

CWA Praises Passage Of Health Care Reform

Unless you have taken cover under a rock for the past year, it would have been nearly impossible to hide from all the press given to the "Health Care Reform" issue. When President Obama took office, CWA made this issue their number one priority to gain leverage at the bargaining table. Many large corporations, such as Wal-Mart, have dodged their responsibilities to provide health care benefits to employees, shifting the burden to struggling state and federal systems. These costs are then shifted by insurance companies to employers that do provide benefits, in order to make up for the deficits. Employers like Verizon, Avaya and SuperMedia try to manage these expenditures at the bargaining table with concessionary demands. Unless something was done with our broken health care system, major give-backs in the next round of bargaining, including major cuts for retiree health care costs would be a top priority for our employers. Not to say they still won't try, but at least we have stronger footing now.



Now while the new "Health Care Plan" is not everything CWA had hoped would come out of the final bill, it is a start. This piece of legislation will make insurance coverage secure for those of us who have it, and make affordable coverage available to an estimated 32 million Americans who don't have it. It will end some of the worst abuses of the insurance companies by prohibiting them from denying coverage, cancelling coverage, or imposing dollar limits on people who desperately need care. Pre-existing conditions will be a thing of the past. Seniors will get prescription drug relief immediately and young adults will be able to stay on their parents' insurance until the age of 26. Americans will benefit from new cost controls, coverage expansion, affordability tax credits, insurance regulations, Medicare solvency, and it will reduce the federal deficit by more than a trillion dollars over the next 20 years.

CWA President Larry Cohen issued a statement saying:

"This legislation is an important opportunity to repair America's broken health care system. We commend Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the House leadership for their efforts that made this vote possible, and we commend members of the House of Representatives who stood up to insurance company interests and voted yes for real reform. H.R. 4872 is good start. It includes some penalties for employers who for too long have refused to pay their fair share and reassures workers that their families won't lose health care if they change jobs or are laid off. It stops the worst abuses of insurance

companies, like denying care based on pre-existing conditions, setting lifetime limits for coverage and dropping coverage when people need it most. After decades of working for quality health care for all, this bill moves us forward and provides a framework for future improvements. We urge the Senate to act quickly to provide working and middle class families with the health care we all need. We can't afford to wait any longer"

Adversaries of the legislation are predicting an economic collapse similar to the one Republicans predicted in 1993 when President Clinton signed into law "The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act". The 1993 Budget Act was President Clinton's response to the economic and political consequences of mounting federal debt. Similar to the Health Care Reform Bill, not one single Republican voted for the legislation. Then Vice President, Al Gore, cast the deciding vote to pass the act. What followed was the longest economic expansion in US history and the fastest economic growth in a generation. Over 23 million jobs were created (compared with a total of 5 million during the 12 years of BOTH Bushes combined). The stock market surged during the Clinton presidency with the S&P 500 increasing by 300%. Clinton bequeathed a federal budget that ran four consecutive years of surpluses totaling \$560 billion. The projected 10-year surplus when he left office was \$5.6 trillion (causing Fed chairman Alan Greenspan to express concern that the entire US debt may get paid off too rapidly and surpluses would have to be invested in private securities - which was considered a bad thing until President Bush proposed privatizing Social Security).

On a different note, radio personality, (if you want to call him that), Rush Limbaugh, promised to pack up and move to Costa Rica if this bill passed. We hope he enjoys his warm, sunny days in a country that offers universal coverage with the government paying for care for the unemployed.

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AFL-CIO Night at Camden Yards

Friday, June 25, 2010

Baltimore Orioles

-vs-

Washington Nationals

Game Time - 7:05 pm

Tickets: \$5.00 Per Person - Sold on a first come, first serve basis.

Join CWA Local 2108 at Orioles Park at Camden Yards this summer as the Orioles take on The Washington Nationals. There will be fireworks presented after the ballgame. To order your tickets call the local office on 301-595-2108. See you at the yard !!

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We must hang together, gentlemen...else, we shall most assuredly hang separately.

Ben Franklin

Those words, spoken by one of the founders of our great nation, may never be truer for any of us than they are today. The companies we work for have embarked on a course of systematically downsizing their workforce with one goal in mind, to get rid of the Union.

Let's talk first about the Yellow Pages/online search publisher, SuperMedia. Spun off from Verizon several years ago, what was then Verizon Information Services became Idearc and then, after declaring bankruptcy, emerged as SuperMedia. Speak to any one of the employees working there and they will tell you it's anything but super. They have now been through two layoffs in the last 9 months with the goal of "right-sizing" their workforce to match industry standards. Translated, they have gotten rid of people and are pushing those still working there to produce at unrealistic and unreasonable levels. It has gotten so bad that many people would like to receive a layoff notice so they can take the severance money and leave.

Then we have Verizon Connected Solutions. They have managed through the divide and conquer, fear and intimidation tactics pretty much from the very beginning. They started out heavily utilizing home car garaging with the main objective of keeping their employees, our members, from growing into a tight cohesive group. The rumors have come and gone over the years about whether or not will they not stay in business.

