UFCW Asks Leading Female Filmmakers to End Partnership with Walmart’s Oscars Campaign

Washington, D.C. – In light of Walmart’s track record of mistreating its female workforce, Making Change at Walmart (MCAW) and the United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) Secretary-Treasurer, Esther Lopez, sent a joint letter to Melissa McCarthy, Dee Rees, and Nancy Meyers, urging them to stand up for the rights of working women and end their Oscars Awards partnership with Walmart.

The letter from MCAW was in response to the three prominent female celebrities’ partnership with Walmart to produce the company’s television commercials that will air during the Oscars Awards ceremony. As part of the effort to highlight Walmart’s track record, MCAW published a full-page ad in the 2/20 edition of Variety magazine and will run a black-and-white version of the ad in USA Today next Thursday.

“While at face value this would seem to represent a positive campaign, we urge you to look at the facts about Walmart’s past actions that reflect on its values. Values that have had a negative impact on countless women and their families, and that send a terrible message as to what behavior is acceptable if we are serious about social equality and justice,” said Lopez in the letter to the three Hollywood filmmakers.

The ad and letters list several reasons why Walmart is an unfriendly workplace for women, families, and pregnant workers, and details Walmart’s scrutiny towards some women of color shoppers and mistreatment of some LGBTQ employees.

As part of an effort to raise public awareness of Walmart’s record on women, MCAW is launching a multifaceted campaign which will include ground actions leading up to this year’s Academy awards, a targeted social media campaign, and paid media. Additional announcements about the next phase of the campaign will be made in the coming days.

“We admire Ms. Rees, McCarthy, and Meyers for their work, and we urge them to do what is right and speak out against Walmart’s record. No actor, especially ones as talented and passionate as these, should ever allow themselves to be used by Walmart to hide the truth about how they treat women. It’s time for Walmart to change, and Ms. Rees, McCarthy, and Meyers can be a powerful voice for that change.” said Lopez.

A copy of the letter and additional information on MCAW’s Oscars campaign can be found at changewalmart.org/oscars.
What will it take for the Academy to care about women who work at Walmart?

Walmart’s record of mistreating countless women workers is shocking. Not just countless female workers, but mothers, pregnant women, LGBTQ, and even some women of color shoppers have dealt with Walmart’s unfair and unjust business practices. Practices like:

- Poverty-level starting wages and poor health care
- No paid maternity or parental leave for part-time working women
- Routinely disciplining pregnant women and others who take time off to care for themselves or sick family
- Gaps in enforcing non-discrimination as to gender identity, according to Human Rights Campaign
- Locked up African-American haircare products in some stores

Which begs the question, why are the Academy and big stars like Melissa McCarthy, Dee Rees, and Nancy Meyers promoting Walmart at this year’s Oscars?

Please stand up for the 825,000 women who work at Walmart, sign our petition and tell the Academy, Melissa McCarthy, Dee Rees, and Nancy Meyers to end their partnership with a company that mistreats its women workers.

Learn more at: www.changewalmart.com/oscars

PAID FOR BY UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION
Letters to Melissa McCarthy, Nancy Meyers, Dee Rees:

Ms. Dee Rees  
Frankfurt, Kurnit, Klein & Selz  
Attention: Victoria S. Cook  
2029 Century Park East, Suite 1060  
Los Angeles, CA 90067  

Dear Ms. Rees:

Across America, the actions taken by leading voices, including those in Hollywood, shape our nation and values. For example, we have seen the determination of countless actresses, actors, and entertainers, who have spoken out in support of the #TimesUp movement and gender equality. Make no mistake, as a leader [actor and director], your actions send a powerful message of what is right and wrong. It is in this spirit that our organization, Making Change at Walmart (MCAW), was shocked to learn of your decision to partner with Walmart in its Oscar campaign to direct commercials for this year’s Academy Awards ceremony.

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Throughout Walmart’s recent history, there have been numerous instances of the retailer not truly valuing women, including mothers, pregnant workers, members of the LGBTQ community and women of color. These instances do not even include the fact that Walmart pays its hard-working workers — male and female — so poorly that tens of thousands are forced to depend on government assistance.

