



The People of the United States,
in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article I
Section 1
All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

RETAIL V. ROE

The Hypocrisy of America's Largest Retailers on Abortion Rights

OCTOBER 2022

UNITEDfor
RESPECT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As our country continues to grapple with the recent Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, closer scrutiny of the role large corporate retailers played in setting the current political stage, and an analysis of the impact the Dobbs decision will have on retail workers, is at once telling and disconcerting.

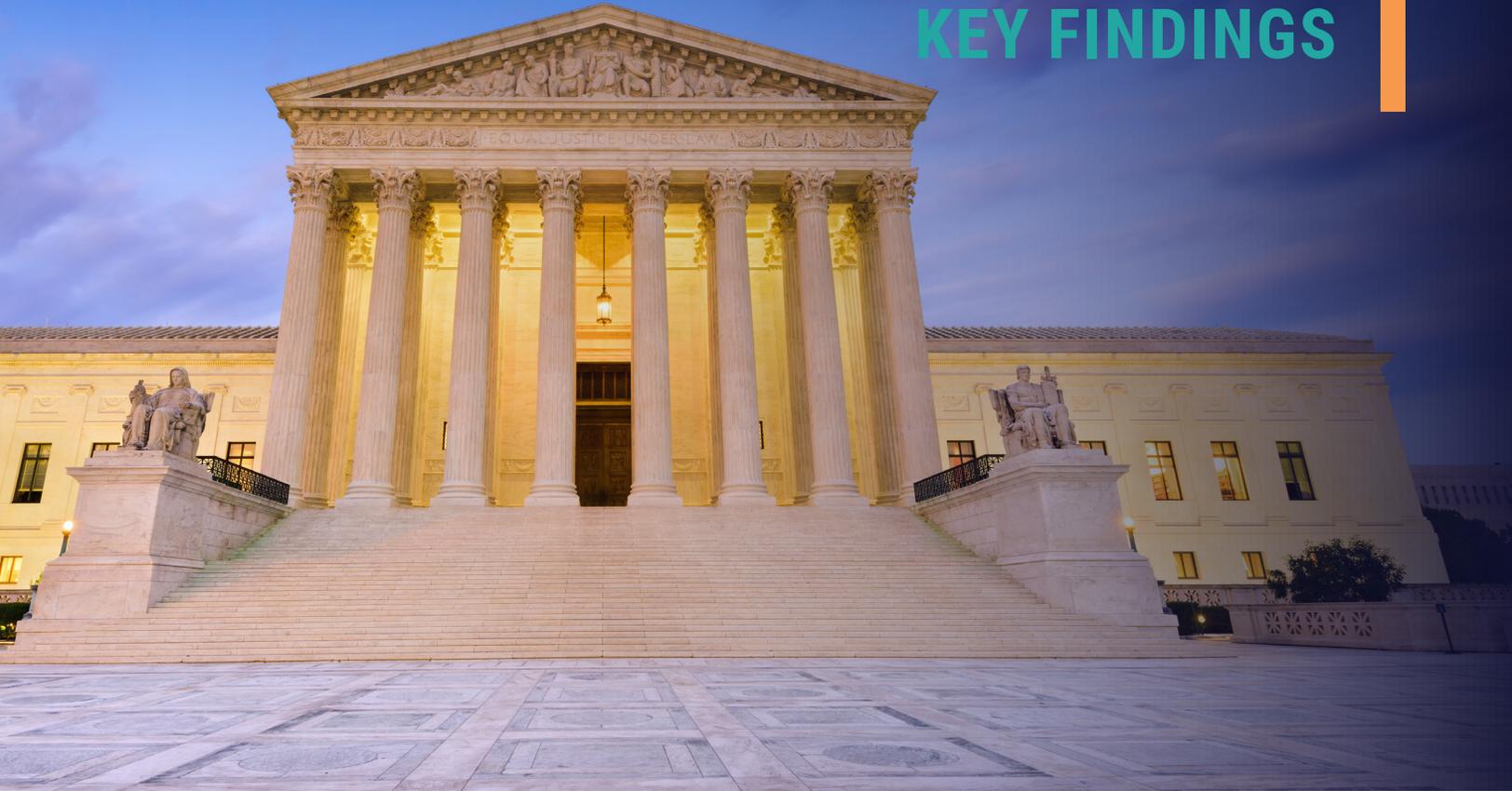
Retail is the second largest employment sector in the United States, employing roughly 16 million people, or one out of every ten people who work in the United States. Although the workforce is evenly split by gender, certain frontline positions, such as cashiers, are filled largely by women, often younger and disproportionately women of color.¹ Concomitantly, the retail industry and many of its top executives have long been criticized for creating low-wage and unstable jobs with few benefits.^{2,3,4,5} As such, retail workers are left particularly vulnerable in a post-Roe environment where access to safe and legal abortions is under siege across most of the country.

As a national advocate for people who work in retail, United for Respect took a close look at the top ten U.S. retailers by sales—Walmart, Amazon, Costco, Home Depot, Kroger, Walgreens, Target, CVS, Lowe's, and Albertsons— and analyzed their responses (or lack thereof) to the overturning of Roe. We also attempt an accounting, however incomplete, of the extensive political contributions the largest corporate retailers have made to anti-abortion political candidates and committees, and we assess the potential impact recent abortion bans and future restrictions may have on retail workers in the United States.

Our findings expose the complicity of top US retailers in the dismantling of a fundamental right to bodily autonomy through their political contributions to candidates and political action committees committed to the wholesale stripping of abortion rights in this country. The report also highlights the substantial impact the Dobbs decision will have on millions of people who work retail jobs in the United States, underscoring the need for retail industry leaders to safeguard employee access to reproductive care through employer-provided comprehensive health insurance and benefits.

Report Images: All images throughout report are stock photos.

KEY FINDINGS



Political Giving

The retail industry's response to the attack on abortion rights extends beyond company statements, HR policies, and benefits. Nine of the top ten US retailers have given extensively to right-wing candidates, campaigns, and committees that had a direct hand in rolling back abortion rights. While many of the top retailers have released statements in support of abortion rights, industry leaders like Walmart, Amazon, and Target have funneled money to the state legislators that craft abortion-ban bills, the governors that sign these bans, the attorneys general that defend these bans in court, and the US Senators that vote to put anti-abortion extremists on the Supreme Court.

Since 2016, the top ten US retailers have given over \$8.6 million to key figures and office-holders in the anti-abortion movement, including:

- Nearly \$4 million to Republican governors in states where abortion rights are under threat, and the political action committees that support them;

- Over \$1.5 million to Republican Attorneys General who seek to strip Americans of their abortion rights;
- Over \$1.2 million to Republican Senate Leadership, including the top three ranking Senate Republicans and the National Republican Senatorial Committee;
- Over \$1.2 million to the Republican State Leadership Committee, which backs and funds state legislators that are passing anti-abortion legislation at the state level; and
- Over \$600,000 to the Republican Senators that unanimously advanced the nominations of Supreme Court Justices Kavanaugh, Gorsuch, and Coney Barrett out of the Judiciary Committee.

