Walmart employees plan to protest on Black Friday

By Craig Wall
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Walmart is trying to lure in shoppers with Black Friday sales that are starting earlier than ever this year, and it's gotten the attention of more than just customers.

This year protesters are calling on Walmart workers to walk out and disrupt the biggest shopping day of the year.

"There's a lot of people who's joining us, they're joining the group to demand respect," said Rosetta Brown, one of the protest organizers. "So a lot of them who have to work might not walk out, but a lot of them are proud of me and the ones that gonna walk out and they want us to walk out.'

In a statement, Walmart spokesman Kory Lundberg called the protests "another exaggerated publicity campaign aimed at generating headlines to mislead our customers and associates."

Lundberg called the tactics part of an ongoing and illegal effort by the United Food and Commercial Workers Union to organize Walmart's workforce.

Protests are planned at Walmart stores around Chicago and in 43 states, with the stated goal of sending a message to the company that workers need better pay and benefits.

The Walmart on Chicago's West side is already open 24 hours, so employees were going to have to be there on Thanksgiving anyway, just like in years past. And while some may walk out, others don't have a problem working the holiday. The earlier Black Friday sales may actually make things easier on workers.

"We don't get as overwhelmed as we used to when the Black Friday sales come at 5:00 AM or 4:00 AM," said an associate named Tasha, who did not want to give her last name. "It's kinda good we're starting the sales at 8 o'clock now it kinda eases the congestion of all the shoppers and stuff."

Some customers liked the idea of getting their shopping done Thursday so they can sleep in on Friday.

"If it's something I need, I'll be here," said Paul Carter of Chicago.

Others saw the push for earlier sales as regretful.
"I think it's a sign of what society is turning into," said Loyola University Law student Hillary Hughes, who added it's not a sign she likes. "I personally think that there are things way more important than rushing to Walmart to buy a bunch of possessions that you don't actually need."