Honorable Vincent C. Gray

Mayor, District of Columbia

1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 316

Washington, DC 20004

Re: Large Retailer Accountability Act

(Date)

Dear Mayor Gray:

On behalf of the thousands of members of (your local) who work in Washington, DC, I am writing to strongly urge you to sign the recently passed Large Retailer Accountability Act. Requiring large retailers, who will earn significant profits by selling merchandise to the citizens of the District of Columbia, to pay their employees a “living wage” is no different than the City itself requiring its contractors to compensate employees with a fair wage. Why should large retailers who will reap profits from doing business here be treated any differently?

The arguments against the LRAA are the same flimsy excuses made repeatedly over the last century whenever progressive legislation was proposed. When the first minimum wage law was established in the 1930s, companies argued that the $.25 wage rate would be the end of business and decrease jobs. History proved them wrong and common sense shows that this argument is no truer now than in the past. Every time the minimum wage has been increased, or expanded to cover new groups, employment in our communities has increased. When employment increases, communities thrive. This includes all stakeholders in the community such as businesses, schools, government and the arts. Any action by your office to veto this legislation will only undermine the efforts to continue the revitalization of or city.

The arguments against the LRAA by retailers like Wal-Mart are a smokescreen for their longstanding history driving down wages across the nation. We have fought long and hard to realize the dream of better wages -- and the improved life it brings -- for our members as well as for all workers in this area. But dreams do not become reality through magic; it takes enormous effort, hard work and, many times, confrontation, to achieve those dreams. It also takes the determination to stand up to bullies when they use scare tactics and threats to get their way. Every good law was once only a dream. Each one, like the current legislation, was dismissed as impossible or impractical or somehow detrimental to the growth of business. In order to make those dreams a reality, it took the fortitude and courage of leaders who stood up and did what was right. We ask you to now do the same.

We strongly encourage you to support the workers of Washington DC and sign the Large Retailer Accountability Act.

Sincerely,

(Your name/title/union)