

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **District Officials Ignored Residents and Got Duped By Walmart**

*Countless residents knew better than to trust Walmart, but were ignored by elected officials eager to believe the company's false promises*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – **Nikki Lewis**, Executive Director of DC Jobs With Justice, released the following statement today after Walmart announced it will not open two stores planned for the District and will close 269 stores worldwide:

"I wish I could say that I am surprised by Walmart's plans to cancel two stores, but the sad truth is, I am not. Today's announcement proves once again that Walmart is a company that cannot be trusted.

"In meetings with residents and community leaders, the company promised to bring much-needed retail to Ward 7. Some residents were even told that wages would start at \$13.50 an hour at these stores.

"Unfortunately, when residents attempted to codify these promises in a written agreement, and later the Large Retailer Accountability Act (LRAA), Walmart responded by threatening to cancel their plans to open three additional stores – effectively forcing Mayor Gray to veto the LRAA.

"With today's announcement of store closures, Walmart is canceling these plans and footing the residents of D.C. with the bill. Make no mistake, Walmart has duped the District with false promises and is now earning profit at the expense of everyone who lives here.

"The District should have ignored Walmart's threats instead of its own residents. Moving forward, the District should be cautious about believing other retailers and should not give in to similar threats. D.C. needs and deserves better companies who can bring both good retail options and family-sustaining jobs to our communities."

**Reverend Edwin Jones**, a pastor in Ward 7 who led efforts to codify a community benefits agreement with Walmart as well as the LRAA, added the following:

"Walmart is not the kind of development we need in Ward 7. We need retailers

that keep their promises and provide good jobs for our community. Today's announcement proved once again that Walmart would not be good neighbor.

"After intimidating Mayor Gray and Councilwoman Alexander with threats of canceling the store in Ward 7, Walmart refused to hold up its end of the deal.

"We knew this was not a company that could be trusted. If only our elected leaders had listened to us instead of Walmart."

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*DC Jobs with Justice is a dynamic coalition of labor organizations, community groups, faith-based organizations, and student groups dedicated to protecting the rights of working people and supporting community struggles to build a more just society.*