

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 3, 2025

Doug McMillon
CEO
Walmart
702 SW 8th St, Bentonville, AR 72716

Dear Mr. McMillon:

We write to you today because we believe that a recent incident at one of your stores in Ohio, where a Puerto Rican customer was refused the purchase of an item because the cashier did not accept his Puerto Rico Real Identity Document (ID), merits an investigation.

According to information received by one of my constituents, on the night of July 30, 2025, Mr. Julio Rivera was shopping at the Beavercreek, Ohio Walmart with his family when the cashier asked for an identification to purchase alcoholic beverages. Mr. Rivera presented his Puerto Rico Real ID, but the cashier responded that it was invalid because it had not been issued “in the United States.” His sister, Ms. Awilda Rivera, questioned the cashier and explained that the ID had in fact been issued in the United States because Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory. The cashier appeared to recognize that Puerto Rico was part of the United States but still refused to accept the ID.

At that point, Ms. Rivera asked to speak with the store manager. During their conversation, Ms. Rivera requested to see Walmart’s policy stating that Puerto Rico IDs could not be accepted. According to the customer, the manager refused to show her such a policy and escalated the situation instead. The family observed the manager becoming visibly agitated and acting in an aggressive manner. Meanwhile, two other employees—including the cashier—were exhibiting a mocking attitude toward the customers. Ultimately, the family claims that the manager forced them to leave the store and threatened to call the police if they did not leave.

As you know, Sec. 201(5) of the Real ID Act of 2005¹ makes it clear that Puerto Rico is considered a “State” for the purposes of such law. Accordingly, Puerto Rico’s Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTOP in Spanish) has outlined a process for island residents to obtain Real IDs that are valid for domestic travel and getting access to restricted federal facilities.² Notably, in 2023, the DTOP began adding the word “USA” to Puerto Rico-issued driver’s licenses to avoid any confusion regarding their validity across the continental United States.³

¹ REAL ID Act of 2005, Pub. L. No. 109-13, div. B, 119 Stat. 302 (2005).

² *Department of Transportation and Public Works*, Puerto Rico, *Real ID* (last visited Aug. 20, 2025), <https://www.dtop.pr.gov/real-id>

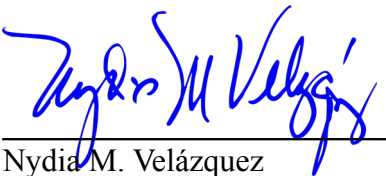
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We believe that, just as Mr. Rivera's identification would be accepted at an airport or a restricted federal facility, it should be accepted at every one of your stores. In fact, Walmart's policy does not require customers to present a Real ID to purchase alcoholic beverages.⁴ We are concerned that Mr. Rivera may have been discriminated against, or that the employees who assisted him were not entirely cognizant that his ID is valid in the United States.

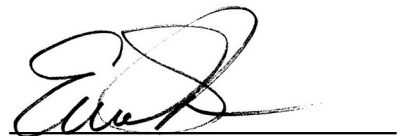
Unfortunately, this incident is not isolated. For decades, Puerto Ricans have reported being denied services and products because employees in the mainland U.S. are unaware that Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory and that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens. This has led to Puerto Ricans being unable to rent vehicles,⁵ obtain over-the-counter medications, or even transfer from one flight to another.⁶

Therefore, we believe that this incident warrants thorough investigation, corrective action for the employees involved, and broader measures throughout your stores nationwide to prevent this type of behavior from occurring again. It is important that every customer, regardless of their residence, is treated with respect, equality, and in alignment with the law.⁷ Should you have any questions, please contact Rachel A. Román of my staff at Rachel.Roman@mail.house.gov. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Emilia Strong Sykes
Member of Congress

³ Madeline Halpert, *Puerto Rico Adds 'USA' to Driver's Licences After Misidentification*, BBC News (Oct. 10, 2023), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-67070745>

⁴ Walmart.com, *Alcohol Orders*, n.d. (last visit August 11, 2025), <https://www.walmart.com/help/article/alcohol-orders/4ce95076037f4098b616783db3a18716>.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Eduardo Medina, *Why Puerto Rico Is Adding "USA" to Its Driver's Licenses*, N.Y. Times (Oct. 8, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/08/us/puerto-rico-drivers-license-usa.html>.

⁷ *Ibid.*