

BUSINESS

Perspective: Who knew that in 2021 the counterrevolution — more popularly known as a coup — would be laid out in a Power-Point presentation? **B3**

Local business, in brief **Page B2**



SOPHIE PARK/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The Dollar General sign outside the store where Shellie Parsons works in Barkhamsted.

The worker revolt comes to a Dollar General in Connecticut

By **GREG JAFFE**
The Washington Post

Winsted
THE AFTERNOON SHIFT workers at Dollar General No. 18060 had listened with growing panic as an executive accused their store manager of stealing. They could hear the yelling and threats in the back office, a scene that had shaken all of them — especially Shellie Parsons.

In a life marked by poverty, addiction and physical abuse, Parsons, 37, had come to see her store — a beige prefabricated building on the outskirts of town — as her haven, a \$15.75-an-hour pathway to a better life. She was desperately afraid of losing it.

And so, after a brief discussion with a few trusted co-workers, she headed to a nearby Stop & Shop grocery store where years earlier she recalled seeing a picket line, walked back to

How Shellie Parsons' phone call set off one of the most lopsided battles of the ongoing low-wage-worker revolt

the deli counter and asked one of the butchers, whom she had never met, whether he had a phone number for someone at their union. She dialed from the parking lot.

"Why does it got to be me?" she recalled thinking as the phone rang. She feared that talking to a union organizer could get her fired, even as she worried that doing nothing would leave her and her colleagues vulnerable to the whims of upper management.

All over the country, workers

who had labored through a global pandemic for low pay and meager benefits were concluding that they deserved better from their bosses. Wages were rising and a wave of strikes was sweeping across the country, hitting iconic American brands such as Kellogg's and John Deere. And now Parsons's phone call was setting off one of the most lopsided battles of the ongoing low-wage-worker revolt.

On one side: six Dollar General employees, most of whom were making the minimum wage or just slightly above it. The group included a community college student, a struggling musician who had recently moved back home and two single moms, one of whom was Parsons. On the other: a company with yearly revenue approaching \$34 billion, more than 157,000 employees and 17,683 stores, not one of which was unionized.

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NOVEMBER RETAIL SALES DISAPPOINT

Rising prices on gas and groceries are prompting Americans to pull back in other areas, raising fears that lingering inflation — coupled with a new covid wave — could be slowing economic growth.

Retail sales edged up 0.3% in November from the month before, the Commerce Department reported this past Wednesday, well below the 0.8% gain forecast by economists.

The categories with the largest increases reflected the rising costs of fuel and food, with gas stations notching a 1.7% jump in sales. Spending at restaurants and bars rose 1%, while grocery store sales climbed 0.9%.

— The Washington Post

SEC EYES CRACKDOWN ON EXECUTIVES' STOCK SALES

Corporate chieftains have long been suspected of skirting rules that are meant to prevent top executives from trading on inside information. Now, the Securities and Exchange Commission is cracking down.

The regulator is addressing a controversial question: When should corporate insiders, who may have access to material non-public information, be allowed to sell stock? Currently, executives can set up sales just days before dumping shares, which some lawmakers say enables them to front run corporate announcements that can move share prices.

In response, the SEC proposed new rules that would force company insiders to wait roughly four months from when they schedule a trade before they sell.

— Bloomberg

Canadian home prices surge a record 25% amid shortage

Canadian house prices jumped more than 25% in November from a year earlier, a record gain propelled by a historic supply shortage.

An increase in properties for sale from October to November wasn't nearly enough to satisfy demand, according to the Canadian Real Estate Association. The benchmark sale price climbed to C\$790,600 (\$612,720).

"The supply issues we faced going into 2020, which became much worse heading into 2021, are even tighter as we move into 2022," Shaun Cathcart, the real estate board's chief economist, said.

Ultra-low mortgage rates and demand for larger living spaces during the Covid-19 pandemic combined to make Canada one of the hottest housing markets in the world over the last two years.

— Bloomberg



BRETT GUNDLOCK/BLOOMBERG

Prospective home buyers attend an open house at a home for sale in the High Park neighborhood of Toronto.