

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 27, 2020

Mr. Doug McMillon  
President and CEO  
Walmart  
702 Southwest 8th Street  
Bentonville, AR 72716

Dear Mr. McMillon,

As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to spread, we understand that essential businesses are rapidly adjusting operations to keep customers and employees safe. However, these adjustments must be consistent across organizations to be effective. Unfortunately, we have heard from constituents who have been unable to access your stores for groceries and medications they needed due to long wait lines and a lack of proper accommodations. For the sake of the health and well-being of Americans, we urge you to require all Walmart and Sam's Club stores to comply with social distancing standards and provide older adults and people with disabilities priority access and opportunities to be seated while awaiting entry.

Walmart is a cornerstone of many communities and must be a model of how to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This includes complying with social distancing standards issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ensuring that seniors and people with disabilities – those at greatest risk of illness due to COVID-19 – are not put in harm's way. We acknowledge and appreciate the initial steps Walmart has taken to protect vulnerable populations such as providing dedicated store hours and contactless pick-up options. These unprecedented times have required drastic changes to the way Americans navigate their lives and we hope your company will be a leader in meeting the unique challenges of this crisis.

The emerging evidence suggests that the CDC social distancing standards are beginning to flatten the curve of the number of new COVID-19 cases reported across the country. These standards have resulted in changes in the way many organizations operate. For example, grocery stores and other essential businesses have started to limit the number of patrons allowed in a store at any given time. While this is a positive step, this change in policy is resulting in long lines forming outside of businesses. Enforcing the suggested six feet of separation while individuals are waiting in line is critical. This can be done in multiple ways, including by simply designating the appropriate distances with brightly colored tape on the ground and the use of directional arrows inside stores in order to reduce traffic among shoppers. Walmart, as one of the largest retail organizations in the country, must do everything possible to adhere to these guidelines.

In addition, we urge you to provide accommodations for those with the greatest needs. As lines grow outside of business establishments, like Walmart, many older adults and people with disabilities are physically unable to stand for the length of time required to enter the stores. This leaves them with the unthinkable decision to leave the line and attempt to return to the store at a different time when the line may be shorter, which would increase their potential exposure to COVID-19. As a solution, older adults and people with disabilities should be provided priority access to the store and chairs or benches, appropriated spaced, should be placed at set intervals outside of the store, providing a place for older adults and people with disabilities to rest while waiting for the line to move forward. These chairs or benches should be placed at least six feet apart and a protocol should be established to regularly clean and disinfect these shared surfaces. Additional accommodations could include systems that allow for contactless pick-up, waiving delivery charges or allowing older adults and people with disabilities the option to schedule an appointment to enter the store. Walmart and other companies must continue to ensure that those at the greatest risk of illness from COVID-19 remain supported throughout the public health emergency.

We implore you to take action now to reduce the likelihood of further infection of members of our communities. During these unprecedented times, unprecedented measures must be taken. Walmart must consider the needs of seniors and people with disabilities and do its part to protect the health and safety of customers.

Sincerely,

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Robert P. Casey Jr.  
United States Senator

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Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

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Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator