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September 26, 2019

Mr. Steve Easterbrook
Chief Executive Officer
McDonald's Corporation
110 N. Carpenter Street
One McDonald's Plaza
Chicago, IL, 60607

Dear Mr. Easterbrook,

We are writing today to call on McDonald's to take concrete action to stop sexual harassment against workers at your stores. This letter comes amid growing local concern for McDonald's workers in our jurisdictions and what appears to be the company's failure to protect workers from sexual harassment in McDonald's stores.

We find McDonald's statements¹ affirming an "unyielding commitment to providing a safe and respectful work environment for all" to be inconsistent with well-documented, persistent occurrences² of harassment in practice. While McDonald's aspires to be a "progressive burger company," it has ignored repeated demands³ from workers in McDonald's-branded restaurants to protect them from widespread sexual harassment throughout its system.

Most recently, McDonald's workers filed over 20 complaints⁴ with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in May detailing numerous allegations of sexual harassment, such as groping, lewd comments and questioning, and propositions for sex. These complaints were supported by the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

This brings the total number of EEOC complaints filed by McDonald's workers to over 50,⁵ nearly all of which were filed by women of color and several by teenage employees. The complaints arise from both corporate and franchised stores and are geographically diverse, with complaints filed in a dozen states. Taken together, they suggest evidence of a widespread sexual harassment problem at McDonald's, the second-largest private-sector employer in the U.S.

In addition to filing complaints, McDonald's workers have taken action across the country to demand the company take the sexual harassment issue seriously. Women workers have led multiple protests outside McDonald's Chicago headquarters. At the actions in late May, women McDonald's workers marched to the company's headquarters wearing blue tape inscribed with "#MeToo McDonald's" over their mouths. Joined by chef and activist Padma Lakshmi and other advocates, workers tore off the tape and publicly recounted their degrading experiences of sexual harassment at the burger giant. And last September, workers struck McDonald's in 10 cities to demand that the corporation live up to its touted "zero-tolerance policy" against sexual harassment – the first walkouts over sexual harassment in more than 100 years.⁶

It is our understanding that the response of McDonald's management to the demands of workers to protect them from this abuse has been wholly inadequate at the store and corporate level. Workers have



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stated that when they've reported inappropriate behavior, often no effective action is taken. Even worse, workers say⁷ management mocked, fired, or otherwise retaliated against them. And while the company has pointed to its "zero-tolerance policy" against sexual harassment and claims to have made efforts to deal with the problem, its most recent announcement of a sexual harassment training program simply falls short. If McDonald's is to seriously address sexual harassment, it will do what two dozen leading women's and sexual violence prevention advocates, nearly 60 members of Congress, and its workers from coast-to-coast are demanding: meet with the people who face sexual harassment in McDonald's restaurants, hear their stories, and, together with them, craft real solutions.

It's our belief that the best public policy is created when elected leaders work closely with the most impacted communities and as such, we ask you to do two things:

- 1) Meet directly with workers and allies to address the issue of sexual harassment in McDonald's stores. It is essential that you and your executives work closely with the brave workers who have come forward to create a policy to stop sexual harassment.**
- 2) When finalized, this policy must be a requirement of franchise agreements and of corporate stores.**

We are willing and available to help arrange such a meeting between executives and workers as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

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¹ Shaban, Hamza. 2019. "Presidential contenders call on McDonald's to address reports of sexual harassment." *Washington Post*. June 11, 2019.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/06/11/presidential-contenders-call-mcdonalds-address-reports-sexual-harassment/>

² Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, ACLU, Fight for \$15. "#MeToo McDonalds." <https://metoomcdonalds.org/>

³ Fernandez Campbell, Alexia. 2019. "McDonald's workers are striking and suing the company — in the same week." *Vox*. May 21, 2019.
<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/5/21/18633995/mcdonalds-workers-strike-sexual-harassment>

⁴ "McDonald's faces 25 accusations of sexual harassment." *ABC News*. May 22, 2019.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uE0BOMHBudQ>

⁵ Wiener-Bronner, Danielle. 2019. "McDonald's is under pressure as allegations of sexual harassment surface and activists circle the wagons." *CNN*. May 22, 2019.
<https://www.cnn.com/2019/05/22/business/mcdonalds-shareholder-meeting/index.html>

⁶ Abrams, Rachel. 2018. "McDonald's Workers Across the U.S. Stage #MeToo Protests." *New York Times*. September 18, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/18/business/mcdonalds-strike-metoo.html>

⁷ Gonzales, Richard. 2019. "McDonald's Facing New Charges Of Sexual Harassment." *NPR*. May 21, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/21/725557211/mcdonalds-facing-new-charges-of-sexual-harassment>