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Open Letter to Former and Current Amazon Employees

A recent New York Times article about the corporate culture and employment practices at Amazon has rightly raised concerns among the general public. While claiming that he did not recognize the company described in the article, Jeff Bezos nonetheless urged all Amazon employees to read it and to raise any concerns directly with him and with Amazon's Human Resources Department.

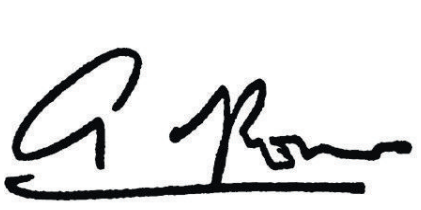
That is a welcome first step, but it is not enough. As the Times article makes clear, the demands that Amazon places on its employees can be especially difficult for those employees who are responsible for raising children or caring for ill relatives. In America today, those employees are disproportionately women. The Times article also reports that Amazon does not have a single woman on its top leadership team, and that its workforce is heavily male. The metrics, as Amazon would say, are clear.

This gender inequality is not unique to Amazon but Amazon now has a unique opportunity to confront and address it by applying the same tools that have made it so successful in the marketplace: vision, innovation, and leadership.

Amazon employees who believe they were unlawfully penalized because of their decision to have children, or because they were caring for a sick relative or recovering from an illness of their own, can contact us at GenderEqualityAmazon@aclu.org by October 1st, 2015, to explore the possibility of legal representation.

For over 95 years, the ACLU has fought for the rights of all Americans to live and work with dignity and fairness. Our earliest work focused largely on the rights of workers to organize and remedy workplace injustices. The ACLU has also been a leader in rooting out gender discrimination in the workplace. While we have made much progress in women's rights since then, we are continuing to work to ensure that America's employers treat women and men with fairness and equality.

And to all of the workers at Amazon, we wish to congratulate you and salute you for your contributions to one of America's most important businesses and employers. We hope that Amazon will continue to use its innovation and vigor to pursue fairness and justice that define America.



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