

For Immediate Release: June 29, 2017
Contact: Amy Ritter (202) 251-5907

GOP’S HEALTH CARE BILL WOULD AFFECT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF WALMART WORKERS

Walmart, McMillon stay silent when employees need them the most

WASHINGTON, D.C. – With the GOP’s health care bill vote postponed in the Senate, there remains an odd silence from the country’s largest private employer, Walmart, on how this bill could affect its 1.5 million person workforce in the U.S. Even more odd, is that Walmart’s CEO Doug McMillon was hand-picked to sit on President Trump’s Business Advisory Council, but hasn’t provided any comment on how to maintain a healthy workforce, or how this bill will affect retail employees in America.

It’s well known that Walmart’s [low wages](#) force thousands of its employees onto [government assistance](#), many of them receiving Medicaid to help them and their families survive. For example, in Louisiana, Walmart workers’ children made up the largest pool of CHIP recipients as of April 2017.^[1] Similarly in Wisconsin, Walmart workers made up the largest group of BadgerCare recipients as of the fourth quarter of 2016.^[2] Walmart employees have historically appeared atop [many lists](#) of state Medicaid recipient counts.

The GOP’s health care bill would gut Medicaid funding; cause premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for low-income workers to “[shoot skyward](#)”; and would [eliminate](#) employer mandate penalties. With hundreds of thousands of Walmart associates in expansion states (see chart), proposed cuts to Medicaid would be especially devastating for Walmart workers; but, these policies in totality would be disastrous for *all* retail workers. It’s difficult to square this bill with McMillon’s assertion that “it’s important that people are covered.”^[3]

Back in 2009, Walmart [signed](#) a joint letter with SEIU in support of Obamacare’s proposed employer mandates, [stating](#):

“At Walmart, we believe in shared responsibility and support an employer mandate that is broad and fair. We believe the mandate should cover as many businesses as possible, and cover part-time as well as full-time employees.”

But in 2011, Walmart eliminated health care benefits for employees working fewer than 24 hours a week. And in 2014, the company [eliminated](#) health care benefits for an additional 30,000 part-time employees working fewer than 30 hours per week. At the time of the 2014 cuts, [Bloomberg](#) reported that many of these workers would be eligible for subsidized plans through state insurance exchanges or Medicaid. Now as a result of the GOP bill, tens of thousands of Walmart workers could lose their insurance coverage as Medicaid shrinks and out-of-pocket costs balloon.

More recently, Walmart [announced](#) a partnership with Quest Diagnostics to provide basic health care services in some of their Florida and Texas stores. The announcement came with a commitment to focus on “providing accessible, affordable healthcare.”

However, we see no action from the largest private employer in the country to protect the health and happiness of thousands of its workers in the face of a GOP bill that would leave [22 million](#) more Americans uninsured. Nor do we see any comment as to how this bill could affect Walmart’s customers and the company’s bottom line as it seeks to be a “[one-stop shop](#) for our customers’ everyday health and wellness needs.”

Even more concerning is that over half of the [Senators](#) who, as of Wednesday, June 28th have been supportive of the GOP health care bill have received PAC contributions from Walmart in either the 2016 or 1018 campaign cycles, several receiving upwards of \$10,000 (see chart).

From Making Change at Walmart Director Randy Parraz:

“A healthy workforce is a strong workforce. Shouldn’t Walmart and the Senators it funds try their best to make sure the company’s employees don’t lose a day of health care coverage? What exactly is Doug McMillon doing on Trump’s Business Advisory Council when hundreds of thousands of his own employees are standing on the precipice of potentially losing their insurance?”

