

In the Natural State, Wal-Mart and Huckabee Force Residents Into Public Assistance

On Wednesday November 8, 2005 at the Marriott Crystal Gateway in Arlington, VA, Gov. Mike Huckabee will give the keynote address at the 2005 Annual Meeting of the National Association of State Medicaid Directors. As chairman of the National Governor's Association and co-chair of the NGA Medicaid working group, Huckabee will be discussing the reduction of Medicaid costs, the impact of natural disasters and the bird flu. Medicaid spending is a particular concern for Huckabee because his state is suffering under the weight of increased spending. Arkansas is also the home of retail giant Wal-Mart who is contributing to the problem in alarming way. Nearly 4,000 Wal-Mart employees in Arkansas are on public assistance and this cost the state \$39.6 million. This document highlights Huckabee's unrelenting support for Wal-Mart and how that support is costing Arkansas millions of dollars. [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 3/17/05; <http://releases.usnewswire.com/GetRelease.asp?id=56301>]

In Wal-Mart's Home State, Nearly 4,000 Employees Receive Public Assistance; Taxpayers Bear Over \$39 Million in Medicaid Costs. In Arkansas, headquarters to the world's largest company, 3,971 of Wal-Mart's 45,106 employees are on public assistance. The average annual cost to Arkansas for each Medicaid recipient is \$4,083, for a maximum total cost of \$39.6 million. Wal-Mart has "shifted the cost to employees increasingly, and many employees aren't able to bear the cost of that family coverage on their own," said Kevin Ryan of the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement. [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 3/17/05]

Gov. Huckabee Openly Defends Wal-Mart. During a monthly radio call-in show, Huckabee praised Wal-Mart's contributions in his state and criticized opponents downplayed their accomplishments. Huckabee called opponents "Wal-Mart bashers" and talked about how Wal-Mart offered hope and a chance for advancement for many of the states workers. "Many of the people who are coming into those jobs have been on total relief. Now they're getting employment, which means they are paying a significant portion of their own way, but they're in the transition period," Huckabee told a statewide audience Wednesday during his monthly radio call-in show. Huckabee failed to highlight how Wal-Mart pays inferior wages and health care. [AP, 8/5/05]

And He Has Done It Before...

- **During the 2004 Presidential election, Huckabee Takes A Shot At Wal-Mart Critic John Kerry.** In May of 2003, Vice President Dick Cheney visited Bentonville, Arkansas to praise Wal-Mart's economic success. Governor Huckabee joined Cheney during the visits and even talked about John Kerry who criticized Wal-Mart for its sub par health care benefits. Huckabee said that "it's unprecedented for a candidate to attack — by name — a company that brings hundreds of thousands of jobs to Americans, high-quality products to working-class consumers and an unmatched charitable spirit," Huckabee said. "It's an elitist, snobbish attitude." [Arkansas News Bureau, 5/4/04]

Sam's Club Gains Liquor License With the Help of Huckabee's Allies. In an effort side-step Arkansas law, Wal-Mart used its connections and lobbyists to persuade the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission to allow the company to open a liquor store adjacent to their Sam's Club location in Fayetteville, Arkansas. To get around the law, which bans liquor sales by retail or grocery stores, Wal-Mart decided it would not have a doorway between the two stores. Rather, they would have separate entrances but all profits would go to Sam's Club. Persuading the Alcohol Beverage Control Commission

was not difficult for Wal-Mart officials because Huckabee's "chief money men" lead the effort to approve the new liquor store. [[Arkansas Times](#), 7/28/05]

Gov. Huckabee Appoints Wal-Mart Officials to state positions.

- **Tom Emerick**, Wal-Mart's vice president of benefits, was appointed to the State and Public School Life and Health Insurance Board in August 2005. The post lasts until April 8, 2009. [[Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#), 8/24/05]
- **Coleman Peterson**, an executive vice president of human resources for Wal-Mart Stores Inc., was appointed to the Northwest Arkansas Community College board of trustees. He served until Dec. 31, 2004. [[Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#), 2/1/03]
- **Excell LaFayette**, manager of vendor development for Wal-Mart Stores Inc, was appointed to the Minority Business Advisory Council in September 1999. [[Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#), 9/25/99]

Jim Walton donated \$100,000 To Promote Gov. Huckabee's Education Plan. Formed to help shepherd his plan through the legislature, the non-profit group Next Step Foundation promoted Huckabee's education plan during the 2002 election. The Democratic Party of Arkansas was angered that Huckabee was using non-profit funds to run ads during his re-election campaign. Jim Walton was one of the major contributors to this group who was involved in lobbying members of the legislature for the governor's plan. [[Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#), 10/30/02]