



Starbucks Coffee Company

2401 Utah Ave. S.
Seattle WA 98134

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
U.S. House of Representatives
2162 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Congresswoman Pingree,

Thank you for your October 3 letter to Howard Schultz. We appreciate the acknowledgement of our continued benefit and wage investments. Throughout our history, we have created a partner-focused company offering industry-leading compensation and benefit packages, a safe work environment, and a culture of respect and belonging. We are consistently ranked as one of the best places to work, the best companies for women, the best companies for work-life balance, and the best companies for perks and benefits. All of these accolades were made possible by our direct partner relationship without union representation. That said, where partners choose to be represented by a union, we respect that choice.

Starbucks remains committed to good faith negotiation and satisfying all collective bargaining obligations. Towards this end, it is important to recognize that where Workers United has representation rights, these rights relate to every store as a stand-alone “bargaining unit,” which entails separate bargaining for each location. For this reason, the process of collective bargaining requires a significant investment of time and fidelity to collective bargaining process by both sides. As such, Starbucks has engaged in good faith bargaining with Workers United regarding stores in Buffalo, New York and since, has sent letters to stores across the country to advance the collective bargaining process.

As we continue to invest in the partner experience, we do so conscious of our obligations and limitations under the *National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)*. Different legal rules apply under the NLRA when union organizing is taking place in a store, different rules apply when a union represents partners in a store, and yet another set of rules apply to stores where there is no union activity. **More than 99 percent of Starbucks partners fall into the third category**, which involves partners who have chosen to maintain a direct relationship with us without union representation and where there is no union organizing.

Although your letter suggests that no wage or benefits investments have been provided to any Starbucks partners at stores that have union organizing or representation, this is incorrect. The legal rules governing this area permit Starbucks to make unilateral changes if the changes were previously decided upon or similar in kind or degree with other types of changes made in the past. Starbucks continues to implement annual wage increases for all partners as well as provide access to improvements such as [access to abortion and gender affirming care travel benefits](#).

Towards this end, I will be reaching out in the coming days to continue this conversation about our ongoing efforts at Starbucks, to clarify any mischaracterizations or claims related to applicable legal rules and discuss how we can work together to support working people across the country.

Sincerely,

AJ Jones II
executive vice president and chief communications officer, Public Affairs
Starbucks Coffee Company