Engagement in public policy

Our aspiration

We strive to make a meaningful and positive contribution to the countries and communities in which we operate through our engagement with government. Through policy advocacy, support of the political process, collaborations with business coalitions and contributions to the tax base, we aim to support public policy that is in the interests of our business, customers, associates and other stakeholders.
Relevance to our business & society

Good public policy is good for business: it promotes a stable and predictable business environment and supports public goods that allow businesses and their stakeholders to thrive, including a cohesive society, a growing economy, a healthy environment, fair competition and infrastructure. Public policy can also catalyze positive action on issues that are important to business and society, including climate change and economic opportunity.

Together with government and civil society, businesses play an important role in addressing societal issues. Walmart stakeholders, including customers, investors, associates and communities, expect us to engage in public policy in a transparent manner to help solve social and environmental challenges relevant to our business.

Walmart’s approach

Walmart aims to shape public policy that enables our business and the creation of shared value for our customers, associates, suppliers, business partners, communities and shareholders. Our approach includes the following:

- Governance of Walmart’s public policy engagement and disclosures to comply with the law, align with Walmart business priorities and values and promote transparency
- Advocating for policies at the local, state, national and international levels that promote the interests of our customers and other stakeholders of our business
- Supporting the political process, including encouraging our associates to vote and contribute to the Walmart Inc. Political Action Committee for Responsible Government (WALPAC)
- Playing an active role in business coalitions such as the Business Roundtable, working with other companies on issues that affect our stakeholders and our business
- Collaborating with civil society, other business and governments in efforts to address environmental and social issues

**Key strategies & progress**

**Governance & transparency | Advocating for public policy | Engagement in the political process | Working through business organizations**

While Walmart has an interest in a broad range of public policy issues, we focus our engagement at the intersection of our business interests and the common good—especially those issues where our interventions can create the greatest shared value. This brief focuses on public policy issues in our largest market, the United States.

**Governance & transparency**

Walmart aims to govern our public policy engagement and disclosures in a manner that complies with the law, aligns with Walmart business priorities and values and promotes transparency.

Our public policy strategies and activities are subject to review and oversight by the Nominating and Governance Committee (NGC) of the Walmart Inc. Board of Directors, a Board committee comprised entirely of independent directors. Management provides regular updates at least annually to the NGC concerning the company's public policy strategy. These briefings include information related to stakeholder relationships, elected official outreach, lobbying, political giving and our commitment to compliance.

Walmart’s Government Relations Policy governs the company’s interaction with elected officials and legislative and regulatory bodies at all levels. It requires that all conversations and engagement on behalf of Walmart with elected officials or legislative and regulatory bodies be done in coordination with the company’s Government Relations department. Our policy also requires that company funds shall not be provided to political candidates, entities or organizations without the express knowledge and consent of the Government Relations department.

Because of Walmart’s commitment to transparency, we have designed our policies and oversight processes to go beyond compliance with federal, state and local laws regulating disclosure of political engagement. Since 2013, we have included a discussion regarding our public policy and advocacy strategy and engagements in our ESG reporting. Walmart submits quarterly reports to Congress that outline Walmart’s federal lobbying activities, including lobbying expenditures for the quarter and the specific legislative items and public policy issues that were the topics of communications. In the quarterly reports, Walmart also identifies the registered lobbyist who lobbied on behalf of the company. For more information regarding our federal lobbying efforts, see the Lobbying Disclosure Electronic Filing system at Senate.gov. Our federal political contributions can also be found at the Senate website. State and federal lobbying
information can be found at our ESG Investors website. We regularly review our process to ensure we accurately and appropriately file our public reports.

**Advocating for public policy**

Walmart engages in public policy discussions to promote the interests of our business, our customers, our associates and other company stakeholders, by focusing on issues that align with our shared-value approach, including health and safety, climate change, marketplace trust and transparency, racial equity, trade and supply chain, firearms, corporate tax policy and data privacy.

We employ federal and state registered lobbyists and registered lobbyist consultants, and Walmart engages in lobbying contacts as defined under the U.S. Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA).

**Health & safety**

The global pandemic presented unprecedented challenges to the safe operation of our stores, clubs and fulfillment and distribution centers. Walmart plays an important role in feeding families and providing other critical goods and services across the country. In 2021, we collaborated closely with federal and state health officials in the distribution and administration of vaccines to the communities we serve. Throughout the pandemic, we have worked closely with public health officials at all levels of government to operate our facilities while maintaining the health and welfare of our associates and customers.

