

# WALMART WORKERS ANNOUNCE BLACK FRIDAY STRIKES

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*Tens of thousands of teachers, voters, clergy, environmentalists, civil rights leaders to join workers at 1600 protests, calling on Walton family to pay \$15 an hour and provide full-time work*

**NATIONWIDE** – In the wake of the [first-ever sit down strike at Walmart](#), members of [OUR Walmart](#) announced that they will strike across the country on Black Friday in protest of the company’s illegal silencing of workers who are standing up for better jobs. Tens of thousands of Americans said they plan to support workers that day at 1600 protests nationwide—the largest mobilization of working families—calling on Walmart’s owners to raise wages to a minimum of \$15 an hour and provide consistent, full-time work.

Even as Walmart brings in \$16 billion in annual profits and Walmart’s owners—the Waltons—build on their \$150 billion in wealth, [the majority of Walmart workers are paid less than \\$25,000 a year](#).

“Walmart’s low pay business model isn’t working for our families, for our customers and for the company, but change is possible,” said Barbara Gertz, a Walmart associate from Colorado. “Walmart needs to listen to workers like us about how to fix these problems by adding hours and improving pay so that we can get the job done. Threatening and firing us for speaking out about how to improve the stores is illegal and shortsighted. That’s why I’m going on strike on Black Friday and why so many of my co-workers are joining me.”

The unprecedented Black Friday mobilization comes as an increasing number of Americans and Walmart workers point to OUR Walmart as making significant changes at the country’s largest retailer. Most recently, after public calls from OUR Walmart, [the company committed to raise wages for its lowest paid workers](#) and [rolled out a new scheduling system that allows workers to sign up for open shifts](#). To date, [workers at more than 2,100 Walmart stores nationwide have signed a petition](#) calling on Walmart and the Waltons to publicly commit to paying \$15 an hour and providing consistent, full-time hours.

A broad group of Americans who plan to protest on Black Friday, including tens of thousands of teachers, voters, members of the clergy, elected officials, civil rights leaders and women’s rights activists say America’s largest employer and richest family are driving the income inequality problems that are holding the country back. In Washington, residents plan to protest at all 60 Walmart stores in the state. In other states, Americans are planning flash mobs, marches and prayer vigils to support striking Walmart workers and call on the company to improve jobs.

“Shame on Walmart and the Waltons for creating a reality where many Walmart workers say they can’t even afford to give their kids Thanksgiving dinner because of their low pay. As

someone who has dedicated her career to helping children grow and achieve their dreams, that tears me apart,” said teacher and AFT New Mexico President Stephanie Ly. “This Black Friday, teachers, parents and students will all be out protesting at Walmart like never before saying we’ve had enough. Walmart needs to raise pay and provide full-time work now so workers can feed and support their families.”

The Black Friday strikes and protest announcement comes on the heels of the [first-ever sit down strikes in company history in Los Angeles, where workers sat down in Crenshaw and Pico Rivera stores, and 23 people were arrested](#). Los Angeles is also the site of the [first-ever strikes at Walmart](#). The group of striking workers, from stores throughout California, placed tape over their mouths signifying the company’s illegal efforts to silence workers who are calling for better jobs. Striking workers held signs resembling those of the first retail sit-down strike at Woolworth in 1937, when retail workers at the then-largest retailer in the country called for the company to increase pay, provide a 40-hour work week and stop the retaliation against workers who spoke out.

“While today, the disparity of wealth and poverty in the U.S. is just as outrageous as it was during the Great Depression, Walmart is far larger and more global than Woolworth’s ever was, and thus even more dangerous,” said labor historian Dana Frank. “Like the Woolworth’s women in 1937, the workers in OUR Walmart are challenging a mass retailer with tentacles all over the world to treat its employees with respect, and inspiring a growing national movement against inequality and for the just treatment of all working people.”

A growing number of Americans say Walmart and its owners are robbing workers of a decent living by paying the majority of associates poverty wages and manipulating their hours. The Walton family, which controls the Walmart empire, [is the richest family in the U.S.—with the wealth of 43% of American families combined](#). While many Walmart workers are unable to feed and clothe their families, [the Walton family takes in \\$8.6 million a day in Walmart dividends alone to build on its \\$150 billion in wealth](#). Walmart brings in \$16 billion in annual profits.

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*UFCW and OUR Walmart have the purpose of helping Walmart employees as individuals or groups in their dealings with Walmart over labor rights and standards and their efforts to have Walmart publicly commit to adhere to labor rights and standards. UFCW and OUR Walmart have no intent to have Walmart recognize or bargain with UFCW or OUR Walmart as the representative of its employees.*