



Kevin Johnson
President and CEO
Starbucks Support Center
Seattle, Washington

Dear Kevin,

Starbucks employees across the US have been inspired by Buffalo's success in unionizing their store. They have provided a clear path for us to organize ourselves. We've run ourselves ragged in increasingly stressful working conditions without reaping any of the benefits, and the only way to improve these conditions is to organize as a unified working class and assert democratic control over our workplace. This principle extends to workers around the world and up the supply chain. In this spirit we, the undersigned, declare ourselves a union.

We make Starbucks products for less than living wages and receive none of the profit, all the while being offered benefits that in no way equal our efforts. While doing this we experience abuse from customers, malfunctioning equipment, unsafe working conditions, chronic understaffing and a complete lack of agency within our workplace. Far too many of us have spent the majority of our tenure as baristas and shift supervisors deteriorating mentally and physically from this never-ending performance. You have failed to adhere to not only your values regarding partner care and quality of service, but also your promises around environmental protections and the Coffee and Farmer Equity program while benefiting from an unequal imperialist relationship between the United States and workers in the global south.

Compounded with this is Starbucks' emphasis on a third-place environment that prioritizes customer comfort over partner safety. The decision to open the cafe during the pandemic conflicts with any policy protecting public health. On the other hand, with a housing crisis in our city causing chronic homelessness, we are providing one of the only available public spaces where people can shelter during the day. This is not inherently a problem, however we have been asked to provide this without adequate training, compensation, or resources for doing so. To be clear, this is not a call for increased policing.

Confusing policy around "making the moment right" puts an even heavier social and psychological burden on populations drawn to Starbucks by a trans-inclusive healthcare policy. Even with a staff that is united on most fronts, majority LGBTQ+, and has a positive working relationship with our store manager, it has been impossible to meet the Starbucks standard with the resources given to us by the company.

Despite its attractiveness to queer folk, Starbucks employs minimal methods on a store-level to provide adequate on-the-ground protection for its LGBTQ+ partners. The limited social and material support provided by Starbucks forces partners to fill in the blanks in order to make things work and efficiently operate the business. We are used to performing free labor as marginalized people, but know that doing so is only sustainable with community support. The only place Starbucks has in the community is as a fast food coffee chain location.

With support from the overwhelming majority of our staff, it is a foregone conclusion that we will vote to certify the union in a fair secret ballot under the National Labor Relations Board. We call on you and the Starbucks corporation to acknowledge this fact and ask that you voluntarily recognize our union as the sole representative body of labor at our store. As well, we call on your company to cease all union-busting efforts and agree to the demands set forward by the Starbucks Workers United *Principles for Employer Non-interference in Union Elections*. We would also like for you to recognize the right of our union to use any means of advancing our interests, including strikes. As part of this recognition, we would like a pledge of non-interference in our actions and organizing. Starbucks has claimed that they support a worker's right to form a union even if they disagree with it. Now is a chance for your company to honor this principle, and end your anti-union campaigns. We ask that you please respond to our request for voluntary recognition by Wednesday, January 19. In the meantime, we have already prepared to file with the NLRB. We will hold an election if you do not recognize us voluntarily.

Signed,

SWU Organizing Committee

1209 N Charles St,

Baltimore, MD 21201

Signatories:

Finn Graham

Kieren Levy

Nicolas Finol

Syrena Torres

Ngaire Philip

Blake Miller

Violet Sovine

Lanoree Blake

Ezra Boyd

Reginald Ransom

Jennifer Clawson

Kodzovi Anthony

Connie Smith

Patria Barkoye

Scott Augustine