

Howard Schultz
President & CEO
Starbucks Support Center
Seattle, Washington, United States



Dear Howard,

We, the partners at Starbucks 23rd and Robinson, dare to embody our progressive values by orienting our labor structure to truly make all Starbucks workers, partners. Rossann Williams wrote to all partners in December last year, commenting on hearing the phrase, “corporate versus worker”. We do not believe corporate partners set out to deliberately exploit retail partners. However, the labor structure of not providing retail partners workplace democracy and a living wage makes our working relationship, “corporate versus worker.” Without a union, existing structures have competing priorities, one of which, being the bottom line of the business. The bottom line of our union is us, the partners. By giving us the ability to negotiate for ourselves and the common good, unionizing will only deepen our company’s commitment to the human side of the business.

We aim to further our shared mission to “inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time”. However, with our voices silenced from the current labor structure, we are alienated from genuinely connecting with our community. Without a labor representative on the corporate board of directors, the two symbolic empty chairs, representing partners and customers, create a baseline of saying that our voices don’t matter, except by profit margin, after extracting surplus value from our labor. If we are to inspire and nurture the human spirit, we need to start “acting with courage, challenging the status quo, and finding new ways to grow our company and each other” by creating a more economically just labor structure. Through our union, we seek to embody our progressive values, in order to alleviate economic alienation, so that we inspire and nurture the human spirit.

We look to Germany in observing how actual progressive corporations function in relation to labor through social market economics. Many of our store’s partners study economics or the performing arts, including acting, musical theatre, and opera at Oklahoma City University or University of Oklahoma. Our opera singer partner knows that Germany’s strong middle class, support for the arts, and labor representation on their corporations’ board of directors, came from a historical effort to restrain corporate power. Germany’s progressive corporate model proves that the American skilled/unskilled labor argument misses the nuance of baseline dignity for all workers who sell their labor. United States labor history has advanced actor’s equity, worker’s rights and benefits, including Starbucks benefits, and our civil rights. However, unrestrained corporate power in the United States has negatively affected our environment, our social bonds, and the dignity for all workers.

Today, a working-class American cannot simply work one job to support themselves through college, let alone earn a living wage from a service industry job, which wasn’t the case in the 1960s. The recent push for the \$15 minimum wage wasn’t decided by the free market, but rather,

an effort from protestors on the West Coast back in 2012. Since the 1970s, American productivity has skyrocketed, while wages have not. We appreciate Starbucks' recent increased pay rate of \$15 per hour going forward, but Starbucks has failed to adequately address seniority pay. You, as our CEO, have received millions in bonuses off the backs of our labor, with our voices silenced. Retail partners create the value, which turns into profit, for the corporation. We are calling on Starbucks to embody its progressive values by letting us workers have workplace democracy and earn not only \$15 per hour, but a living wage, whose definition updates with cost of living and considers productivity.

We, are "performance driven, through the lens of humanity", and unionizing will enhance the focus of the lens of humanity. Unionizing will improve our retail performance because, with our voices represented, we bring our collective talents and participatory knowledge to problem solve. From learning routines, Starbucks standards, and local store operations, we know how to efficiently run our store. However, we must also focus on resiliency and not just efficiency. Unionizing offers resiliency for the company by improving productivity, retaining key leaders in their roles by lowering turnover, and improving operations by giving partners a voice.

Together, we aim for true partnership through power-sharing and accountability. In the spirit of true partnership, we call on you to sign the Fair Election Principles, attached to this letter, to provide a level playing field that will enable Starbucks partners to choose whether or not to unionize without fear of reprisal. Our union seeks to rein in corporate power so that all Starbucks workers who sell their labor receive dignity. We are calling on Starbucks to embody its progressive values by letting us workers, who produce the value for the corporation, have workplace democracy and earn a living wage. We also aim for eventual labor representation on the corporate board of directors. We challenge you, Howard Schultz, to act with courage, challenge the status quo, and find this new way to grow our company and each other.

In Solidarity,

Starbucks 23rd & Robinson
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, United States

Collin Pollitt
Maxwell McIntire
Taylor Turnbow
Emma Campbell
Janie T. Schoolcraft
Kyaira Landrum
Katheren Hudgins
Michael Kepple
Stephanie Reynolds

Christina Smith
Giselle Kepple
Daijha Ashford
Joe Langer
Anna Astley
Kassandra Thomas
Alexandria Lester
Lucas Reyes
Mia Sherlock

Gabriel Anderson
Kurt Frates
Araxy Rangel

And others who wish
to remain anonymous,
but stand in solidarity.