

# **Brennan Center Attorney to Testify at Chicago City Council Hearings on Proposed Law to Improve Job Standards at Wal-Mart**

Issue: [Related Issue](#)

**For Immediate Release**

Monday, September 20, 2004

## **Contact Information:**

Nathan Newman, 212 992-8638, 917 854-0279

Natalia Kennedy, 212 998-6736<

## **Brennan Center Attorney to Testify at Chicago City Council Hearings on Proposed Law to Improve Job Standards at Wal-Mart**

*Proposal Requires Wal-Mart and Other Large Retailers to Provide Living Wages, Benefits Like Health Care and Community Access*

**New York, NY** - The Chicago City Council will hear testimony today from Nathan Newman, associate counsel at the Brennan Center for Justice, on proposed ordinances that would guarantee employees at new Chicago “big box” retailers, such as Wal-Mart, a living wage of roughly \$10 per hour plus benefits such as health care. One of the proposed ordinances would also guarantee access to the sidewalks at retailers like Wal-Mart for community members to talk to the public

and workers about civic and labor issues, while encouraging local hiring through a so-called “First Source” hiring program.

“By requiring that these “big box” retail stores pay a living wage and provide benefits,” Newman will testify, “the proposed ordinances will prevent these employers from undercutting existing wage standards in the retail industry.”

Newman, who helped draft one of the proposed ordinances, will highlight how the Chicago proposals illustrate a new community strategy for defending workplace standards in response to large retailers like Wal-Mart. Building on the successes of the “living wage” movement, this Chicago proposal follows the example of cities, such as San Francisco, Santa Fe, Madison, and Berkeley, which have recently enacted local wage laws that raise pay for workers at some or all private businesses in their communities—not just at businesses that receive city contracts, as most early living wage laws did.

To learn more about the ordinances and testimony at the Chicago City Council hearings, please contact Nathan Newman at (917) 854-0279.

For additional information on the Living Wage movement, please visit the Center's [Living Wage page](#).

*The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, founded in 1995, unites thinkers and advocates in pursuit of a vision of inclusive and effective democracy. Its mission is to develop and implement an innovative, nonpartisan agenda of scholarship, public education, and legal action that promotes equality and human dignity, while safeguarding fundamental freedoms.*

*Please visit [www.brennancenter.org](http://www.brennancenter.org).*