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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

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Zabrina Jenkins
Acting Executive Vice President
and General Counsel
Starbucks Corporation
2401 Utah Avenue South
Seattle, Washington 98134

March 2, 2023

Dear Ms. Jenkins:

Thank you very much for the letter you sent to me today. Unfortunately, your letter does not address any of the serious concerns that I and many other United States Senators have raised for nearly a year.

Quite frankly, I am shocked and deeply concerned that Howard Schultz would continue to defy a request made by a majority of members on the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) to testify about the 80 complaints issued by the National Labor Relations Board against Starbucks for violating federal labor law, the more than 500 unfair labor practice charges lodged against Starbucks and the illegal firing of more than a dozen Starbucks workers.

Let's be clear. Howard Schultz is the founder of Starbucks, he is the CEO of Starbucks, he is the spokesperson of Starbucks, and he will continue to be on the Board of Directors at Starbucks well into the future. In numerous media interviews, Mr. Schultz has made it clear that he is the driving force of labor policy at Starbucks.

For these reasons, the Senate HELP Committee invited Howard Schultz to testify, not a subordinate, because he is the man who engineered and continues to make labor decisions at Starbucks.

As you are no doubt are aware, just yesterday, an Administrative Law Judge, issued a some 200-page ruling in which he made clear that under Howard Schultz, Starbucks has massively and egregiously violated federal labor law, ordered Starbucks to reinstate seven workers that were wrongfully terminated and to re-open a store in Buffalo that was illegally shut down, among many other things. In addition, this judge ordered Howard Schultz to read a notice to Starbucks employees about their rights under the National Labor Relations Act and to assure that Starbucks will not infringe upon these rights.

Perhaps most significantly, this judge detailed a November 2021 meeting—before Mr. Schultz had even returned to the company as CEO—that he had with all Buffalo-area Starbucks workers. These workers were forced to attend this meeting while every Buffalo-area store was closed to listen to Mr. Schultz one month prior to union elections that were held in the area. This meeting makes clear the enormous power and influence Mr. Schultz has over labor policy at Starbucks even when he is not the official CEO of the company.

The American people are sick and tired of multi-national corporations violating labor laws with impunity. Howard Schultz may be a multi-billionaire, but he has got to understand that he and the multi-billion-dollar corporation he runs are not above the law.

The HELP Committee will vote on March 8th at 10 a.m. to compel Mr. Schultz to testify and to investigate violations of labor law at major corporations. At some point in the future, we may well want to hear from other executives as to how Starbucks intends to abide by the law and allow workers to form unions. But right now, the immediate issue is to hear from Mr. Schultz.

Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
Chairman, Senate HELP Committee