen wages, inadequate access to water, extreme temperatures, frequent injury and broken equipment. These substandard conditions have garnered the attention of state and federal agencies, the courts, and the international media. In the past two years, workers affiliated with Warehouse Workers United have filed numerous complaints with multiple government agencies. As a result, at least six Walmart contractors in California have been fined for a total of more than \$1.3 million. Workers have also filed complaints with Walmart directly and they have gone on strike to protest the problems and the retaliation they suffer when they try to improve their workplaces.

In October 2012, warehouse workers met with Walmart officials in Bentonville. They described the problems listed above at length. David Garcia, a warehouse worker, looked Walmart executives in the eyes and told them that he had been fired because he raised safety concerns in a Walmart-contracted warehouse in Southern California. He still does not have a job and struggles to support his family.

In response, Walmart executives told the warehouse workers that the problems they raised were being taken seriously.

But replicating the failed monitoring system currently in use overseas is not taking the problem seriously.

Failing to consult with workers directly impacted by these decisions is not taking the problem seriously.

Failing to redress retaliation against whistleblowers is not taking the problem seriously.

Walmart's domestic warehouse supply chain is in desperate need for reform to ensure workers are treated with dignity and respect, in accordance with the law, and in accordance with Walmart's own stated "Standards for Suppliers". Those Standards include decent wages, health and safety, and, most importantly, freedom of association and collective bargaining.

In reality, none of those standards are upheld today.

Walmart's announcement of a new monitoring program is an empty gesture: any credible effort to correct the dangerous and illegal working conditions in warehouses must include a seat at the table for workers and ensure that workers have the freedom to organize without fear of retaliation.

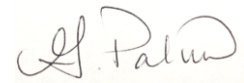
A public relations campaign by Walmart and a toothless monitoring system will not make the problems disappear. We need real solutions that involve the workers who actually make Walmart's business run – those who make the goods, move the goods, and sell the goods.

We are asking you to revisit the issue and include stakeholders in the process of reform. Without workers at the table, your proposal is nothing more than smoke and mirrors.

Sincerely,



Nicholas Allen
Campaign Director, Warehouse Workers United



Guadalupe Palma
Deputy Campaign Director, Warehouse Workers United



Javier Rodriguez
Member, Warehouse Workers United



David Acosta
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