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## **Contributions to Ald. Tillman's Campaign Seen As Reward for Her Vote Against The Big Box Living Wage Ordinance**

“Two contributions totaling \$7,000 were funneled to Third Ward Alderman Dorothy Tillman’s campaign in a two-step shuffle that hides the fact that the donations were ultimately made by Wal-Mart and other large retailers opposed to the ‘Big-Box’ living wage ordinance,” said Mell Monroe who is challenging Tillman in the February 27<sup>th</sup> aldermanic election.

“It looks like a political reward for Tillman’s vote last July against the proposed living wage ordinance that would have required the large retailers to pay workers a minimum of \$10.50 per hour plus benefits,” Monroe said. In September, she voted to sustain the Mayor’s veto of the ordinance.

In the first week of February, Wal-Mart made a \$30,000 donation and Target contributed \$15,000 to the Illinois Merchants Association PAC Team according to financial disclosure reports filed with the Illinois State Board of Elections. Two days earlier, the Merchants PAC contributed \$4,000 to Citizens for Dorothy Tillman.

A week later, the Merchants PAC received another \$20,000 from Target and Walgreen Co. chipped in \$10,000. The same day, the PAC contributed an additional \$3,000 to Tillman’s campaign.

“By passing the donations through the Illinois Merchants Association PAC, Wal-Mart, Target and the other large retailers violate City Ordinance 2-164-030 that prohibits any one from making or receiving a campaign contribution that hides the identity of the real donor,” Monroe said. “It may also violate another ordinance that prohibits any individual or company from making a contribution larger than \$1,500 to an aldermanic candidate if the donor is doing business with the City,” Monroe added.

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Monroe is a supporter of the Big Box Living Wage ordinance. “Many residents of the Third Ward need jobs,” Monroe said. “But they need good jobs, not the low-paying, skimpy-benefit positions available at Wal-Mart and other billion-dollar merchants who seem to take pride in squeezing suppliers and exacting maximum work from employees while providing minimum pay.”

“Alderman Tillman has been in office for 22 years and has done nothing to attract even a grocery store to the ward,” Monroe charged. “Now she thinks Chicago should allow highly-profitable giant retailers like Wal-Mart to come into the City and offer sub-par wages and little or no benefits. I think it’s a bad decision on her part. I predict the voters will tell her so when they vote next Tuesday.”

Monroe, the principal owner of an executive and professional job placement firm, said “large big-box retailers, like Wal-Mart, don’t create any jobs, they replace jobs. They drive smaller local retailers out of business; kill off the jobs they provided, and then offer low paying positions at the big-box outlet. This ‘race to the bottom’ puts downward pressure on the wage level for all workers and in the long run will reduce spending power and sales tax in Chicago.

“We need real economic development in the inner city of Chicago,” said Monroe who has experience in sales, marketing and management with Mobil Chemical, Coca Cola, General Electric and other Fortune 500 companies.

“City and other government subsidies should go to manufacturing plants and builders of affordable housing,” Monroe said. “We should encourage and support companies that not only offer good starting wages but also provide career opportunities and have a good record of retaining workers. We also need small and medium-sized businesses that can be accessed in the neighborhoods on foot or by public transportation.”