We urge you to not only reconsider this decision to partner with Walmart, but to do so based on the following:

- Exploiting Female Overseas Supply Chain Workers: According to a 2016 report from the Asia Floor Wage Alliance, workers in some factories in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, and Indonesia that supply Walmart claimed that they faced sexual harassment, unsafe working conditions, low wages, denial of benefits, and forced overtime that resulted in “...mass fainting episodes resulting from over exertion, exacerbated by inadequate nutrition.”
• **LGBTQ-Unfriendly Policies:** Last year, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) took the unusual step of suspending Walmart’s score for LGBTQ corporate equality after two investigations by the EEOC “pointed to significant enforcement gaps in Walmart’s non-discrimination policy, specifically with regards to sex and gender identity…” Furthermore, some members of the Walton family, the owners of Walmart, have given extensively to anti-LGBTQ political candidates and causes. Walmart owner and Walton family member Jim Walton has, in the past, given repeatedly to Arkansas State Senator Jason Rapert. Rapert is a leading crusader against gay marriage in Arkansas. After a state judge ruled Arkansas’ bans on gay marriage unconstitutional in 2014, Rapert sponsored a resolution accusing the judge of violating his oath and calling for the creation of a judicial recall process in the state.

• **Issues with Equal Pay Transparency:** In 2015, Walmart successfully blocked a shareholder vote that would have required the company to disclose how many men and women were in each pay grade. And again in 2017, Walmart attempted to block a shareholder proposal requiring a report: “...on the Company’s policies and goals to reduce the gender pay gap.” That proposal was eventually withdrawn amid Walmart’s opposition. At the time, Jaqui Canney, the company’s executive vice president of global people, said, “The stats don’t make you feel very good about how long it would take to reach [gender] parity.”

• **Family-Unfriendly Policies:** Inadequate sick day policies and irregular scheduling make Walmart a very difficult place to work and raise a family. Walmart does not guarantee paid sick days or offer holiday pay to its workers; instead the company utilizes a policy where workers must accrue paid time off based on hours worked. This means a new part-time Walmart worker must work 43.33 hours to earn just one hour of paid time off. Earning just one hour of paid time off could take a part-time worker weeks because the company’s scheduling system fails to ensure that all part-time workers have access to a fuller and more consistent schedule. Based on these policies it would be difficult for many working parents who need regular childcare to have a stable life working at Walmart.

• **Extra Scrutiny for Women of Color:** Walmart has been criticized for having put extra security packaging on black hair care products in some stores in Virginia, North Carolina, and California. Some of the locked-up products have cost as little as $3.94, while products used primarily by white shoppers remained unlocked in the same store.

• **Denial of Maternity Leave and Health Care to Hundreds of Thousands of Workers:** As of 2015, 50 percent of Walmart’s hourly workers are part-time, according to the New York Times, yet Walmart does not offer health insurance to any part-time worker who averages less than 30 hours per week. Even though Walmart recently expanded its paid parental leave program for full-time employees,
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- **High Female Turnover**: How poor are Walmart jobs? Based on the 2016 overall retail industry turnover rate of 53 percent; an estimated 437,000 women workers leave Walmart every year.

- **Support of President Trump**: In February 2017, President Trump selected Walmart CEO Doug McMillon to participate in his Women in the Workforce discussion and appointed him to his now-defunct business advisory council. In August 2017, McMillon failed to resign from Trump’s business advisory council in the wake of Trump’s Charlottesville remarks. That same month, the Trump administration halted a rule that would have required large companies to report employee pay by race and gender — an Obama-era policy that aimed to close wage disparities.

Again, on behalf of our tens of thousands of supporters, and the better and more just America we all must believe in, we urge you to end your Oscar campaign partnership with Walmart. If any of us, whether we work in Hollywood or not, are to change this nation for the better, we must stand up against all injustice - especially when this workplace injustice is perpetuated by the largest employer in the nation.

We sincerely hope that you listen to our concerns, and will be reaching out to your representatives to meet and discuss how we can best work together to improve the working conditions of all women Walmart workers.

Sincerely,

Esther R. Lopez

International Secretary-Treasurer
Ms. Melissa McCarthy
MGMT Artists:
451 South Beaudry Avenue
Suite F180
Los Angeles CA 90017

Dear Ms. McCarthy:

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Creative Artists Agency  
2000 Avenue of the Stars  
Los Angeles CA  90067

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[Signature]

International Secretary-Treasurer

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