In focusing on these officials and committees, this analysis **undercounts** the total dollar amount the top ten retailers have donated to anti-abortion candidates, as it excludes contributions to hundreds of other anti-abortion candidates, elected officials, and political committees at the state and

Figure 1. Political Contributions by the top ten U.S. retailers since 2016 to prominent anti-abortion candidates and committees



Federal level. For example, in the past two years alone Walmart’s PAC has contributed to Senators like Marco Rubio, who introduced a bill targeting companies that reimburse employees for travel costs associated with abortion care; Congress Members like House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, who suggested a Republican-controlled House would introduce a nation-wide abortion ban bill; and the Republican Party of Wisconsin, where state legislators are fighting to preserve an abortion ban from 1849.^{6,7,8,9}

Abortion Access For People Who Work in Retail

The abortion rights of over 8.2 million people who work in retail is severely restricted or under threat. Of this total, nearly 3.9 million live in states with full abortion bans, and 2.3 million live in states with partial bans. An additional 1.9 million people who work retail live in states where abortion is currently under threat and at risk of being banned. People who work in retail in these states will face greater difficulty in accessing safe and legal reproductive care as they will be forced to travel out of state, to take time off work, and undoubtedly incur out-of-pocket expenses. These are particularly prohibitive hurdles for low-wage retail workers who have little to no paid time off.

Company Policies

While six of the top ten U.S. retailers announced they will reimburse employees for out-of-state travel related to

abortion care, questions remain over whether workers will be given the paid-time-off necessary to travel, and how many people will be excluded because they are part-time, temporary, or sub-contracted employees. Recent commitments of travel reimbursement aside, 60% of retail workers are not covered by their employers’ healthcare plans and will face the additional hurdles to care that come with being under-insured.¹⁰ These barriers will apply to all people who work retail in need of abortion care, not just those in states with abortion bans. Even when working people do receive health insurance from their employer, there is no guarantee that their health plans cover elective abortion. For example, Walmart’s health plan covers abortion only in instances of rape, incest, health risk to the mother, ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage, or lack of fetal viability.¹¹ In this way, the nation’s largest private employer curtails the reproductive freedoms and abortion rights of hundreds of thousands of its own employees. While some retailers outside of the top ten have committed to supporting the reproductive rights of their employees, large corporate retailers like Publix, Best Buy, TJ Maxx, Aldi, PetSmart, and Dollar General have remained silent about their position on abortion rights, making no commitment regarding travel reimbursement or ensuring their health insurance plans cover abortion care.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the economic and political power the retail industry wields, it is well positioned to support access to abortion care for millions of people who work retail jobs in this country. By making a firm commitment to protect reproductive rights, retail executives and decision-makers will not only set industry standards but can also significantly influence the policies of corporate America more broadly. Access to safe and legal abortion is a matter of life and death, and the rapidity with which Americans are losing that access must be matched with an urgent response.

Retail industry leaders have a responsibility to protect and prioritize the health and safety of the millions of people they employ. As such, United for Respect calls on the retail industry to commit to the following recommendations:

- Ensure that retail employees have access to robust and comprehensive health benefits, inclusive of reproductive health, maternal health, parental leave, and paid sick leave.
- Ensure that employer health plans cover abortion broadly—including elective abortions—so that decisions related to reproductive care are made by the patient and their doctor, not an insurance company and the employer.
- Ensure that all employees in states where abortion has been banned or severely restricted are able to travel out-of-state to receive care. This benefit should include travel reimbursements as well as sufficient paid-time-off for the duration of travel.
- Ensure that the above benefits apply to all people who work in retail, whether full or part time, seasonal or permanent; and that those benefits should be extended to app-based workers, independent contractors, and all workers who make the corporation run.
- Withhold all political giving to anti-abortion candidates and political committees and organizations.
- Publicly disclose a detailed accounting of all political contributions, both by the company and any affiliated political action committees, to all candidates, elected officials, PACs, political organizations, 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations, and 501(c)(6) trade associations.

By following these recommendations, the top retailers can set a valuable precedent by publicly affirming their support for the reproductive rights and safety of their employees. And just as the January 6, 2021, Capitol Riot led to a re-evaluation of corporate giving to elected officials and political committees that supported the attempted insurrection, the overturning of Roe should provoke a reassessment of political contributions to the leaders of the anti-abortion movement. The retail industry plays an outsized and ubiquitous role in our communities, and should not be using its power to support the stripping away of fundamental freedoms. Instead, retail industry leaders can set an example for all of corporate America by reaffirming that abortion care is medical care and that abortion rights are human rights.

INTRODUCTION



As one of the largest sectors of the United States economy, the retail industry exerts enormous influence on the shape of American life. From groceries to automobiles to everything in between, the retail industry is present in practically every community. The top two retailers, Walmart and Amazon, are also the two largest private employers of working people in America, and nearly 16 million people work in the retail industry as a whole. Millions more work in jobs directly related to, or in support of, the industry, such as transportation, logistics, and security.

With about one out of ten American workers employed in retail, the policies and benefits that companies like Walmart and Amazon set for their employees have an enormous impact on the public, determining whether millions of working people and their families have health insurance, retirement savings, or sick leave to recover from illness or injury. But now, after the Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the role of large corporate retailers in both protecting and endangering abortion care and reproductive freedoms is increasingly coming under scrutiny.

Studies suggest that 1 in 4 American women will have an abortion by age 45, and that roughly 860,000 abortions occur

annually in the United States.¹² Yet despite being a common and necessary medical procedure, Americans increasingly face obstacles to accessing abortion care. Patients in need of an abortion must consider the cost and whether it is covered by their insurance provider, as well as whether they can take the time off work necessary for the procedure and recovery. And this is to say nothing of the legal barriers to abortion that have been thrown up by state governments across the country. It is estimated that 58% of U.S. women of reproductive age live in states hostile to abortion rights, a number that is at risk of rising in a post-Roe legal landscape.¹³ Twelve states have already passed full abortion bans, five more states have partial bans in effect, and bans are either incoming or temporarily blocked in another nine states, meaning that millions of Americans will have to travel out of state to receive abortion care.¹⁴

As abortion protections are increasingly rolled back, people who work in retail, in particular, will struggle to overcome barriers to their medical and reproductive care. Retail jobs have long been criticized for paying low wages, with limited hours and benefits, and many of these workers are precisely

the people who face the greatest challenges accessing abortion care. Retail cashiers—one of the most common occupations in the industry—are disproportionately young (66% under the age of 35) women (72%) of color (50%).¹⁵ The loss of abortion rights represents a serious threat to the health and safety of working people. The United States already has the highest maternal mortality ratio among wealthy countries, and this ratio is even higher for women of color.¹⁶ Before *Roe v. Wade*, women of color were 12 times more likely than white women to die from an illegal abortion.¹⁷ With state abortion bans proliferating, the country is at risk of returning to this pre-1973 status quo, and people who work in retail will suffer the effects.