**Climate change**
Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, profoundly affecting all regions of the world and all sectors of society. We believe a strong climate strategy across government, business and civil society will help everyone manage the physical and transition risks associated with climate change, contributing to the resilience of our business and helping us create value for stakeholders.

To complement and facilitate achievement of our climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, including achieving our science-based targets for emissions reduction, we engage directly with policy makers, NGOs and trade associations in line with our Board-approved Statement on Climate Policy.

In addition to setting our own Science-Based Target for emissions reduction, Walmart advocates for 1.5°C-aligned, science-based national and international climate policies that are consistent with achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and fairly and equitably address the needs of all stakeholders. We believe market-based emissions-reduction policies are critical to achieving ambitious reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while supporting economic prosperity.

We actively support the goals of the Paris Agreement and we have advocated for emissions reductions at the Paris and Bonn United Nations Climate Change Conferences of the Parties, the Global Climate Action Summit and Climate Week events. We are also a signatory to the We Are All In Coalition, which urges immediate international action on climate change.

Walmart discloses our climate initiatives (including a discussion of our climate-related risks, approaches to mitigation and adaptation, and progress toward our Science-Based Target) through CDP as well as through our ESG Reporting.

Marketplace trust & transparency

Counterfeit and stolen goods are a growing problem on some online marketplaces. These illicit sales have become a $509 billion criminal enterprise according to a 2020 report by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Without sufficient marketplace safeguards in place, bad actors will continue to profit from the sale of fraudulent items to consumers.

As a leading omni-channel retailer, Walmart has made promoting trust and transparency in our marketplace a central organizing principle. We support consumer protection legislation that would require all online marketplaces to verify the identity and business information of third-party sellers and to publicly disclose basic information about third-party sellers. We believe these two components increase transparency and accountability to prevent illegitimate item sales.

Racial equity

Over the last year, the country’s longstanding struggle with racial injustice, inequality and fairness have come to the fore. Our nation has a long history of racism, and we see unacceptable events continue. And we understand that this is more than just a policing reform or criminal justice conversation. The facts show that change is needed in our financial, education and healthcare systems, too.

Walmart focuses on advancing racial equity primarily through our business, including by providing products and services that meet the needs of our customers; implementing a workforce development strategy that
focuses on creating access to employment, providing job stability and building mobility for professional advancement; providing business opportunities for suppliers from underrepresented and marginalized communities; and engaging and supporting community life. We have committed to disclosing our progress on our own internal diversity, equity and inclusion within Walmart twice per year.

Because Walmart also wants to accelerate the dismantling of systemic racism in society, we launched Shared Value Networks (SVNs) within the company and, together with the Walmart Foundation, established the Center for Racial Equity. The SVNs consider how to use Walmart business capabilities—including policy advocacy—to advance equity in our nation’s financial, healthcare, workforce education and criminal justice systems. As part of our engagement with policymakers, Walmart has been a leading advocate for the enactment of hate crimes laws in states lacking such statutes. And through our membership in Business Roundtable, we are engaged in the public debate on police reform and barriers to reentry for formerly incarcerated individuals. Read more: Equity & inclusion at Walmart and beyond.

Trade & supply chains

Walmart advocates globally for a rules-based global trade system to enhance economic growth through reduced barriers to market access, consumer choice and sustainable development. In addition, we engage in global advocacy to promote laws, policies and regulations that reduce risk, advance environmental sustainability and promote worker dignity within priority supply chains. Our policy agenda includes:

- Working with governments to advance policies that facilitated trade in medical goods (masks, gowns, pharmaceuticals) necessary to combat the global pandemic
- Advocating for environmental provisions in trade agreements as well a successful conclusion to World Trade Organization fisheries negotiations

Engagement in public policy

- Engaging with suppliers and allied trade associations to oppose unilateral tariffs that increase costs for consumers and reduce competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers
- Influencing governments in Southeast Asia to enforce laws to reduce the prevalence of forced labor in the region

Firearms

Walmart has been impacted directly by gun violence and seen how it affects communities. Our heritage as a company has always included serving sportsmen and hunters, and we take seriously our responsibility to help ensure firearms are sold safely and responsibly, at Walmart and beyond. That’s why we’ve taken steps in recent years to stop selling handguns and certain other types of firearms, to stop selling ammunition used in handguns and large-capacity magazines, to raise the age limit to purchase a firearm or ammunition to 21, to require a “green light” on a background check (where federal law only requires the absence of a “red light”), to videotape the point of sale for firearms and to only allow certain trained associates to sell firearms.

