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PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Brown Joins Coalition Urging Walmart To Keep Its Commitments To Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

BALTIMORE, MD (January 14, 2025) – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown, as part of a coalition of 13 attorneys general issued a [letter](#) to Walmart voicing concerns about the company’s recent announcement of its plans to step away from its commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

In a letter sent to Walmart President and CEO Doug McMillon, the coalition of attorneys general urge the company to reconsider its decision to phase out supplier diversity programs, close down the Center for Racial Equality, end equity trainings for staff, and remove the words “diversity” and “DEI” from company documents and employee titles, arguing that the move would undermine important social progress and antidiscrimination efforts. McMillon announced the creation of Walmart’s Center for Racial Equality in 2020 after the murder of George Floyd, calling social justice and equity “essential” to the company’s “core business.”

“Diversity, equity, and inclusion policies are critical tools for preventing discrimination and addressing historic injustices against minorities and other marginalized groups. When major companies roll back their commitments to these efforts, they signal to smaller businesses that it is acceptable to do the same, creating a ripple effect that inflicts lasting harm across our State and nation,” **said Attorney General Brown.** “These initiatives are an essential part of our country’s promise of equality, and they should not be subject to the whims of politics. Diversity has proven in every sector of our economy and society to contribute to innovation, creativity, and problem solving, driving progress and helping us adapt to an ever-changing world.”

In its letter, the coalition notes that opponents to diversity initiatives have sought to improperly expand the U.S. Supreme Court’s narrow ruling in *Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* far beyond its scope. These opponents to DEI have attempted to pressure businesses and education organizations through unfounded lawsuits and threats of litigation and boycotts. The coalition makes clear that DEI programs remain legal and that Walmart’s decision to eliminate these efforts is not required by law. In fact, the coalition argues that such programs help ensure that companies remain in compliance with state and federal civil rights laws.

In addition to clarifying the legal landscape around DEI programs, the coalition reminds Walmart that such initiatives are good for business and popular among consumers. The letter cites studies that show companies with diverse leadership teams are associated with higher financial returns and consumer research that indicates that most Americans support businesses that take active steps to ensure that corporate culture and structure reflect the diversity of the American population.

In sending the letter to Walmart, Attorney General Brown joins the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Hawai'i, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont.

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