In this context, the quality and coverage of the retail industry's healthcare and leave policies matter more than ever. Access to contraceptives and reproductive health services will be crucial to working people, and whether they enjoy broad coverage of abortion under their insurance plan, or whether they have health insurance at all, can mean the difference between life and death. For the increasing number of working people in states with abortion bans, their ability to travel to seek medical care isn't just an added expense, though it is, but now represents a potential loss of income from missed work while traveling out of state and recovering. Given the stakes, retail executives and board members have the opportunity and responsibility to respond to this crisis by enacting generous reproductive, parental leave, and out-of-state travel benefits that protect the rights and health of their workforce, along with their families and communities.

But the retail industry has another role to play in upholding the reproductive rights of its employees and protecting access to safe and legal abortion care. For years, the industry has made extensive and generous political contributions to right-wing candidates and campaign committees intent on ending abortion as a right. From the Senators who engineered an anti-abortion majority on the Supreme Court to the Governors signing anti-abortion bills into law, nearly every key figure in the recent rollback of abortion rights has been supported by top retailers, with contributions topping \$8 million since just 2016. This association with the anti-abortion movement is a political choice, and one that flies in the face of recent statements in support of abortion rights.

In the wake of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, coverage of corporate America's response has primarily focused on the largest companies. As a national advocate for people who work in retail, United for Respect is providing an overview of the retail industry's response to the Dobbs

decision, by looking at the top ten U.S. retailers by sales: Walmart, Amazon, Costco, Home Depot, Kroger, Walgreens, Target, CVS, Lowe's, and Albertsons. This report aims to go beyond the press releases to examine impacted employees, retailers' commitment to reimbursing out-of-state travel for abortion-care, and each company's history of political contributions to the anti-abortion movement and the architects of the strategy to reverse *Roe v. Wade*. United for Respect hopes that this report shines a light on the increasing challenges faced by people who work in retail in accessing abortion care, while also pushing the top retailers to make a commitment to safeguarding the reproductive rights of its employees and end its political contributions to anti-abortion extremists. In a post-*Roe* landscape, the retail industry must decide whether it will stand with its employees and communities, or with its anti-abortion allies in elected office.

ABORTION ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WHO WORK IN RETAIL

Approximately 16 million people work retail jobs in the US and over 8 million of them live in states where access to abortion has been prohibited, restricted, or is severely under threat (see Table 1).^{18,19} Nearly half of people who work in retail are women who may need abortion care at some point in their lives; but the loss of abortion rights affects everyone, including male partners, fathers, and family members. Additionally, neither employer disclosures nor Census data report the number of people working in retail who do not conform to, or identify with gender stereotypes who may become pregnant and need or want safe abortion care.

Particularly for those in the South and the Midwest, accessing abortion care post-Roe will be increasingly difficult. Nearly 3.9 million people who work in retail live in states with full abortion bans and 2.3 million live in states with partial bans in place. Of these, the state with the most retail workers is Texas, where almost 1.4 million workers have seen their right to abortion decimated to the point at which abortion care for pregnancy complications, like an ectopic pregnancy, has been withheld

from patients.²⁰ An additional 1.9 million people who work in retail live in states where abortion is currently under threat.

Because retailers have long relied on exploitive practices to maximize their profits — like paying low wages, scheduling irregular hours, and offering limited benefits — many of these working people will face insurmountable financial barriers to accessing abortion care and traveling out-of-state to receive it. The median annual wages for retail cashiers, customer service representatives, salespersons, and stock clerks are all under \$30,000 per year.²³ Additionally, 60% of people who work in retail don't receive healthcare from their employers and 33% don't have access to paid sick leave.^{24,25} Those who must go out-of-state for abortion care will not only be responsible for the costs of their medical care, travel, and childcare, they will also be saddled with taking time off from work and any resulting loss in wages. With over half of all Americans lacking the savings to cover a \$1,000 emergency expense, there are serious concerns around the ability of people who work in retail to cover the financial and logistical costs associated with abortion care.²⁶