In September 2019, we submitted a letter to the White House and Congressional leadership asking them to consider the reauthorization of the Assault Weapons Ban. We also encourage lawmakers to strengthen background checks for gun buyers and to remove weapons from those who have been determined to pose a threat to themselves or others.

Individual data privacy

Walmart works with policymakers to enhance consumer privacy whether we meet those customers in the physical world, in the digital world or, as is increasingly the case, both. We strongly support bipartisan efforts toward a national privacy law that protects the rights of all consumers in the U.S. These laws should preempt a patchwork of state laws, which are inconsistent and insufficient to protect individual privacy. Read more: Digital Citizenship: ethical use of data & responsible use of technology.

Engagement in the political process

In 2020, Walmart again partnered with Time to Vote, a business-led, nonpartisan coalition that aims to increase voter participation in elections. We also took steps to encourage our associates to vote, including offering them paid time off to do so, if needed. Continuing efforts that began two years ago, customers and associates will see signs in our stores and clubs directing them to resources that will help them stay informed and participate in the elections, from information on requesting an absentee ballot and voter registration deadlines, to polling locations and who is on the ballot in their communities. We also invite our associates to participate in political giving through WALPAC, the primary vehicle for Walmart associates to financially contribute to the political process in the United States.

Associate contributions help elect lawmakers on both sides of the aisle at the state and federal level to make informed decisions on issues critical to the interests of our customers, associates, suppliers, communities and shareholders. In the 2020 election cycle, WALPAC’s donations were nearly evenly split with 50.2% going to Republicans and 49.8% going to Democrats. Campaign finance laws, at the federal level and in many states, govern the use of corporate funds in the election process.
WALPAC is funded solely with voluntary contributions from eligible associates, providing an opportunity for them to join each other in participating in the political process at the state and federal level. The involvement of thousands of associate voices can have a significant impact on the policies that affect the company and our stakeholders. All contributions to state and federal candidates and committees are subject to an approval process that considers a wide range of criteria such as voting records, Congressional leadership positions, committee membership and legislative activity; WALPAC’s campaign contributions to elected officials are not an endorsement of all their individual beliefs, voting records or comments.

Working through business organizations

In addition to direct advocacy and political engagement in areas consistent with our shared-value approach, Walmart is also a member of certain trade associations and coalitions that the company believes can assist us in achieving our long-term strategic objectives. These organizations and coalitions allow us to work with other leading companies on issues that impact the retail sector and beyond. Some of these U.S. trade associations engage in political activities, including political contributions and lobbying. We periodically review our memberships in such trade associations and determine if any adjustments are needed in our membership roster. Below are a few examples of organizations in which we participate.

Retail industry

We are members of business groups that work on issues important to the advancement and growth of the retail sector and business at large, including:

- **Business Roundtable**: Business Roundtable promotes the U.S. economy and expanded opportunities for Americans through sound public policies. In 2019, Business Roundtable released its *Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation*, which was signed by 181 CEOs, including Walmart CEO Doug McMillon, the organization’s current chair. The Statement lays out a modern corporate responsibility standard by which companies operate for the benefit of all stakeholders, including customers, employees, suppliers, communities and shareholders. We have endorsed Business Roundtable’s call for a *U.S. national climate policy solution* to reduce U.S.-based emissions by at least 80% by 2050 through a market-based mechanism that includes a price on carbon. We supported the Business Roundtable’s 2020 launch of a Special Committee for Racial Equity and Justice and the recommendations related to racial equity. Walmart is also a member of the **Second Chance Business Coalition**, a cross-sector group of large employers committed to expanding employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals.

- **Consumer Goods Forum (CGF)**: Comprising more than 400 retailers, manufacturers and service providers, CGF addresses key challenges facing the industry, including forced labor, deforestation, health and wellness, food safety, food waste, plastic waste and data transparency. Walmart is a member and Walmart CEO Doug McMillon serves on its Board of Directors. Our work with CGF includes advocating for the adoption of the packaging “golden design rules” to advance plastic reduction efforts and improve recyclability, along with working to advance global principles for Extended Producer Responsibility programs for managing plastic and packaging waste.

International business coalitions

We are members of coalitions that seek to facilitate commerce across borders including, for example:
**Americas Business Dialogue:** Americas Business Dialogue brings together companies from across the western hemisphere to develop, disseminate and support the implementation of policy recommendations that contribute to a business environment conducive to sustained economic growth. Walmart chairs the Transparency and Regulatory Cooperation Working Group where we’ve played a leading role in designing and advocating for e-government reforms and building a cross-sector model for implementation of these reforms.

