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**PUBLIC MARCH ON FRED MEYER SET FOR MARCH 12**

Corvallis, Ore. -- The Linn Benton NAACP is inviting the public to help back up several local Black women who have experienced racial profiling at the Corvallis Fred Meyer. An Albany woman said both stores refused to take her checks to pay for supplies, but when her white husband presented the same check, they cashed it. Another Corvallis woman said she was repeatedly monitored at the self-checkout stand while white customers around her were not. A third woman born and raised in Oregon said she has suffered racial profiling at Fred Meyer for years.

"I was totally fed up, I was done. And it takes a lot to bring that out in me," said the Corvallis woman.

"It made me mad," said the Albany woman. Both asked that their names not be used, for fear of retaliation. "I'm not going to shop there anymore. It's humiliating, too. I was in line, with people behind me."

The Corvallis woman said staff treatment at both Fred Meyer stores varied depending on how she wore her hair and whether her white mother was with her. Close patrolling or monitoring happened most often if she was alone or she wore either an ethnic or braided hairstyle, rather than straight.

The NAACP's Linn Benton Branch invites the public to join members Saturday, March 12, 2022, in protesting this and other Fred Meyer store practices that discriminate against people of color. Beginning at 12 noon, participants will march from Franklin Square Park to the Corvallis Fred Meyer store. At the store, the group will present a list of demands that includes a timeline for action to change and add to store policies. To take part, dress in black and meet at noon at Franklin Square Park in Corvallis. The group will march together to the Corvallis Fred Meyer store.

While racial profiling is hard to prove, it happens more often than it should in Fred Meyer stores.

The blame rests with the administration, whose job it is to set policies that treat everyone the same, and to train their employees to steer away from racial profiling.

The Albany and Corvallis stores are not the only Fred Meyer stores where racial profiling has reared its ugly head. A former Black Fred Meyer employee filed a lawsuit in 2020 after he was fired for reporting a pattern of on-the-job racism ranging from name-calling to wearing a hoodie – garb worn without comment by his white coworkers.

A Portland woman the same year filed a lawsuit after a Portland Fred Meyer employee called her racist slurs. Last year, the National Labor Relations Board ruled that Fred Meyer violated the law when it banned its employees from wearing Black Lives Matter-themed buttons and masks.

### **Branch Demands:**

1. Fred Meyer must publicly apologize to all persons offended by the offensive behavior of the Fred Meyer staff and publicly commit to adopting a nondiscriminatory approach to customer service. These actions should be completed no later than **Wednesday, March 16**.
2. Fred Meyer's local and regional management will request to meet with the President of the Linn Benton NAACP to further discuss the issue of discrimination at Fred Meyer. This action should occur no later than **Wednesday, April 6**.
3. Fred Meyer must retain a local equity, diversity, and inclusion consultant and/or organization to facilitate required workshops for shift managers and regional managers concerning bias, equity, and inclusion. This action should be completed no later than **Wednesday, June 1**.
4. Fred Meyer must design a customer-facing protocol for shoppers to report discrimination, provide quarterly reports of the findings to local newspapers, and display the quarterly reports on Fred Meyer's website.

“It is our hope that Fred Meyer genuinely acknowledges the centuries of harm that have caused members of our beloved community not to have positive experiences while shopping in their stores. As an organization, our intentions are not simply to raise awareness around past and present issues of inequities that occur at Fred Meyer but to situate ourselves as collaborative partners to help provide measurable action-oriented solutions that are best practices to address inequitable business and customer service issues that are happening in our own backyard. We are asking that our local and small business community members, partnering organizations, all Fred Meyer patrons, and members of our community that cares about all members of our community join us and dress in all black attire as a symbol of solidarity.” said the Linn Benton NAACP activist coordinator.

For more information, visit <https://linnbentonnaacp.com/End-Racism-Fred-Meyer>