Amazon Response to Amnesty International

9 February 2021

Dear Ms. Cernusakova and Mr. Cockburn,

Amazon is committed to ensuring the people and communities that support our entire value chain are treated with fundamental dignity and respect. Our commitments to internationally recognized human rights are codified in Amazon’s Global Human Rights Principles and Amazon’s Supply Chain Standards. We firmly believe it is in our employees’ and the company’s best interests to continue our direct communications, and the best way to effect positive change is for our employees to continue working directly with their managers throughout the company. We respect freedom of association and our employees’ right to join, form, or not to join a labor union or other lawful organization of their own selection, without fear of reprisal, intimidation, or harassment.

We opened this site in March and since that time have created more than 5,000 full-time jobs in Bessemer, with starting pay of $15.30 per hour, including full healthcare, vision and dental insurance, 50% 401(K) match from the first day on the job; in safe, innovative, inclusive environments, with training, continuing education, and long-term career growth. We work hard to support our teams and more than 90% of associates at our Bessemer site say they would recommend Amazon as a good place to work to their friends. We don’t believe the RWDSU represents the majority of our employees’ views. Our employees choose to work at Amazon because we offer some of the best jobs available everywhere we hire, and we encourage anyone to compare our total compensation package, health benefits, and workplace environment to any other company with similar jobs.

The fact is that Amazon already offers what unions are requesting for employees: industry-leading pay, comprehensive benefits from the first day on the job, opportunities for career growth, all while working in a safe, modern work environment. At Amazon, these benefits and opportunities come with the job, as does the ability to communicate directly with the leadership of the company. Direct dialogue is essential to our work environment in which we encourage associates to bring their comments, questions, and concerns directly to their management team with the goal of quickly improving the work environment and challenging leadership assumptions. We firmly believe this direct connection is the most effective way to understand and respond to the needs of our workforce.

We believe that the best approach to a valid, fair and successful election is one that is conducted manually, in-person, making it easy for associates to verify and cast their vote in close proximity to their workplace. Amazon provided the NLRB with a safe, confidential and convenient proposal for associates to vote onsite. The onsite voting proposal, which is in the best interest of all parties – associate convenience, vote fidelity, and timeliness of vote count - was not accepted. We will continue to insist on measures for a fair election, and we want everyone to vote, so our focus is ensuring that’s possible.

It is important that all employees understand the facts of joining a union and the election process. We hosted regular information sessions for all employees, which include an opportunity for employees to ask questions. If the union vote passes, it will impact everyone at the site and it’s important all associates understand what that means for them and their day-to-day life working at Amazon.

Sincerely,

Mike Mathieu
Director of Social Responsibility, Amazon