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Why Should McGill Staff and Students Join this Struggle?

Conditions of work in Dollarama warehouses are those of people who are working class and migrant. They touch our Haitian, African, and Latinx communities. Dollarama, like Amazon or Uber, is thrusting down standards of work and life. When we fight alongside Dollarama workers, we are fighting for ourselves.

At the moment, we are in a common struggle against corporations – and we are losing. Between 2001 and 2012, working poverty in Montreal increased by 30 percent. In 2016, over one third of Montrealers made between \$10,000 and \$30,000. The COVID-19 pandemic made things worse, with deaths and infections the highest in Montreal's poor black communities, increases in homelessness, and continual rent hikes. On the other hand, Canada's 44 richest billionaires increased their wealth by 28 percent in the first six months of the pandemic alone.

Simply by agitating in their workplace, and with external support, Dollarama's worker committee has achieved a \$15 minimum wage and improved some workplace conditions. Together, we stand to win so much more.

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How can I get Involved?

We bring McGill students and staff into collaboration with Montreal-based warehouse workers. We attend and support their rallies and lead pressure campaigns on shareholders (our campaign helped land over 20% support for a shareholders motion that the company vocally opposed). We work in collaboration with the Immigrant Workers Centre, our most direct link to the shop floor.

We are currently petitioning for McGill to take the side of these workers. McGill holds \$3.3 million in Dollarama investments. The Rossy family, Dollarama's founders, also founded McGill's "Rossy Wellness Hub" with at least \$5 million. Their patriarch received an honorary degree from McGill, and a member of their executive committee sat on the Law Faculty's Advisory Board.

Fill out our petition at mcap.ssmu.ca. And let us know if you need help with your issues as a migrant or worker.

Those looking to get involved should contact us: McGillCAP@gmail.com or message Sam at 438-979-4122.

In love and solidarity - Our student-worker action committee.



Staff & Student Solidarity

With Dollarama Workers



JOIN OUR STUDENT-WORKER ACTION COMMITTEE

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What's up in Dollarama Warehouses?

Dollarama is a major Canadian company. Its 2021 sales reached over \$4 billion. Its founding family, the Rossey's, are, together, some of the richest billionaires in Canada. Its six Montreal warehouses' employ hundreds of low-wage Haitian, Latinx and African workers. Like corporations such as Amazon, Foodora, and Uber, Dollarama makes its money by exploiting the people who work for it who are working class or migrants.

For well over the past year, these Dollarama workers have been organizing with Montreal's Immigrant Workers Centre. They are demanding changes to poor safety training, dangerously crowded workspaces, and relentless pushes for productivity. Several have been fired in the process.

In 2019, the Immigrant Workers Centre surveyed several Montreal warehouse workers. 55 percent reported that they had not received paid sick days. 12 percent reported wage theft. Over 40 percent reported an unsafe workplace, lacking in safety equipment. A quarter of workers had been injured at work.

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Dollarama: "Our Amazon"

As in Amazon warehouses, where the "pace of work is inhumane" (as one striking worker reported), Dollarama warehouses demand as much work in as little paid time as possible. As one Dollarama pallet worker reported in 2020, "If I make one pallet, it takes 45 minutes. How can I make 15 pallets in 8 hours? We just have to work, work, work, and for nothing... There are injuries all the time."

In 2020, Dollarama opened 66 net new stores. In 2021, there were 65 new stores. However, the number of warehouses remains the same. This has forced more products and workers to be packed into the same space as Dollarama increases its distribution. A Dollarama warehouse is an increasingly crowded, grinding shop, where machines like forklifts are manned unsafely. The chances for accidents is getting higher.

Several Dollarama workers who have voiced concerns about health and safety conditions, or spoken at rallies, found themselves quickly fired from Dollarama. Union busting tropes have been levelled against their allies at the Immigrant Workers Centre, as the company tries to paint them as self-interested outside agitators.

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What's Wrong with Dollarama's Labour Practices?

Like any corporation that isn't run cooperatively by its workers, the interests of employees in good work and the interests of owners in profit and power are naturally at odds. But Dollarama stands out for its use of temporary placement agencies.

Temporary placement agencies are third party staffing agencies. In using them, Dollarama does not have to directly hire any of their warehouse workers. Instead, workers technically work for an external agency that can move them to another workplace or fail to provide work at a moments notice. Because workers do not technically work for Dollarama, legal recourses against the company are complicated and more expensive.

Temp agencies effectively put workers on an indefinitely probationary status. Workers can, therefore, be dismissed for any reason without severance or dismissal-related benefits. Dollarama can also offload unsafe and risky work onto these employees. Because they're not technically their employees, the company's premiums to be paid to the CNESST do not go up for its history of accidents and occupational diseases.