

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 5, 2021

Mr. Jeff Bezos  
Chief Executive Officer  
Amazon.com, Inc.  
410 Terry Ave. N  
Seattle, WA 98109

Andy Jassy  
Chief Executive Officer  
Amazon Web Services  
410 Terry Ave. N  
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Mr. Bezos & Mr. Jassy:

We write regarding the upcoming National Labor Relations Board election in Bessemer, Alabama, and to express our support for Amazon workers who seek to organize a union with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). We urge Amazon to take this opportunity to recognize the true value of your workers to your company's success and treat your employees as the critical asset they are.

Amazon's profits have soared by 70 percent over the last year, because of the hard work of your employees.<sup>1</sup> They have put in long hours and risked their own health during the COVID-19 pandemic to meet increased demand, and they deserve to share in the success they have made possible. Amazon's employees have the right to join together to bargain collectively for a voice in their workplace, and to vote to establish their rights to negotiate. They also deserve to receive the compensation, benefits, and respect that reflect their true value to the company and to their communities.

In a recent Executive Order, President Biden wrote that, "It is also the policy of the United States to encourage union organizing and collective bargaining."<sup>2</sup> The expansion of collective bargaining can be a net benefit to workers and management. Workers who belong to unions earn higher wages, have more paid time off, and negotiate improved healthcare coverage, which not only benefit the employee, but also help to strengthen their families and communities.<sup>3</sup> The workers in Alabama are also focused on advancing racial equity.<sup>4</sup> Given the historic challenges our nation faces right now, these kinds of improvements are needed across the economy.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/windfall-profits-and-deadly-risks/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/22/executive-order-protecting-the-federal-workforce/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epi.org/publication/why-unions-are-good-for-workers-especially-in-a-crisis-like-covid-19-12-policies-that-would-boost-worker-rights-safety-and-wages/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/25/business/amazon-union-alabama.html>

Amazon should view this as an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to its stated values. Though Amazon has referred to their workers as “heroes fighting for their communities and helping people get critical items they need,” Amazon’s treatment of its workforce has not always reflected that.<sup>5</sup> From using so-called “flex” workers to avoid paying full benefits to your employees,<sup>6</sup> to failing to provide complete data on COVID-19 spread in the workplace, to spying on employees seeking to organize a union,<sup>7</sup> Amazon has not always treated its workers with the dignity they deserve. During this campaign in Alabama, employees seeking to unionize have received misleading text messages, been overwhelmed by anti-union propaganda,<sup>8</sup> and faced attempts to force in person voting<sup>9</sup> during a pandemic that has resulted in the deaths of [nearly 500,000] Americans.<sup>10</sup> All of these efforts represent disgraceful attempts to coerce Amazon employees out of exercising their voices and their rights under the National Labor Relations Act.

The upcoming election in Bessemer, Alabama is an opportunity for a reset. We ask that Amazon follow the law and allow their employees to freely exercise their right to organize this union. We will be paying close attention to the way Amazon conducts itself during this vote and call on Amazon to ensure an election for its workers in Alabama that honors the dignity of work.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/4/8/21214117/amazon-warehouse-workers-coronavirus-senator-booker-chris-smalls-senators-letter>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2018/12/26/18156857/amazon-flex-workers-prime-delivery-christmas-shopping#:~:text=Amazon%20is%20cutting%20costs%20with,being%20injured%20on%20the%20job.>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/10/6/21502639/amazon-union-busting-tracking-memo-spoc>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.vice.com/en/article/5dpkad/amazon-launches-anti-union-website-to-derail-alabama-union-drive>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/01/22/amazon-union-vote-alabama/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/>



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



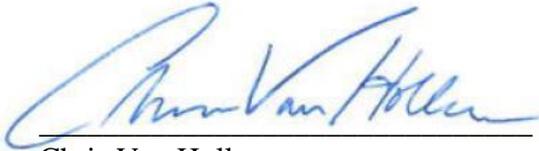
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



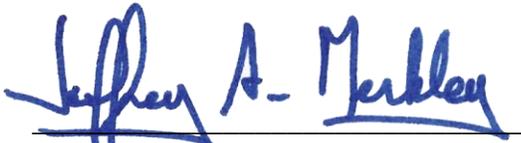
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator