

WakeUpWalMart.com Wake-Up Call 2.10.06 Edition

WakeUpWalMart.com Hand Delivers a Letter to Lee Scott
Wal-Mart CEO Lee Scott came to Capitol Hill on Wednesday morning for breakfast with Congressional leaders, but WakeUpWalMart.com served up a surprise.

WakeUpWalMart.com staffer Buffy Wicks met Lee Scott at the door to hand-deliver a letter asking him, once again, to meet with us and work together to change Wal-Mart. She said, "I would like to give you this letter on behalf of WakeUpWalMart.com and our 180,000 supporters." Mr. Scott accepted the letter and replied sarcastically, "You are too kind."

The letter handed to Lee Scott states, "Wal-Mart has a great opportunity to work with us to help improve the lives of so many Americans who face an economic and health care crisis everyday, everywhere in America. The American people want to know, will Wal-Mart do what is right for America or will Wal-Mart lead a race to the bottom?"
<http://www.wakeupwalmart.com/press/20060208.html>

Senator Clinton Returns Wal-Mart Cash
Senate records made public last Friday indicate that Sen. Clinton returned a \$5,000 donation from Wal-Mart's political action committee "because of serious differences with current company practices."
<http://www.wakeupwalmart.com/news/20060203-lvs.html>

Wal-Mart Bank Bid Receives Serious Opposition
Two weeks ago, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan sent a 12-page letter to Congress opposing a regulatory loophole that would allow Wal-Mart to pursue its banking plans. Last week, the National Association of Realtors came out against Wal-Mart's bank bid. Now, Hillary Clinton is telling regulators she has "serious reservations" about allowing companies to enter financial services by exploiting a "loophole" in U.S. law.

Clinton's letter told the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. that the retailer's bid to open an industrial loan company (ILC), if successful, could have a serious negative impact on the financial sector. "Indeed, I believe that any action by the FDIC that would lessen or loosen the oversight for ILCs while granting it the same privileges and functions of traditional commercial banks would be a critical mistake and stand in stark contrast to the fundamental principle of the separation of banking and commerce."
<http://www.wakeupwalmart.com/news/20060208-wapo.html>

Wake-Up Call of the Week

“*Fredricksburg, VA*

Maryland is pointing the way. We must demand that our democratic beliefs about fair play, justice and equality be extended to workplaces.

Free Lance Star ”

WakeUpWalMart.com Spotlight

FAIR SHARE HEALTH CARE UPDATE:

Wal-mart costs WA taxpayers \$22.7 million in 2004

We knew it was bad – but it's even worse than we thought. In the past eight days, three new reports from Washington, Utah and Massachusetts have confirmed Wal-Mart's outrageous abuse of tax-payer funded health benefits. In Washington state alone, Wal-Mart workers' publicly-funded health care benefits cost taxpayers more than \$22.7 million in 2004! Studies in Massachusetts and New Jersey confirm that Wal-Mart leads all state employers with the number of employees on public health care.

Movement Supporting Fair Share Health Care Grows

California — Modeled after a controversial Maryland law, Sen. Carole Migden, D-San Francisco announced she will introduce Fair Share Health Care legislation in California modeled after the Maryland bill.

Florida — Floridians now have a chance to join Americans across the country calling for fair share health care legislation. Fair Share Health Care State House Bill 813 and State Senate Bill 1618 bring Florida into the national debate.

New Jersey — Fair Share Health Care is heating up in New Jersey.

"The taxpayers of the state of New Jersey should no longer bear the burden of funding health care for corporations that are making hundreds of millions of dollars in the state," said Sen. Stephen M. Sweeney, D-West Deptford.

Colorado — Fair Share hit the Rockies on Wednesday with the introduction of House Bill 1316.

WakeUpWalMart.com Spotlight

FAIR SHARE HEALTH CARE Americans Speak Out in Support

As elected officials across the country debate Fair Share Health Care legislation, newspapers this week have been full of fair share discussions. From Virginia to Washington state, editorial boards, journalists and, most importantly, citizens are highlighting the need to hold large corporations accountable.

As the issue heats up in Washington state, the *Seattle Times* published the thoughts of some local citizens in a Letters to the Editor section titled "Discounting health." Here is one excerpt:

"I work in a public-district hospital. Many of the patients and families I work with on a daily basis aren't insured. Many of them work but can't afford coverage from their employer. That means that their employers are dumping the cost of providing their care onto us, the taxpayers.

Now we've learned that it costs Washington taxpayers \$12 million per year to provide health care to Wal-Mart employees.

Wal-Mart made a \$10 billion profit last year. We shouldn't be giving it this handout. As a taxpayer, I am outraged that I'm paying to help Wal-Mart get a competitive edge over other employers by helping pay for its health-care benefits.

As a health-care worker, I believe that working families deserve basic, preventative care. Otherwise, they put off getting care, which leads to higher costs later on.

The system isn't working. We desperately need the Fair Share health-care bill to pass.

— Bill Hickey, Shoreline, Washington

Washington legislators are currently debating Fair Share Health Care legislation in the state. WakeUpWalMart.com has constant updates on the bill's progress.

Moms vs. Wal-Mart Launches Petition

In an open letter to Lee Scott, Moms vs. Wal-Mart has asked the world's largest retailer to stop setting up shop next to schools.

Their letter states: "On behalf of school children across the country, we would like to ask you to create a new corporate policy: Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. will not build any future stores next to schools.



We understand that there are a few Wal-Mart stores in the country that have been built next door to schools. Due to the poor mix of this size development with school children, Wal-Mart has made special concessions at these stores. A store in Tampa, Florida, does not sell firearms or hard alcohol as a result of parental pressure from the High School PTA next door. A store in Fort Worth, Texas, erected a large concrete wall to shield a school playground. Wal-Mart has recently agreed to block all customer traffic that would exit near a school entrance at a proposed store near Ann Arbor, Michigan, in response to safety concerns by county officials.

If Wal-Mart must make these safety concessions to be near a school, it is clear to everyone that Wal-Mart stores and schools are not appropriate neighbors.

'Moms vs. Wal-Mart' has been created to ask Wal-Mart Inc. to establish a responsible development policy. On behalf of the children who are unable to speak for themselves, please create a corporate policy that would give parents a reason to say something positive about Wal-Mart. Please announce that you will not build any future Wal-Mart stores next to schools.

Wal-Mart stores draw crime and traffic, some sell firearms and hard alcohol. If Wal-Mart can't play nice, they should stay away from our children's playgrounds."

It's All About Priorities

At the same time Wal-Mart uses "thin profit margins" to justify why it can't be more responsible and provide better health care and wages to its workers, Wal-Mart wants to spend hundreds of millions on a "face lift" - talk about the wrong priorities.

<http://www.wakeupwalmart.com/news/20060208-mw.html>

Press Release of the Week

WakeUpWalMart.com statement on the lawsuits filed by The Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA) challenging the Fair Share Health Care Act which recently became law in the state of Maryland:

Paul Blank, campaign director for WakeUpWalMart.com stated, "Today's lawsuit is just another attempt by Wal-Mart and its allies not to pay its fair share for health care in the state of Maryland and elsewhere. The Maryland Attorney General has already said Fair Share Health Care legislation is in compliance with the law. Wal-Mart would be better off changing its behavior and living up to its responsibilities. States should be applauded, not sued, for trying to address the fact that in every state where we have data Wal-Mart is costing taxpayers millions by having more employees on taxpayer-funded health care than any other employer."