



## HOW WAL-MART HELPS AMERICA: THE WAL-MART REVOLUTION

By Richard Vedder and Wendell Cox

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The activities of Wal-Mart and other big-box retailers have become rallying cries for both sides of the political aisle. Richard Vedder and Wendell Cox's book, *The Wal-Mart Revolution: How Big-Box Stores Benefit Consumers, Workers, and the Economy* (AEI Press, 2006), is aimed at those involved in the current debates over Wal-Mart's impact on worker wages, labor issues, and health-insurance and land-use policies.

*The Wal-Mart Revolution* provides useful facts about the company, the U.S. retail industry, labor economics, health-care policy, and land-use realities in America today. Economist Vedder and public-private partnerships expert Cox painstakingly analyze available evidence before concluding that the economic transformation in American retailing which is personified by Wal-Mart has largely been good for Americans and the economy. Wal-Mart's basic business strategies have had a profoundly positive impact on America's productivity, wages, consumer prices, and other key economic variables.

Though the book was written without any cooperation from Wal-Mart, Vedder and Cox address several criticisms often lobbed at the company and demolish them one-by-one:

- Wal-Mart workers are paid fairly—given their level of skills and experience, and compared to other retail firms, Wal-Mart employees do well
- Wal-Mart's fringe benefits—health-care coverage, retirement benefits, and more—are similar to those of other retail firms, and very few Wal-Mart workers go without health insurance
- Big boxes mean big business: communities with new Wal-Mart stores typically enjoy increased employment and incomes after the store opens
- Wal-Mart benefits the poor, in particular, in the form of lower prices and new job opportunities
- Attempts to keep Wal-Mart out of communities through zoning restrictions, mandatory health insurance, or special high minimum wages hurts citizens, especially those with lower incomes

**Richard Vedder** is a distinguished professor of economics at Ohio University, a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, and director of the Center for College Affordability and Productivity in Washington, D.C. **Wendell Cox** is an international public policy consultant and principal of Wendell Cox Consultancy (Demographia).

*If you are interested in a complimentary media copy of The Wal-Mart Revolution or would like to interview Richard Vedder, please contact Véronique Rodman at vrodman@aei.org or 202.862.4870.*

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