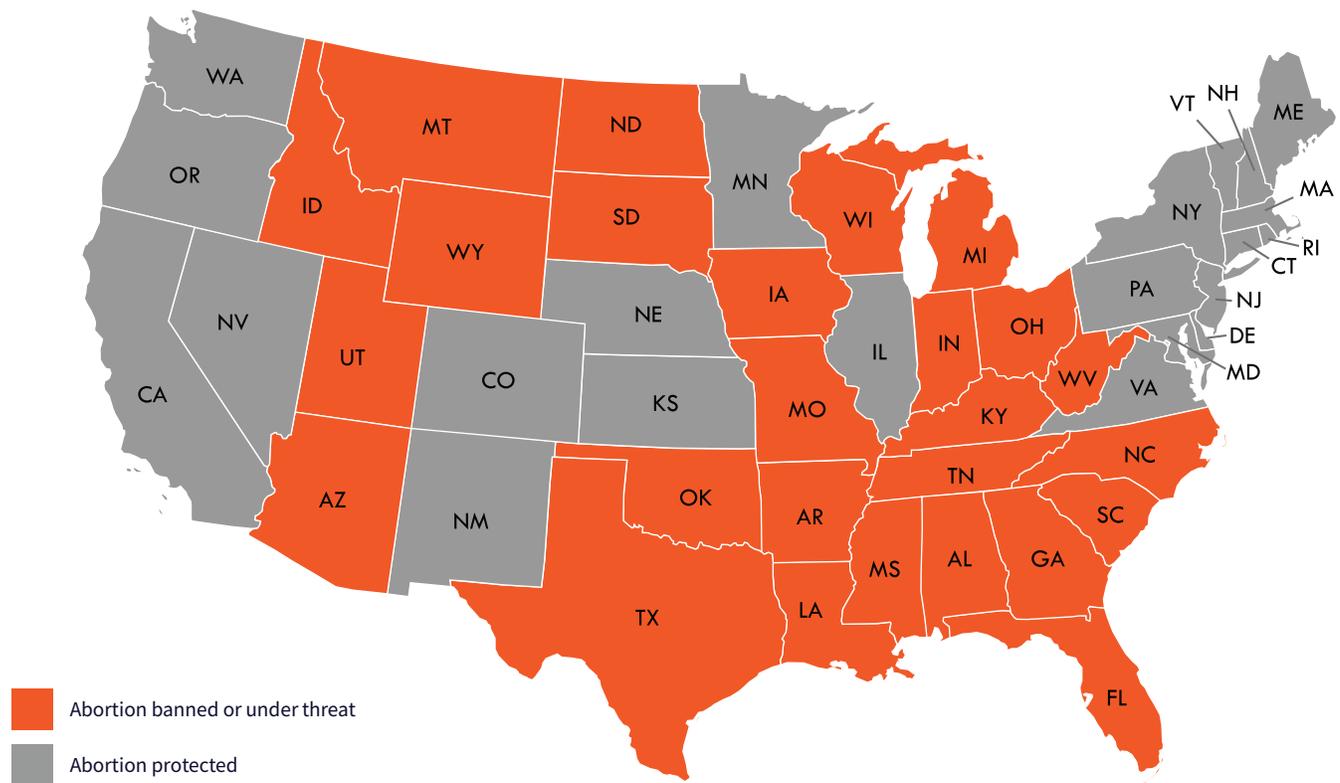


Table 1. Number of people who work in retail in states where abortion is banned or under threat

State	Status of abortion rights²¹	Number of retail workers²²
Alabama	Full ban in effect	235,500
Arizona	Ban blocked for now	342,200
Arkansas	Full ban in effect	137,600
Florida	15-week ban in effect	1,140,400
Georgia	Six-week ban in effect	517,600
Idaho	Full ban in effect	96,000
Indiana	Full ban in effect	317,100
Iowa	Ban blocked for now	175,400
Kentucky	Full ban in effect	209,200
Louisiana	Full ban in effect	219,900
Michigan	Ban blocked for now	451,600
Mississippi	Full ban in effect	136,300
Missouri	Full ban in effect	302,200
Montana	Ban blocked for now	62,200
North Carolina	At risk	511,000
North Dakota	Ban blocked for now	46,700
Ohio	Ban blocked for now	538,800
Oklahoma	Full ban in effect	184,500
South Carolina	Ban blocked for now	259,500
South Dakota	Full ban in effect	51,200
Tennessee	Full ban in effect	340,700
Texas	Full ban in effect	1,387,900
Utah	18-week ban in effect	190,600
Wisconsin	Full ban in effect	295,400
West Virginia	Full ban in effect	77,700
Wyoming	Ban blocked for now	29,800
TOTAL		8,257,000

THE TOP TEN U.S. RETAILERS



The top ten U.S. retailers employ approximately 5.3 million people, of whom 2.7 million are women (see Table 2). Many live in states where abortion is now banned or severely restricted. These figures most certainly undercount the number of impacted people who work in retail as employers do not report the number of employees who do not conform to, or identify with gender stereotypes who may become pregnant and need or want safe abortion care.

Table 2. Number of women employed by top 10 retailers²⁷

Top ten retailers	Number of U.S. employees	Estimated number of female employees
Walmart ^{28 29}	1,600,000	880,000
Amazon ³⁰	1,100,000	517,000
CostCo ^{31 32}	192,000	88,320
Home Depot ³³	437,000	166,060
Kroger ³⁴	465,000	227,850
Walgreens ^{35 36}	242,550	164,934
Target ^{37 38}	450,000	261,000
CVS ³⁹	300,000	147,000
Lowe's ^{40 41}	300,000	120,000
Albertsons ⁴²	270,000	132,300
Total	5,336,550	2,704,464

In response to the overturning of Roe, much of the media's attention has focused on whether companies will assist their employees in traveling out-of-state for abortion care. Out of the top ten corporate retailers, six have announced they will reimburse employees for costs associated with travel related to abortion care (see Table 3):

- **Walmart** reportedly announced reimbursement for travel if an associate has to travel more than 100 miles for abortion care in cases where “there is a health risk to the mother, rape or incest, ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage or lack of fetal viability”;⁴³
- **Amazon** announced up to \$4,000 reimbursement for travel if an employee has to travel more than 100 miles for abortion care, including elective abortion;⁴⁴
- **Target** announced reimbursement for travel if an employee lives in a state with an abortion ban;⁴⁵
- **Kroger** announced up to \$4,000 reimbursement for out-of-state travel related to abortion care;⁴⁶
- **CVS** announced it will make out-of-state abortion care accessible to employees;⁴⁷ and
- **Walgreens** will reimburse travel expenses for employees who have to travel over 50 miles for abortion care.⁴⁸

The other members of the top ten, Home Depot, Costco, Lowe's, and Albertsons, have made no such announcements.

Some smaller retailers have also announced or clarified policies in response to *Dobbs v. Jackson*, and some have even signed the “Don't Ban Equality Pledge,” which states that “restricting access to comprehensive reproductive care, including abortion, threatens the health, independence, and economic stability of our workers and customers.”⁴⁹

- **Apple** clarified that company benefits have long covered employees' out-of-state travel for abortion care.⁵⁰
- **Gap Inc.** announced that its benefits would cover comprehensive family planning, including abortion, and could be accessed by employees in any state, but did not clarify whether it would reimburse expenses for necessary out-of-state travel.⁵¹
- **Dick's Sporting Goods** announced it would provide up to \$4,000 in travel reimbursement for employees required to travel out of state for abortion care.⁵²
- **Sephora** released a memo to US employees, 80% of whom are female-identifying, announcing that as of October 1st, 2022, health benefits would be updated to support necessary out-of-state travel for medical care.⁵³
- **Ikea** announced that it would expand US benefits to include reimbursement for travel for abortion when not locally available, and reaffirmed its belief that “IKEA Retail U.S. supports the fundamental right of Americans to make reproductive decisions and exercise control over their own bodies.”⁵⁴
- **Victoria's Secret** offers extensive reproductive health benefits to its employees, including health plan coverage of therapeutic and elective abortions, free birth control, maternity care, breastfeeding support, and parental leave.⁵⁵
- **Lululemon** said that its benefits will cover employees if they travel out-of-state to access treatment related to reproductive health and family planning, and announced a \$500,000 donation to the Center for Reproductive Rights.⁵⁶
- **Nike** clarified in an email to *Retail Dive* that its employee benefits covered travel expenses for abortion when unavailable nearby.⁵⁷
- **J. Crew** signed the Don't Ban Equality Pledge and its CEO announced that the company was exploring how to assist employees with travel for healthcare.⁵⁸
- **Allbirds** sent a message to employees announcing that it would cover necessary travel costs for employees to seek an abortion, along with the expenses of a travel partner, and pay for needed child care during travel.⁵⁹
- **The Body Shop** announced it would cover travel expenses for abortion care, signed the Don't Ban Equality Pledge, and pledged to donate \$25,000 to the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.⁶⁰
- **Modcloth** signed the Don't Ban Equality Pledge and committed to covering necessary travel costs for employees seeking abortion care.⁶¹
- **Levi Strauss & Co** released a statement saying it would cover travel expenses for employees needing to travel more than 50 miles to receive medical care, and also announced that part-time workers who do

not receive benefits from the company could apply for reimbursement for travel expenses related to medical care.⁶²

