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An Open Letter to Starbucks' New CEO, Brian Niccol

Dear Mr. Niccol:

I'm writing to you as the mother of a 13-year-old child who was arrested earlier this year inside a Florida Starbucks store while peacefully protesting against the company's upcharge on plant-based milks. There is nothing you can do about your predecessor's harsh policy that allowed management to call the police to evict nonviolent pleaders or about my son's traumatic experience, but as you step into your new role, I ask on behalf of my son and everyone else who wants to choose plant-based milks for ethical, environmental, health, or religious reasons that you please end the vegan upcharge as one of your first actions.

My son was exercising his First Amendment rights at Starbucks, protesting peacefully for all the sons who are taken away from their loving mothers so that the milk meant to nourish their bodies can be sold. Watching as my son was handcuffed, torn away from me, and hauled off also gave *me* a glimpse into the horrors of the dairy industry. Just as humans do, cows form strong maternal bonds with their babies, and they're devastated when their calves are taken away from them. The helplessness I felt was minuscule compared to theirs, but it offered a glimpse of the suffering that these mother cows feel year after year—an acute pain that no parent should ever experience.

Cows feel love, joy, pain, and fear just like the rest of us. Charging extra for vegan milks punishes people who want to make a kinder choice by leaving cows in peace. Please, use your power to make a positive change by ending this upcharge.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon Blair". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shannon Blair