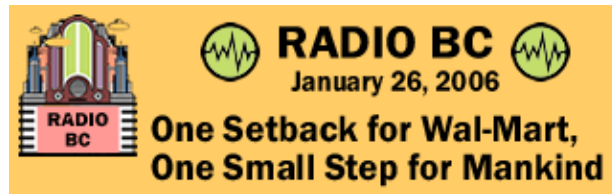


**The
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The battle against Wal-Mart saw a significant victory in Maryland, one that hopefully can be replicated and expanded upon in other states. The Democrat-controlled legislature overrode the Republican governor's veto of a bill that would force Wal-Mart to invest 8 percent of its labor costs in health insurance for its employees. Of the four companies with more than 10,000 employees that operate in Maryland, Wal-Mart is the only one that doesn't meet the 8 percent threshold. That's because Wal-Mart doesn't believe in workplace standards of any kind. It doesn't even believe in calling its workers "employees." Instead, they are "associates" – as if management is a partner and friend to the 1.6 million Americans who draw their meager paychecks from the largest company in the world. Wal-Mart can more easily be said to be an associate of China, where it buys up ten percent of that nation's exports. But Wal-Mart is certainly no friend or associate to of its employees, who earn below the poverty level for a family of four.

Wal-Mart's crimes against society are too lengthy for a brief radio commentary. It is a worldwide corporate villain, the leader of the pack in the global race to the bottom. The Bentonville, Arkansas-based corporation complains that the Maryland law, and other measures being pushed in various localities, unfairly singles out Wal-Mart. Well, that's what happens when a company makes itself a model of super-exploitation in the quest for super-profits. That's what *should* happen when a corporation provides so little in health benefits that the public must pick up the health care tab; when it encourages its uninsured and underinsured workers to seek out help from the state.

The Walton Family, which retains the controlling interest in the company, is the most aggressive rightwing force in the drive to privatize public education. The Walton Family Fund, along with the far-right Bradley Foundation, created and lavishly funded a wholly bogus Black so-called "movement" for school vouchers, and then paid for a national advertising campaign that made their hired Black political operatives appear to be authentic.

The Black Commentator – Radio BC: One Setback for Wal-Mart, One Small Step for Mankind

The Walton's are buying off Black organizations and media, wholesale, with advertising and contributions. Local NAACP chapters across the nation have been co-opted by the Walton political machine.

But they were unable to get to the Maryland legislature, despite intense lobbying by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, whose members would all like to be like Wal-Mart, one day. That's why, although Wal-Mart-specific legislation should be encouraged, no one should think that dogging the worst corporations will solve the problem. What's needed is a universal health care system, something enjoyed by the citizens of every other developed country in the world. Until health care becomes a right, the United States cannot begin to claim a place among the civilized nations of the planet. For Radio BC, I'm Glen Ford.

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