**Business 20 (B20):** The B20 is the official G20 dialogue forum with the global business community. Walmart co-chairs the Digital Economy Task Force which crafts recommendations to the G20 heads of state on how to improve digital-economy inclusion. Walmart also sits on the Employment & Education Task Force.

**Business at OECD:** Recognized as the voice of business at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Business at OECD brings together firms from across the world to build positions on OECD policy initiatives. Walmart is actively engaged in the Corporate Governance and Responsible Business Policy Group and is a vice chair of the Environment and Energy Policy Group.

**International Chamber of Commerce:** The International Chamber of Commerce promotes international trade, responsible business conduct and a global approach to economic regulation. Walmart participates in the Trade Dialogues that leverage the voice of the business community at the World Trade Organization, the Commission on Corporate Responsibility and Anti-Corruption, the Commission on Environment and Energy and the Informal Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

**Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation:** The Global Alliance is a public-private partnership that works to identify and deliver commercially meaningful reforms to facilitate international trade. Walmart serves on the steering committee.

**Climate coalitions**

We are members of coalitions aligned with our climate aspirations, including our aspiration to get to zero emissions in our own operations by 2040. In addition to working with the Business Roundtable and CGF, as noted above, we are members of other coalitions advocating for an enabling policy environment, including:

- **Retail Breakthrough Campaign on the Race to Zero:** We support the effort to achieve net zero emissions in the retail sector by 2050.

- **We Are Still In:** We are a signatory to the coalition, which demonstrates our long-standing commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement and America’s contribution to it. In alignment with this, we also signed the We Mean Business/Ceres letter that supports a U.S. goal to cut emissions by at least 50% by 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

- **Renewable Energy Buyers Alliance (REBA):** We are a member of REBA, a collaboration of clean energy buyers, energy providers and service providers that, together with NGO partners, seek a transition to a zero-carbon energy future. The group advocates for policies such as wholesale energy market expansion, flexible financing for renewables, retail access and a federal carbon green grid.

Read more: Climate change.

**Other environmental coalitions**

Our aspiration to become a regenerative company includes aiming to protect, preserve and restore nature through supplier engagement and philanthropy, as well as reducing waste to zero. To shape an enabling public policy environment, we engage with several business coalitions, including:
• **Business for Nature**: We are members of Business for Nature, a global coalition that brings together business and conservation organizations to call for governments to adopt policies to reverse nature loss in this decade. In 2020, we supported Business for Nature’s Call to Action to reverse nature loss by 2030 and our CEO was part of the public video campaign launch which is also being used to recruit more signatories.

• **Midwest Row Crop Collaborative**: We are a member of the Collaborative, which develops solutions for removing barriers to widespread adoption of regenerative agricultural practices. It promotes policies that align conservation and farm profitability in Midwest markets.

• **Consumer Goods Forum and World Economic Forum**: Walmart is a member of the Forest Positive Coalition, the Tropical Forest Alliance collective action forum. Walmart also participates in the Plastic Waste Coalition for Action which has released guidance on policy design principles to address problematic plastic packaging and principles for the optimal design of extended producer responsibility programs for managing plastic and packaging waste.

• **Ellen McArhur Foundation and U.S. Plastics Pact**: The Foundation works to re-think, re-design and build a positive future circular economy. Walmart supports the organization’s New Plastics Economy Global Commitment and is a partner. The Pact is a coalition of businesses, government entities, non-governmental organizations, researchers and other stakeholders who will work collectively toward a common vision of a circular economy for plastics, including by advocating for policy regimes to enable achieving 100% reusable/recyclable/compostable packaging by 2025.

Read more: [Climate change and Regeneration of natural resources: forests, land, oceans](#).

**Challenges**

• Walmart is one actor, and the political process is subject to many factors.

• Walmart is a member of certain business and trade associations that we believe can assist Walmart in achieving our long-term strategic objectives; Walmart may not agree with every position or lobbying action taken by such trade associations. We work to influence these associations, particularly in our priority areas, but ultimately, they set their own agendas.

• The public expects a company’s political engagement to align with its values and transparency about its activities. At the same time, there can be pressure to weigh in on issues that are not core to our business or important to a majority of our stakeholders. We may not always meet all stakeholders’ expectations.

**Additional resources**

• [ESG Investors website](#)
• [Government Relations Policy](#)
• [Climate policy statement](#)
• [Equity & inclusion at Walmart & beyond](#)

**Endnotes**

About our reporting