- **Patagonia** signed the Don't Ban Equality Pledge and released a statement that the company covers the cost of medical insurance for full-time and part-time employees, and would reimburse travel, food, and lodging for out-of-state travel related to abortion care. Patagonia also announced that it would cover training and bail for all employees who peacefully protest for reproductive justice.⁶³
- **Adidas** said in an email to *Retail Dive* that its employee benefits would continue to cover abortion and other family planning services, and that it would cover up to \$10,000 for travel and lodging expenses incurred by employees enrolled in its medical plan who need to travel to receive medical care.⁶⁴

Still, these companies represent only a fraction of the top 100 US retailers, with major companies like Publix, Best Buy, TJ Maxx, Aldi, Dollar General, H.E.B., and PetSmart announcing no such changes in policy or employee support post-Roe.

Even for the retailers that have announced travel reimbursement policies, questions remain about which employees are covered and which are not. Census data shows that around 45% of retail workers are part-time.⁶⁵ Will they qualify for travel reimbursement benefits? And while the retail industry relies on seasonal hires, temp employees, and third-party contractors, will those people be able to count on the retailers to support their access to abortion care? The answer appears to be “no,” and Amazon has even clarified as much, saying that contingent workers, such as the hundreds of thousands of delivery drivers who wear Amazon uniforms and drive Amazon-branded vans, are not covered by the company's travel reimbursement policy since they are technically not employees.⁶⁶ App-based workers who help the companies run, such as Amazon Flex drivers and Walmart's Spark Drivers, appear to be excluded from such policies as well.

Questions also remain over how broadly retail employees' insurance plans will cover abortion care. While Amazon has stated that its health benefits will apply to elective abortion, Walmart specified that employee health plans would only cover abortion in cases where there is a health risk to the mother, instances of rape and incest, ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage, or lack of fetal viability. These types of restrictions strip Walmart associates of their bodily

autonomy, placing personal medical decisions in the hands of an insurance provider rather than the patient. And that's only in instances when associates have insurance to begin with. A 2021 report by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that only 40% of retail workers were covered by their employers' health benefits, the lowest percent of any industry studied, meaning the majority of retail workers will face financial barriers to accessing abortion care on top of legal ones.⁶⁷

Lastly, there are privacy concerns over how these policies will be implemented. Will employees need to inform their employer that they are traveling to seek abortion care? How will this information be safeguarded? These questions, and more, must be clarified so that employees feel safe and secure in accessing benefits related to abortion-care.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

As companies like Amazon and Target tout their commitment to reimbursing employees for out-of-state travel for abortion care, they fail to acknowledge their role in funneling millions of dollars in political contributions to anti-abortion Republican candidates and committees. In fact, nine out of the top ten retailers have given extensively to lawmakers working to strip people of their right to safe and accessible abortions. Costco is the lone exception, as it does not contribute to any political campaigns.⁶⁸

Large corporate retailers primarily contribute to political candidates and campaigns through political action committees (PACs), which bundle contributions from employees and

donors and then disperses them to candidates up and down the ballot. Most of the top US retailers have corporate PACs, such as the *Amazon.com Services LLC Separate Segregated Fund* or the *Walmart Inc. PAC for Responsible Government*, which spend millions of dollars on political campaigns across the country. How these PACs decide what campaigns and committees to contribute to is largely shielded from the public, and this lack of transparency helps corporate decision-makers avoid responsibility for said political giving.

PACs can also contribute to other PACs. For example, since 2016 the political action committees for Walmart, Home Depot, Target, and Lowe's have contributed a combined

Table 3. Whether the top ten U.S. retailers have announced travel reimbursement for out-of-state abortion care and whether they give to anti-abortion political candidates.

Top Ten Retailers	Announced they will cover travel reimbursement for out-of-state abortion care	Gives to Anti-Abortion Republicans
Walmart	✓	✓
Amazon	✓	✓
CostCo	X	X
Home Depot	X	✓
Kroger	✓	✓
Walgreens	✓	✓
Target	✓	✓
CVS	✓	✓
Lowe's	X	✓
Albertsons	X	✓

\$100,000 to the National Retail Federation’s RetailPAC, which calls itself “the voice of retail worldwide”.^{69 70} In turn, during that period RetailPAC contributed \$75,000 to the National Republican Senatorial Committee, \$9,000 to Mitch McConnell, and \$28,000 to the Senators that advanced the nominations of Supreme Court Justices Kavanaugh, Gorsuch, and Coney Barrett.⁷¹ Thus, PACs can support candidates indirectly in ways that are difficult to measure and track. Certain political organizations, such as 527 nonprofits can also receive contributions directly from the companies themselves, rather than their PACs, in unlimited amounts and then use that money to advocate for political issues and campaigns. For example, in 2021, the Republican Governors Association received \$175,900 directly from Amazon.com Services LLC rather than from Amazon PAC.⁷²

Like most corporate PACs, the retail industry’s political giving spans both sides of the aisle. This analysis, however, looks at how the top ten U.S. retailers have poured millions of dollars into the anti-abortion movement. The Roe decision in 1973 sparked a decades long national campaign combining the short term goals of restricting abortion access and the long term goal of overturning Roe completely.⁷³ The largest retailers have supported candidates and committees at nearly every level of this strategy, and because their political giving is so extensive, this analysis limits itself to the contributions from the top ten retailers to the following political candidates and committees:

- Republican Senate leadership, including the National Republican Senatorial Committee;
- The Republican Senators on the Judiciary Committee that voted to advance the nominations of Supreme Court Justices Kavanaugh, Gorsuch, and Coney-Barrett;
- Anti-abortion state governors and the Republican Governors Association;
- Anti-abortion attorney generals and the Republican Attorneys General Association; and
- The Republican State Leadership Committee which funds and supports anti-abortion candidates in state legislatures across the country.

The resulting picture is one of an industry that since 2016 has poured over \$8 million into the campaign coffers of anti-

abortion campaigns, imperiling the abortion rights of not just its employees, but all Americans. This pattern of political giving also casts a new light on recent statements in support of abortion rights, from the likes of Amazon and Target. When retailers have spent years funding the candidates and committees enacting abortion bans, their commitments to help some employees (excluding many temp, part-time, and independent contractors) flee those very same bans ring hollow.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANTI-ABORTION SENATORS

Perhaps no group has been more responsible for the right-wing composition of the Supreme Court that overturned Roe than Republican Senate Leadership and the Senators who sit on the Judiciary Committee.

