Dear [Candidate],

Whether through neighbourhood shops or larger multi-location banners, retail is the largest private employer in Manitoba – period.

* Over 77,000 Manitobans work in retail at over 4,692 locations – retail means local community jobs.
* 64% of retailers in Manitoba are small businesses with fewer than 10 employees: supporting retail means supporting small business and your community.
* Retail generates over $16.2 billion in annual sales in Manitoba alone.

Government policies affect the competitiveness of Manitoba retailers. As the industry goes through an important transformation with the growth of online shopping, Manitoba retailers want to continue to contribute to the growth of jobs and our economy. To do this, we need your party's support, including these issues as outlined by Retail Council of Canada:

**A Predictable Minimum Wage:** Unpredictable increases to the provincial minimum wage can hurt the economic stability of retail businesses, and can result in lost jobs, especially amongst less experienced youth. Its important to link inevitable future increases to the provincial minimum wage to Manitoba’s Consumer Price Index, as legislated in the Minimum Wage Adjustment Act.

**Retail Safety and Crime:** Retail employees are on the front line of endless threats to their safety, as a result of prolific and often violent offenders using a range of dangerous weapons and tactics, as well as complex interactions with those dealing with mental health and drug induced behaviours. Please ensure the Government of Manitoba remains an active and contributing partner in collaborative discussions lead by RCC between police agencies, prosecution, retailers and other important stakeholders.

**Fiscal Responsibility and Taxes:**  Manitoba must find the right balance to support economic growth and opportunity through low taxation and strategic investments, while meeting the needs of Manitobans. We support a balanced approach and believes it should be maintained, by not introducing additional taxes, including raising the provincial sales tax.

**Retail Job Growth:** A recent labour market study for the Manitoba retail sector indicates significant shortages in the workforce necessary to meet current and future growth expectations, including 3,800 current vacancies and by 2028 a shortfall of 14,000 workers at all levels of the industry. Our sector needs the government at the table as RCC and Manitoba’s retailers investigate and implement strategies that will help support the sector’s labour requirements and growth.

**Leveraging Private Sector:** Across Canada most government’s see retailers as valued partners, leveraging their front-line access to the public to extend accessibility of health services, bring greater convenience for liquor sales, and in other ways that allow governments to better serve their communities. We need your government to openly explore opportunities to collaborate with Manitoba’s private sector retailers to better serve Manitobans, including potentially expanding pharmacy health services, expanding grocery liquor sales, as well as other potential products and services.

When I vote, I will be thinking about these issues.

The retail jobs and economic success must be at the heart of the October 2023 election. I invite you to support these issues as each of them have a significant impact on Manitoba’s economy and its communities.

For more information, I invite you to visit voteretail.ca tweet your support at @RetailCouncil, or contact John Graham, Director, Government Relations (the Prairies) at jgraham@retailcouncil.org.

Sincerely,

[your name]