



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on February 2, 2024

Dem Rep. Pressley Hits Walgreens for Closing Store in Crime-infested Area

Democrat Massachusetts Representative Ayanna Pressley denounced Walgreens pharmacy chain because it is pulling up stakes in her district, the crime-ridden 7th.

Walgreens is just one of many large retailers that are closing stores in largely minority, blue cities because of out-of-control theft. The company announced last year that [it would close](#) some 150 stores nationwide by August 2024 to save money.

Of course, Pressley, a member of the anti-American congressional group called The Squad, doesn't see that theft as part of the problem in "urban communities."

Walgreens, she averred, in so many words, is racist and "discriminating" against "black and brown people." And it's "threatening" their very lives.



AP Images
Ayanna Pressley

The Speech

Pressley unloaded on the pharmacy giant on the House floor for closing a store on Roxbury. That section of Boston, Pressley hastened to add, is 85 percent black and Hispanic.

"This closure is a part of a larger trend of abandoning low-income communities like the previous closures in Mattapan and Hyde Park, both in the Massachusetts 7th," she said.

When a Walgreens leaves a neighborhood, they disrupt the entire community and they take with them baby formula, diapers, asthma inhalers, life-saving medications, and, of course, jobs.

These closures are not arbitrary and they are not innocent. They are life-threatening acts of racial and economic discrimination.

That is why I joined with Senators [Ed] Markey and [Elizabeth] Warren to demand answers from Walgreens' CEO.

Why was there no community input? No adequate notice to customers? And no transition resources to prevent gaps in health care?

Shame on you, Walgreens.

Having a website with talking points about health equity and underserved communities is not enough.



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Walgreens is a multi-billion-dollar corporation that needs to put their money where their mouth is and stop divesting from Black and brown communities.

For his part, Markey, sounding every bit like the socialist he likely is, bluntly stated that Walgreens must stay. “The @Walgreens closure of 416 Warren St. is the latest example of corporations putting profit over the health of Black, Brown, and immigrant communities. Walgreens must provide resources to limit the harm they’ve created. They cannot just abandon Roxbury,” he wrote on X:

Yeah, Walgreens can “abandon Roxbury.” The company is not obliged to keep stores open that it wants to close.

Pressley, Markey, and Warren showed up at a protest outside the store.

Of course, they didn’t describe anything about the neighborhood except its racial makeup of “black and brown people.”

The AreaVibes website does. It gives Roxbury an F rating for its crime, and offers the following data:

- It is 75 percent above the national average on total crime;
- 214 percent above the national average on violent crime; and,
- 48 percent above the national average on property crime.

In 2021, at the Walgreens in question, [six black women kicked](#) the tar out of a security guard who tried to stop them from shoplifting.

Nationwide Trend

But Walgreens is not alone. Ever since the Floyd riots of 2020, organized shoplifting and looting gangs have hit myriad stores nationwide.

Last year, Walmart closed four stores in crime-ridden Chicago.

“The simplest explanation is that collectively our Chicago stores have not been profitable since we opened the first one nearly 17 years ago — these stores lose tens of millions of dollars a year, and their annual losses nearly doubled in just the last five years,” the [company said](#):

The remaining four Chicago stores continue to face the same business difficulties, but we think this decision gives us the best chance to help keep them open and serving the community.

Over the years, we have tried many different strategies to improve the business performance of these locations, including building smaller stores, localizing product assortment and offering services beyond traditional retail. We have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the city, including \$70 million in the last couple years to upgrade our stores and build two new Walmart Health facilities and a Walmart Academy training center.

That’s the long way of saying the company won’t absorb losses due to theft. In December, CEO Doug McMillon warned that stores would close if the shoplifting didn’t stop. “If that’s not corrected over time, prices will be higher, and/or stores will close,” [McMillon told](#) CNBC’s *Squawk Box*.

Walmart closed 23 stores nationwide in 2023.



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[Target expected](#) to lose \$600 million to organized shoplifting gangs in 2022, and [last year said](#) “crime will fuel \$500 million more in stolen and lost merchandise this year compared with a year ago,” [CNBC reported](#).

“The problem affects all of us, limiting product availability, creating a less convenient shopping experience, and putting our team and guests in harm’s way,” CEO Brian Cornell said at the time.

[Continued CNBC:](#)

Organized retail crime has become a hot-button issue in the industry, and some companies have blamed the growth of online marketplaces that allow thieves to anonymously sell electronics, makeup and other items they stole from stores.

Home Depot, Walmart, Best Buy, Walgreens and CVS are among the major retailers that have spoken about the problem, saying that shrink has gotten worse.

“The country has a retail theft problem,” Home Depot CFO Richard McPhail said on a call with CNBC on Tuesday. “We’re confident in our ability to mitigate and blunt that pressure, but that pressure certainly exists out there.”

Such is the widespread theft that Target and other retailers are locking razors, toothpaste, and other items in cabinets or otherwise making them inaccessible.

As Macy’s CEO [Jeff Gennette](#) told the *Wall Street Journal*, “these are crime levels we haven’t seen before.”

Across the country, gangs [are staging](#) smash-and-grab robberies at high end boutiques as well.

X Reaction

As expected, [X users delivered](#) the ridicule that Pressley’s speech richly deserved.

“Maybe we should defund the police some more,” Patrick Byrne wrote.

Wrote syndicated columnist Larry Elder:

Okay @RepPressley, pass the hat, raise money and put a store in the Walgreens location. Let’s see how the race card works when people steal from you.

“Democrat Rep. Ayanna Pressley accuses Walgreens of racial discrimination for closing stores in neighborhoods overrun by theft,” user Pismo wrote over video of a robbery and Pressley’s speech. “Imagine being this stupid.”

Wrote Sirius XM radio host Andrew Wilkow, “You owe it to stay open and be looted.....Daily.”

H/T: [National Review](#), [Daily Mail](#)



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