Under Senator Mitch McConnell’s guidance, Senate Republicans strategically refused to advance the nomination of President Obama’s Supreme Court pick, Merrick Garland, out of the Judiciary Committee in 2016. In the following years, under President Trump, the Republican committee members unanimously advanced the nominations of Justices Kavanaugh, Gorsuch, and Coney Barrett, all of whom decisively voted to overturn Roe. Since 2016, the biggest retailers have contributed extensively to nearly every Senator involved in this takeover of the Supreme Court, from Senate leadership to the members of the Judiciary Committee.

For the purposes of this report, Republican Senate Leadership refers only to the top three ranking Republican Senate leadership positions: Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senate Whip John Thune, and Senate Conference Chairman John Barasso, as well as the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC), a PAC which calls itself “the only national organization solely

devoted to strengthening the Republican Senate Majority and electing Republicans to the US Senate.”⁷⁴ In recent election cycles the NRSC has spent hundreds of millions of dollars supporting anti-abortion candidates and was instrumental to the Republican Party controlling the U.S. Senate from 2014-2020.⁷⁵

In this same period, the top ten retailers’ PACs also made over \$600,000 in political contributions to the Senate Republicans that sat on the Judiciary Committee during the 115th and 116th Congress and who unanimously voted to advance the nominations of President Donald Trump’s three Supreme Court picks: Justices Kavanaugh, Gorsuch, and Coney Barrett.

The top retailers have also given extensively to other anti-choice US Senators that make up the Republican caucus, though those contributions are not tallied here. For example, since 2016, the top ten retailers have combined to contribute \$50,000 to the campaign coffers of Florida Senator Marco Rubio. This year, Rubio announced proposed legislation that would prevent companies from writing off the costs associated with reimbursing employees for travel to access abortion care, specifically targeting companies like Amazon.

Table 4. Top 10 U.S. retailers’ PAC contributions to Republican Senate Leadership (2016-2022)⁷⁶

Top ten retailers	National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) and related committees	Republican Senate Leader Mitch McConnell	Republican Senate Whip John Thune	Republican Senate Conference Chairman John Barasso	Total
Walmart	\$195,000	\$10,000	\$11,500	\$7,000	\$223,500
Amazon	\$75,000	\$1,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$96,000
CostCo	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Home Depot	\$350,000	\$10,000	\$18,000	\$7,000	\$385,000
Kroger	\$45,000	\$2,500	\$0	\$3,500	\$51,000
Walgreens	\$30,000	\$7,500	\$5,000	\$1,000	\$43,500
Target	\$75,000	\$17,500	\$14,500	\$17,500	\$124,500
CVS	\$105,000	\$25,000	\$12,000	\$10,000	\$152,000
Lowe’s	\$105,000	\$10,000	\$13,500	\$1,000	\$129,500
Albertsons	\$10,000	\$7,500	\$0	\$1,000	\$18,500
Total	\$990,000	\$91,000	\$84,500	\$58,000	\$1,223,500

Table 5. Political contributions since 2016 from the top ten U.S. retailers to Republican members of the Senate Judiciary Committee⁷⁷

Anti-Abortion Senator on the Senate Judiciary Committee	Voted to nominate Kavanaugh	Voted to nominate Gorsuch	Voted to nominate Coney Barrett	Contributions from top ten retailers since 2016
Marsha Blackburn	NA	NA	Y	\$38,000
John Cornyn	Y	Y	Y	\$59,500
Mike Crapo	Y	Y	Y	\$82,000
Ted Cruz	Y	Y	Y	\$7,500
Joni Ernst	NA	NA	Y	\$61,000
Jeff Flake	Y	Y	NA	\$28,500
Lindsey Graham	Y	Y	Y	\$29,000
Chuck Grassley	Y	Y	Y	\$76,500
Orrin Hatch	Y	Y	NA	\$48,500
Josh Hawley	NA	NA	Y	\$0
John Neely Kennedy	Y	Y	Y	\$18,500
Mike Lee	Y	Y	Y	\$49,500
Ben Sasse	Y	Y	Y	\$51,000
Thom Tillis	Y	Y	Y	\$63,500
Total				\$ 613,000

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANTI-ABORTION GOVERNORS

At the state level, the top retailers have supported Republican governors who have signed increasingly draconian laws restricting the right to abortion. In some states, the overturning of Roe set off trigger bans that were designed to take effect immediately after a Supreme Court decision like Dobbs. In other states, Republican governors have signaled plans to implement wider bans in the near future. Despite these extremist positions, the top retailers have given generously to these state executives (see Table 6).

Table 6. Top 10 U.S. retailers' contributions to anti-abortion Republican Governors (2016-2022)

State	Status of abortion rights ⁸⁵	Anti-Abortion Republican Governor	Contributions from top 10 retailers ⁸⁶
Alabama	Full ban in effect	Kay Ivey	\$9,500
Arizona	At risk	Doug Ducey	\$11,000
Arkansas	Full ban in effect	Asa Hutchinson	\$10,800
Florida	15-week ban in effect	Ron DeSantis	\$58,000
Georgia	Six-week ban in effect	Brian Kemp	\$45,400
Idaho	Full ban in effect	Brad Little	\$7,500
Indiana	Full ban in effect	Eric Holcomb	\$60,000
Iowa	At risk	Kim Reynolds	\$20,000
Mississippi	Full ban in effect	Tate Reeves	\$17,750
Missouri	Full ban in effect	Mike Parson	\$500
Nebraska	At risk	Pete Ricketts	\$2,250
North Dakota	At risk	Doug Burgum	\$3,800
Ohio	At risk	Mike DeWine	\$64,204
Oklahoma	Full ban in effect	Kevin Stitt	\$14,000
South Carolina	Six-week ban in effect	Henry McMaster	\$12,000
South Dakota	Full ban in effect	Kristi Noem	\$1,000
Tennessee	Full ban in effect	Bill Lee	\$27,400
Texas	Full ban in effect	Greg Abbot	\$102,000
Utah	18-week ban in effect	Spencer Cox	\$14,000
Virginia	Legal for now	Glenn Youngkin	\$150,000
West Virginia	Full ban in effect	Jim Justice	\$6,500
Wyoming	Wyoming	Mark Gordon	\$1,000
TOTAL			\$638,604

- In 2021, Texas Governor Greg Abbot signed an abortion trigger ban bill that went into effect upon the overturning of Roe. Walmart’s PAC has contributed \$105,000 to Governor Abbott’s campaigns since 2016.⁸⁰
- Following the Dobbs decision, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin announced he would seek to ban abortions after 15 weeks.⁸¹ In 2021 alone, Amazon contributed \$125,000 to the Virginia governor’s campaign.⁸²
- In Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis has said he wants to “expand pro-life protections” and has suspended a State Attorney for saying he would not pursue criminal charges for women seeking abortions.⁸³ Walgreens’ PAC has contributed \$28,000 to his campaigns since 2016.⁸⁴

In total, the top ten retailers have given over \$638,000 to 22 Republican Governors in states where the right to abortion has been banned or is under threat.

