



MOTION REGARDING SUPPORT FOR DOLLARAMA WAREHOUSE WORKERS 2021-01-28

Submitted for: 2021-01-28

Submitted to: SSMU Legislative Council **Document no.:** LEG-PUB-MOT-2021-01-28-004

Moved by: Ayo Ogunremi **Current Status:** FOR APPROVAL
Vice-President (External Affairs) APPROVED
 POSTPONED
 COMMITTED
 NOT APPROVED

Seconded by: Brandon Bonan
Law Representative

Issue In response to student-led calls to action, this motion seeks to establish the SSMU's support for Dollarama warehouse workers organising to demand better labour conditions from their employer.

Background and Rationale For over a decade, Dollarama warehouse workers have been organising, in collaboration with the Temporary Agency Workers Association and the Immigrant Workers Centre, to protest their working conditions and demand better working conditions from their employer, Dollarama Inc. Dollarama workers are largely temporary foreign workers hired through temporary placement agencies, making them among Montreal's most vulnerable workers to exploitative practices. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these organisers expressed concerns over safety and the impermanence of pandemic wage increases. Several workers who spoke out with these demands were fired by Dollarama.

Dollarama has an institutional connection to McGill University, since its founder, its CEO, and its Executive Chairman are members of the Rossy family, whose considerable donations helped establish the Rossy Wellness Hub. Further, McGill has \$2 million invested in Dollarama Inc.

Organisations with important affiliations to the SSMU, namely the Association of McGill University Support Employees (AMUSE) and the student group McGill Corporate Accountability Project (MCAP), have



advocated for the SSMU to take action on this matter. This motion responds to these calls to action by establishing the SSMU's solidarity with the warehouse workers of Dollarama and providing support for organic student initiatives working in solidarity with them.

Alignment with Mission

This motion strongly aligns with the SSMU's Sustainability Policy, according to which the SSMU is mandated to endeavour to minimize systemic power imbalances within society and to foster a culture of anti-oppression. The SSMU should not lag behind on this important issue of human dignity for people without permanent status within our community.

Consultations Completed

This motion was drafted in consultation with the SSMU Political Campaigns Coordinators, who would be the primary actors implicated in the passing of this motion. Also consulted were the student group McGill Corporate Accountability Project, the Immigrant Workers Centre, and the McGill labour union AMUSE.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

If passed, this motion would send a strong message of solidarity from the SSMU to Montreal's migrant worker communities, which has already been shown to be crucial to making gains for international students, and is therefore in the SSMU's material interest.

With respect to resource implications, this motion would primarily implicate the Campaigns department, as the Political Campaigns Coordinators would be mandated to act as a source of institutional support for student activism in solidarity with this cause.

Sustainability Considerations

The sustainability implications in this motion primarily concern social sustainability. Dollarama's exploitative practices affect not only the temporary foreign workers who are employed, but society at large, especially in a pandemic context, where unsafe working conditions promote community transmission and exacerbate the public health crisis.

Further, promoting a relationship between student unions and labour unions itself promotes social sustainability, as these vibrant organisations operate under similar power structures and are more effective together.



Finally, such organisations share broader goals of environmental sustainability, and can work more effectively on this urgent issue if they are willing to show solidarity on other matters of social justice.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If the proposed resolutions are approved, the SSMU will establish its support for the Dollarama warehouse workers by mandating the Campaigns department to support student campaigns standing in solidarity with these workers. This may involve submitting petitions to McGill University's Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility (CAMSR) and providing resources to assist in awareness-raising events.

If this motion fails, the SSMU's Legislative Council will have rejected a student-led call to action to adopt a solidarity mandate with a local social justice cause.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved, that the Legislative Council condemn the exploitative, unscrupulous labour practices of Dollarama Inc.;

Be it further resolved, that the office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) be mandated to support the student campaign of the McGill Corporate Accountability Project (MCAP) in solidarity with the warehouse workers of Dollarama Inc. in their fight for a healthy and safe work environment, pay rises, and permanent jobs.

Results of the Vote

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|-----------|-------------|
| In favour | (UNANIMOUS) |
| Opposed | () |
| Abstain | () |