Lastly, there is Verizon Communications. This has been their core company and mostly cash cow from the very beginning. They used the sweat of our collective brow to start up and grow the Wireless side of the business. We started off from the very beginning trying to organize those workers in order to give them a voice in the workplace. We negotiated several Card Check / Neutrality Agreements, none of which Verizon honored. Any attempt at organizing at Bell Atlantic / Verizon Wireless is met with swift and often catastrophic consequences for the workers interested in doing so. Intimidations and firings are the standard operating procedure to keep the union out.

Now we see Verizon laying off its workers from New England to

Virginia. We see them making every effort to sell off landlines in fourteen states, the crown jewel of which is West Virginia. Even management is scratching their collective heads wondering where this is leading to and when it will all end. In the meantime, through fear and intimidation we have allowed them to divide us, and if we're not real careful, they will conquer us.



At our most recent Membership Meeting we had a packed house with everyone asking the same question, "What's going on with the layoffs? And what can we do about it?" I will take those in the order they were posed.

First, "What's going on with the layoffs?" I am writing this on March 26th and as of this moment we have not received the official notice of any EISP or Article 35 layoff announcement. That may be changed by the time you are reading this.

Second, "What can we do about it?" That's a two part answer.

As a contractual matter, for those members who don't have the Job Security Letter protections, there is very little we can do in the short term. If Verizon is determined to lay you off, contractually they may do so. However, one thing you and everyone can do immediately is stop working yourself out of a job. For too long now, we have allowed the company to intimidate us into working harder and, quite frankly, dumber by giving in to their threats of transfer to inconvenient work locations or overtime restrictions, etc. In some cases, we are stepping on each other trying not to be the crab that gets left in the cooking bucket, when what we should be doing is all working together to see that the water never boils! And now the chickens are coming home to roost. Management has decided they can continue cutting and intimidating in order to achieve its goals. We don't have to allow this.

We all have a tool that if we just took advantage of it, we could all protect ourselves and in doing so, protect each other. What is this magic tool I'm talking about? It's simple, Company Policies. We are all trained on the practices and procedures that management insists we use in performing our jobs each day. Some of these practices we think are stupid and ineffective. Essentially, we see them as a waste of our time. PERFECT! If that's what they've trained us to do, they'll be hard pressed to discipline us for following their direction.

So why don't we do it? I think somehow people think that all of these things, ideas and problems simply don't apply to them. Or we wait for the other person to do it first.

Look around folks. That other person is rapidly becoming you. As our employers continue to downsize and layoff, no one will be safe. If you work for Verizon and today you enjoy the protection provided by the Job Security Letter, don't get too comfortable. They've violated that Letter in the past and it wouldn't surprise me if they didn't attempt to do so again.

We are a scant sixteen months from the expiration of the current agreement. Now is the time to look around and take stock of the fact that the only thing that's going to protect us from this corporation, **IS** us.

Les

Communications Workers of America Local 2108

2108News

Published Monthly
Printing Done In-House

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Recording Announcements

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- SuperMedia** (301) 595-3072



I got an interesting email the other day which had a link to a website that tracked stock trading from corporate executives. I usually just delete these links but I accidentally opened this one and was very intrigued by what I saw. It was the required filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission from Verizon CEO and Chairman, Ivan Seidenberg, regarding all his stock transactions all bundled up in a nice neat package.

<http://www.secform4.com/insider-trading/1187727.htm>

Not that I really understand what half this stuff means, but it looks like ol' Ivan is selling his stock at the same pace as Tiger Woods' mistresses are coming out of the woodwork. Maybe he just needed a little more "walking around" money or perhaps he is in the middle of a mid-life crisis and wants to buy that 1968 Camaro SS he always wanted...but I figured if the big rats were scurrying off the ship, I better grab my little piece of cheese and jump ship as well. It was time for me to change my investment directions. Don't know if I made a wise choice, but I figure the quote at the top of that webpage said it all... *"Insiders might sell their shares for any number of reasons, but they buy them for only one: they think the price will rise"*.

For whatever the reason, his actions speak volumes to the overall mood of the company. Layoffs, radical policy changes, selling off land-lines, ridiculous commitment dates, unattainable objectives and a plethora of other issues have us all scratching our heads. Even management is throwing their hands in the air in disbelief. Everyone is in the "what shoe is gonna drop next" mode. Maybe, they are engineering this chaotic situation as part of a "grand plan" to **frustrate us off the payroll** and make it more attractive for potential suitors.

Rumors have been floating around for some time that AT&T has been interested in buying up Verizon's landlines. So my thought on the potential sale is that we, as active shareholders, should commence to doing our part to make sure that whoever ends up with us is getting a quality product.