Along with giving directly to gubernatorial candidates, the largest retailers have funnelled millions of dollars into the Republican Governors Association (RGA), a major funder and supporter of the anti-choice governors who are undermining abortion rights. The RGA is one of the biggest spenders in gubernatorial races across the country and has been instrumental to the Republican party holding 28 of 50 gubernatorial seats in 2022.^{87 88 89} This past May, the RGA’s Co-

Chair, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts announced he would call a special session if *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, in order to pass a complete abortion ban with no exceptions for rape or incest.⁹⁰ Despite the extremist positions of its chairman, and its long history of giving to anti-abortion candidates, the top ten retailers have contributed over \$3.3 million to the RGA since 2016 (see Table 7).

Consequently, the RGA spends extensively to support anti-abortion candidates. This past March, the RGA announced TV buys worth \$31.4 million across five different 2022 gubernatorial races, including:

- Arizona: where the Republican gubernatorial nominee, Kari Lake, has said, “I believe that abortion is the ultimate sin,” and that she wants to close all of the state’s abortion clinics;⁹²
- Kansas: where Republican gubernatorial nominee, Derek Schmidt, praised the Dobbs decision and supported the state referendum to strip abortion protections from the state constitution;⁹³ and
- Michigan: where Republican gubernatorial nominee, Tudor Dixon, has advocated for abortion bans that make no exception for victims of rape and incest.⁹⁴

Table 7. Top 10 U.S. retailers’ contributions to the Republican Governors Association (2016-2022)

Top ten retailers	Contributions to the Republican Governors Association since 2016 ⁹¹
Walmart	\$1,110,450
Amazon	\$817,868
CostCo	\$0
Home Depot	\$81,250
Kroger	\$0
Walgreens	\$693,775
Target	\$100,450
CVS	\$540,000
Lowe’s	\$0
Albertsons	\$0
Total	\$3,343,793

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANTI-ABORTION ATTORNEYS GENERAL

Many retailers, including Walmart, Amazon, Home Depot, Walgreens, Lowe’s, and CVS have also contributed to the Republican Attorneys General Association (RAGA), an important force in the anti-abortion movement. While garnering less attention than the governors signing abortion bans into law, Republican attorneys general have played a key role in the implementation of these bans and the legal assault on abortion protections. In fact, a fundraising email from RAGA sent the very day that Roe was overturned said: “Every donation will help the Republican Attorneys General combat the Democrats’ pro-abortion agenda and stand tall for life.”⁹⁵

RAGA gained particular notoriety in early 2021, when its non-profit arm The Rule of Defense Fund helped organize and sent out a robocall inviting “patriots” to attend the January 6th Washington D.C. insurrection that led to the storming of the U.S. Capitol Building.⁹⁶ In response, some corporate donors announced they would change or pause their political giving policies. Yet, Home Depot, Walgreens, and Lowe’s have given RAGA over \$250,000 in combined contributions since 2021.

RAGA’s website includes a “Meet the AGs” section, which features a host of anti-abortion attorneys general, including:

- Mississippi AG Lynn Fitch, who helped design the legal strategy behind the anti-abortion position in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, and was called “The woman who helped to end *Roe v. Wade*” by the BBC;⁹⁷
- Arizona AG Mark Brnovich, who on July 13th, 2022, asked a court to lift an injunction on a 1901 state law that bans abortion in nearly every instance unless the pregnant person’s life is at risk;⁹⁸
- RAGA Chairman and South Carolina AG Alan Wilson, who thanked the Supreme Court for overturning *Roe* and is defending in court a 6-week abortion ban;⁹⁹
- And Ohio AG, Dave Yost, who cast doubt on reports that a ten-year-old Ohio girl, a victim of rape, had been forced to travel to Indiana for an abortion.¹⁰⁰ Shortly after saying that there was “not a whisper” of evidence to corroborate the story, Yost reversed himself when he announced that a suspect had been arrested and confessed to the crime.

Table 8. Top 10 U.S. retailers’ contributions to the Republican Attorneys General Association (2016-2022)

Top ten retailers	Contributions to the Republican Attorneys General Association since 2016 ¹⁰³
Walmart	\$130,000
Amazon	\$212,500
CostCo	\$0
Home Depot	\$508,921
Kroger	\$0
Walgreens	\$155,960
Target	\$0
CVS	\$220,301
Lowe’s	\$316,335
Albertsons	\$0
Total	\$1,544,017

Along with supporting current anti-abortion AGs, RAGA also spends heavily to take down pro-choice Democrats in states where abortion rights hang in the balance. For example, RAGA has spent extensively in Wisconsin where Democratic Attorney General Josh Kaul has sued to prevent the implementation of an 1849 abortion ban.^{101 102} Kaul's election this coming November will help determine the abortion rights of nearly 5.9 million Wisconsin residents, including 300,000 people who work in retail.

Since 2016, the top ten US retailers have contributed over \$1.5 million to RAGA's anti-choice agenda (see Table 8).

Wasting no time, RAGA held a private retreat for donors at the exclusive Breakers Resort in Palm Beach immediately after the Dobbs decision. Though the cost of attendance is unknown, one article estimated that donors would need to contribute at least \$125,000 to participate in the retreat. Representatives from Walmart and Lowe's reportedly attended the event.^{104 105}

CONTRIBUTIONS TO STATE LEGISLATURES

For years, Republican-controlled state legislatures have attempted to roll back abortion rights, pushing the very limits of what was permitted under Roe. Many of these legislators have been supported and funded by the Republican State Leadership Committee (RSLC), a powerful group that is behind much of the Republican party’s down-ballot success and which has poured money into candidates and campaigns that have targeted abortion protections.

In Georgia’s 2018 election cycle, for example, the RSLC spent \$1.2 million in state races.¹⁰⁶ The following year, fresh off Republican victory, the state legislature passed a trigger law that would go into effect upon Roe’s reversal.^{107 108} Republican Governor Brian Kemp, who the RSLC supported,

happily signed the bill into law. Similar anti-abortion laws followed the RSLC’s heavy 2018 spending in Alabama and Missouri as well.¹⁰⁹ In 2022, the RSLC is targeting North Carolina, where Republican state legislators are hoping to gain enough seats to pass a veto-proof abortion ban.^{110 111}

Despite a pattern of supporting and funding candidates intent on stripping away abortion rights, the RSLC has enjoyed \$1.2 million in donations from the top ten U.S. retailers since 2016 (see Table 9). In fact, on June 24th, 2022, the very date that Roe was overturned, Amazon made two contributions totalling \$25,000 to the RSLC.