###

States Participating in ACA Medicaid Expansion[\[4\]](#)

State	Total WMT Retail Units	WMT Associates [5]
NH	31	8,052
VT	6	1,218
MA	50	12,138
RI	9	2,424
CT	37	8,974
NJ	72	20,563
NY	116	37,846
*PA	162	51,998
DE	10	4,413
MD	59	17,683
DC	3	600
WV	43	11,894
OH	173	50,257
MI	118	31,816
IN	130	39,055
KY	105	29,610
IL	196	53,743
MN	83	22,687
IA	68	18,100
AR	127	52,541

LA	137	37,037
ND	17	4,618
MT	15	4,780
CO	110	27,962
NM	53	14,445
AZ	127	34,090
NV	49	14,037
CA	301	90,498
OR	43	11,681
WA	69	20,163
AK	12	2,953
HI	12	4,032
Total	2,543	741,908

Senators Supportive of Health Care Bill[6]

Senator	State	Quote	Wal-Mart Stores PAC Contributions 2016 Cycle[7]	Wal-Mart Stores PAC Contributions 2018 Cycle[8]
John Barrasso	WY	“a vast improvement over Obamacare”	\$ –	\$ 1,000.00
John Cornyn	TX	“The time to close the book on Obamacare is now.”	\$ –	\$ –
John Thune	SD	“will help stabilize markets that are already collapsing”	\$ 10,000.00	\$ –
Lamar Alexander	TN	“benefits for Tennesseans”	\$ –	
Luther Strange	AL	“I am encouraged by key provisions”	\$ –	\$ 2,000.00
Michael B. Enzi	WY	“Senate Republicans are proposing solutions”	\$ –	\$ –
Michael D. Crapo	ID	“a promising step”	\$ 9,500.00	\$ –
Michael Rounds	SD	“I think we can make it better, but I think we are moving in the right direction”	\$ –	\$ –
Mitch McConnell	KY	“It’s time for #BetterCare.”	\$ –	\$ –
Orrin G. Hatch	UT	“important step in our effort to replace Obamacare”	\$ –	\$ –
Pat Roberts	KS	“the best possible bill under very difficult circumstances.”	\$ –	\$ –
*Patrick J. Toomey	PA	“an important and constructive first step”	\$ 10,000.00	\$ –

Richard C. Shelby	AL	“I’m going to support this bill”	\$ 2,000.00	\$ –
Richard M. Burr	NC	“While not perfect, the bill does provide the funding we need”	\$ 9,500.00	\$ –
Roger Wicker	MS	“If enacted, Americans would be far better off”	\$ –	\$ –
Roy Blunt	MO	“this bill takes important steps”	\$ 7,500.00	\$ –
Tim Scott	SC	“a much better plan than Obamacare.”	\$ 8,000.00	\$ –

[1] Based on data received from the State of Louisiana.

[2] Based on data received from the State of Wisconsin.

[3] Transcript of Fox Business News’ “Mornings with Maria”, June 23, 2015:

BARTIROMO: Well, I mean, this is an idea where policy and business really should be coming together. But what about other policies? I mean, for example, Obamacare and the cost of health care has been a big burden for American business. What’s your take in terms of the costliness and the pressure that the health care legislation has had?

MCMILLON: Well, we’ve got 1.3 million associates in the U.S. We want them all to be covered. And we’ve got a broad health care plan with an affordable offering for those that are just getting started but lots of options. And we’re proud of what we’re offering in terms of health care. As it relates to increased costs, as long as it’s a level playing field, we’ll deal with it just like everybody else will. But we think it’s important that people are covered.

[4]<http://www.kff.org/health-reform/slide/current-status-of-the-medicaid-expansion-decision/>

[5]<http://corporate.walmart.com/our-story/our-locations#/united-states>

[6]<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/06/22/us/politics/senate-health-care-whip-count.html?mcubz=0>

[7]<https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/pacgot.php?cycle=2016&cmte=C00093054>

[8]https://www.fec.gov/data/disbursements/?two_year_transaction_period=2018&data_type=processed&committee_id=C00093054&recipient_name=alexander&recipient_name=barrasso&recipient_name=blunt&recipient_name=burr&recipient_name=cornyn&recipient_name=crapo&recipient_name=enzi&recipient_name=hatch&recipient_name=mcconnell&recipient_name=roberts&recipient_name=rounds&recipient_name=scott&recipient_name=shelby&recipient_name=strange&recipient_name=thune&recipient_name=toomey&recipient_name=wicker&min_date=01%2F01%2F2017&max_date=12%2F31%2F2018