Vehicles need to be thoroughly inspected every morning for possible safety issues prior to leaving the garage per company guidelines. Every safety inspection on poles, ladders, personal protective equipment should also be done daily in accordance with Verizon safety practices. All outside jobs should be done with the strictest attention to quality and safety. Remember, we want to produce a quality product. If the numbers tank, so be it. We are just following the rules. If everyone follows the rules to the letter of the law, everyone's numbers will reflect it accordingly.

Folks working on the inside should adhere to established procedures. Workarounds which promote efficiency should be avoided because the company has demonstrated that free-thinkers are no longer welcomed in structured environments. If they want robots...for 30 bucks an hour...I will be the best robot in the world. Supervisors are there to make sure you succeed at your assigned task and should be utilized as often as possible to facilitate that success. They love questions. Lots of them. Bring an apple in if you think it will help.

Remind them every chance you get that you are following "THEIR" rules !!

Personals :

We wish to extend sincere sympathy to the family and friends of:

John T. Huff, Sr., father-in-law of Shelley Archer-Barron who died on January 20, 2010.

Anna Mae Calloway, grandmother of Anna Hunter, who died January 16, 2010.

William R. Lloyd, Sr., father of Carmelita Lloyd who died on February 18, 2010.

Patsy Ann Hill, aunt of Dedria Tyree who died on February 21, 2010.

Lorretta Kurz Gilmore, aunt of Don Kurz who died on March 3, 2010.

Thedius Wallace, mother-in-law of Richard Johnson who died on February 24, 2010.

Lucille Watson, sister of Eva Bailey who died on March 2, 2010.

Joanne Bell Jackson, mother of Michelle Golden who died February 22, 2010.

Charles J. Lee, father of Thomas Lee who died February 18, 2010.

Antonio B. Mercado, father of Scot Mercado who died February 24, 2010.

Julia Charles, mother-in-law of Sonja Thompson, who died February 19, 2010.

Andrew Ruffin, nephew of Stephanie Crews who died on March 9, 2010.

Congratulations to:

Robert Sickman on the birth of his granddaughter, Rylan Jerricka Simpkins on June 20, 2009.

David Broach on the birth of his son Noah Christopher on February 2, 2010

Welcome New Members

New

Mike Carter

Randy Smith

Abebe Abebe

Retirees

Frances Ale

Glenda Carpenter



Transferred

Tonie Price

Toni Owens

John Stromer, Jr.

Bernice Warfield

Sabrina Staley

Karen Finecey

Michael Wartman

Sally Young

2010 CWA LOCAL 2108 SCHOLARSHIP GRANT

CWA Local 2108 is proud to offer scholarships to our members and their families.

Please read the rules below, and call the Local if you have additional questions.

1. Three \$2,000 scholarships are available
2. Available to members in good standing since last negotiated contract, their spouse and dependent children or dependent children of deceased members.
3. \$1,000 will be mailed directly to the institution per semester
4. Student must take at least 9 credits per semester.
5. Must have a letter of acceptance from the college or accredited learning institution with application.
6. Drawing at July membership meeting as a raffle.
7. Community Service Committee will screen applications.
8. Applications must be postmarked by June 30 of the current year.
9. Resignation from the union will forfeit scholarship awards.

NAME: _____ SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER _____

RELATIONSHIP TO MEMBER _____ SCHOOL ATTENDING _____

ADDRESS _____ HOME NUMBER _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____ WORK NUMBER _____

Calvin C Foster Jr.
 President RMC 2108

Spring is here and it's a new beginning for 2010. We are all hoping for a new change from Capitol Hill. When this newsletter is published we will have some indication of whether anything constructive is being done. The country is waiting for the changes that will match the spring weather. The CWA employees of Verizon are looking for change and the CWA retirees are hoping that any changes are positive ones for us and future retirees.



RMC 2108

Any changes that take place will be reviewed and explained at this year's CWA Convention and Legislative Conference in July. The Chapter elected Joe Cooke as the second delegate to the convention at last month's meeting. He and I will be in attendance and will review any changes with the Chapter.

Other spring thoughts Janice Crowe is still accepting reservations for the special matinee performance of "Hairspray" at Toby's Dinner Theatre in Columbia, MD. The date is Wednesday, April 21, 2010 10:30am. The cost is \$40.00 per person and includes a Buffet Lunch, Show and all taxes and gratuities. If you have questions, call Janice Crowe at (410) 533-5370.



APRIL 2010

- 4 Easter Sunday
- 7 Chief Stewards Meeting - (Cancelled)
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 6-8 CWA District 2 Conference
Baltimore, MD
- 14 Retired Members Chapter Meeting, 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 28 Stewards Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

MAY 2010

- 5 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 5 Finance Committee Meeting - 4:30pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 9 Mother's Day
- 12 Retired Members Chapter Meeting, 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 12 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 31 Memorial Day
Local Office Closed

ATTENTION: Membership Meeting : April 14, 2010 - 6:00 pm, Local Office
 Stewards Meeting : April 28, 2010 - 6:00 pm, Local Office

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 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
 ISSN: 0162-248X