Table 9. Top 10 U.S. retailers’ contributions to the Republican State Leadership Committee (2016-2022)

Top ten retailers	Contributions to the Republican State Leadership Committee since 2016 ¹¹²
Walmart	\$335,818
Amazon	\$201,681
CostCo	\$0
Home Depot	\$92,000
Kroger	\$25,000
Walgreens	\$399,989
Target	\$79,205
CVS	\$90,000
Lowe’s	\$70,000
Albertsons	\$0
Total	\$1,293,693



CONCLUSION

Whether they want to or not, retail industry executives and board members have a responsibility to protect and preserve the abortion rights of millions of workers. Even before the Dobbs decision those rights were under attack, with state governments passing anti-abortion laws that pushed the very limits of *Roe v. Wade*. In the meantime, at the federal level, anti-abortion Republicans were patiently advancing right-wing Supreme Court nominees to take over the highest court. Now that the strategy has paid off, millions of Americans, including millions of retail workers, have seen their bodily autonomy, and their ability to choose if and when to have a child, taken away.

In its capacity as employer, provider of healthcare benefits, and political spender, the top retailers are deeply entwined in both the cause and effect of the Dobbs decision, and have a responsibility to take action. As one of the largest American industries, featuring the top two private employers in Walmart and Amazon, the retail industry's healthcare policies and benefits (or lack thereof) have an outsized impact on communities and families across the country.

This outsized influence also presents an opportunity for the industry. While bodily autonomy and access to reproductive medical care continues to be a hotly debated and controversial political issue, public polling indicates the American people

firmly support the right to safe and legal abortion care. Across gender, age, and race/ethnicity, a majority believe that abortion should be legal in all or most cases.¹¹³ Retail industry executives can reflect and reinforce this public support by making a firm commitment to reproductive justice and setting a new standard for protecting abortion rights. And it doesn't require reinventing the wheel, as certain companies are already demonstrating best practices around reproductive justice and abortion rights. Whether it's the comprehensive reproductive health benefits of Victoria's Secret, Levi Strauss & Co's support for employees not covered by benefits, Allbirds' inclusion of a travel partner in travel reimbursements, Patagonia's health insurance coverage of all part time and full time employees, or Costco's lack of political giving, examples of successful corporate policies are out there and ready to be adopted as the industry standard.

Given their size and influence, the top retailers, in particular, have a responsibility to lead the way. To demonstrate a true commitment to the health and wellbeing of employees, United for Respect recommends that the retail industry take these concrete steps to safeguard and uphold abortion rights:

- Ensure that retail employees have access to robust and comprehensive health benefits, inclusive of

reproductive health, maternal health, parental leave, and paid sick leave.

- Ensure that employer health plans cover abortion broadly, including elective abortions, so that decisions related to reproductive care are made by the patient and their doctor, not an insurance company and the employer.
- Ensure that all employees in states where abortion has been banned or severely restricted are able to travel out-of-state to receive care. This benefit should include travel reimbursements as well as sufficient paid-time-off for the duration of travel and reimbursement for necessary child care during that period.
- Ensure that the above benefits apply to all people who work in retail, whether full or part time, seasonal or permanent; and that those benefits are extended to app-based workers, independent contractors, and all workers who make the corporation run.
- Withhold all political giving to anti-abortion candidates and political committees and organizations.
- Publicly disclose a detailed accounting of all political contributions, both by the company and any affiliated political action committees, to all candidates, elected officials, PACs, political organizations, 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations, and 501(c)(6) trade associations.

By following these recommendations, the top retailers can set a valuable precedent by publicly affirming their support for the reproductive rights and safety of their employees and customers. Companies like Walmart and Amazon are ubiquitous, play an outsized role in our communities, and should not use their power to support the stripping away of fundamental freedoms. The retail industry can set an example for all of corporate America by reaffirming that employee health and safety comes first, that abortion care is medical care, and that abortion rights are human rights.

METHODOLOGY

- Table 1. Status of abortion rights is based on a nationwide analysis by the New York Times, titled [Tracking the States Where Abortion is Now Banned](#), as of September 16, 2022. The number of people who work in retail by state is based on the June 2022 figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.
- Table 2. The list of top ten U.S. retailers based on sales comes from the National Retail Federation's 2022 [ranking](#). The number of U.S. employees is based on company reporting. The estimated number of female employees is based on the most recently available company reporting. When not available, as in the case of Kroger, CVS, and Albertsons, an estimate for the number of female employees was calculated based on the 49% of American people who work in retail that are women according to May data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, retrieved from <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CES420000010> on August 8, 2022.
- Table 3. Company policies are based on reporting on, or public announcements from, [Walmart](#), [Amazon](#), [Kroger](#), [Walgreens](#), [Target](#), and [CVS](#).
- Table 4. Political contributions are based on a search of FEC disbursement data from January 1st, 2016 to July 25th, 2022 for the Corporate PACs linked to the top ten U.S. retailers. Contributions reported may include multiple committees linked to a single candidate. As it does not have a PAC, Costco's contributions are listed as zero. Figures for Albertsons include contributions from Safeway Inc. PAC, as Safeway is owned by Albertsons.
- Table 5. Political contributions are based on a search of FEC disbursement data from January 1st, 2016 to July 25th, 2022 for the Corporate PACs linked to the top ten U.S. retailers. Contributions reported may include multiple committees linked to a single candidate. As it does not have a PAC, Costco's contributions are listed as zero. Figures for Albertsons include contributions from Safeway Inc PAC, as Safeway is owned by Albertsons.
- Table 6. Figures are based on a search of FollowtheMoney.org records for candidate contributions from the top ten retailers or their associated PACs from 2016 to 2022.
- Table 7. Figures are based on the 8872 Forms filed by the Republican Governors Association from 2016 through the first half of 2022. Publicly available through the Internal Revenue Service, form 8872 is filed by tax-exempt 527 political organizations.
- Table 8. Figures are based on the 8872 Forms filed by the Republican Attorneys General Association from 2016 through the first half of 2022. Publicly available through the Internal Revenue Service, form 8872 is filed by tax-exempt 527 political organizations.
- Table 9. Figures are based on the 8872 Forms filed by the Republican State Leadership Committee from 2016 through the first half of 2022. Publicly available through the Internal Revenue Service, form 8872 is filed by tax-exempt 527 political organizations.

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