

Wal-Mart: Merchant of Shame

In 2002, the National Organization for Women named Wal-Mart a Merchant of Shame as part of its Women Friendly Workplace Campaign. Wal-Mart's dismal record contradicts the worker-friendly image it projects to the public. Join NOW in its campaign to demand changes in Wal-Mart's unfair practices.

Background: In the years leading up to naming Wal-Mart a Merchant of Shame, NOW leaders and members received numerous complaints regarding workplace environment and employment practices at the chain's retail stores and distribution centers, as well as its regional and corporate offices. NOW reviewed the extensive public record on cases filed against Wal-Mart and found the allegations disturbing. These included sex discrimination in pay, promotion and compensation, wage abuse, exclusion of contraceptive coverage in insurance plans, violations of child labor laws and the Americans with Disabilities Act, and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Cases have also been filed regarding firing pro-union workers, eliminating jobs once workers joined unions, and discouraging workers from unionizing.

In the wake of *Wal-Mart v. Dukes* — the largest class action lawsuit in U.S. history, filed on behalf of 1.5 million women employees who were discriminated against while working for the retail giant — NOW will continue to fight to bring justice to these women. The Supreme Court heard the case, which included 120 affidavits relating to 235 stores, and ruled that “[e]ven if every single one of these accounts is true, that would not demonstrate that the entire company ‘operate[s] under a general policy of discrimination.’” Essentially, the Roberts Court declared Wal-Mart too big to sue and women as a group not worthy of class action status.

NOW is partnering with United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and other leaders from the women's movement and labor movement to support the Making Change at Wal-Mart Campaign, which aims to transform the nation's largest employer into a good employer. Read on for more about NOW's efforts to get Wal-Mart to clean up its act.