



For The People Act:

CWA members made thousands of calls to their representatives in Congress, and their efforts paid off when Congress passed the *For the People Act*, sponsored by Representative John Sarbanes (D-Md.), earlier this month. The sweeping pro-democracy bill contains reforms essential to fixing our political system, including voting rights, money-in-politics, redistricting, and government ethics reforms. Now, CWAers are turning their attention to pushing for the *For the People Act* to get a full debate and vote in the Senate.

CWA members joined a town hall call last week to celebrate the success of passing the bill in the House and lay out next steps to keep fighting for the bill to become law. CWA President Chris Shelton, Rep. Sarbanes, and Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.) spoke with the members on the call.

"If we don't make sure that our democracy works for the people, we will never be able to pass legislation to save call centers from offshoring, protect our union rights, make it easier for other workers to join CWA, rein in the power of Wall Street, and make sure the 1% pays their fair share of taxes," said Shelton. "We must make sure that the Republican-controlled Senate takes this legislation up for a vote, and if they don't, we need to take to the streets. We need to email, call, and visit our Senators to tell them that they need to hear our voices."

On the call, 91% of CWA members polled said they would put pressure on their Senator in support of the *For the People Act*. Top issues for those members included getting big money out of politics, fighting corruption, ending gerrymandering, and expanding voting rights.

No Tax Breaks for Outsourcing Act:

The Republican corporate tax cut bill contained a provision that rewards and incentivizes the offshoring of more American jobs. In order to address this, CWA is urging Congress to pass the *No Tax Breaks for Outsourcing Act*. The bill, introduced earlier this month by Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas) along with more than 70 co-sponsors in the House and by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) in the Senate, would stop rewarding companies that ship jobs overseas and reverse the offshoring incentives embedded in the tax bill.

Many of the companies that are among the biggest beneficiaries of the Republican tax bill, such as AT&T and Wells Fargo, have already been closing American call centers and aggressively offshoring U.S. jobs. After shipping jobs overseas, these companies have been gifted billions of dollars in new tax breaks while being encouraged to offshore even

more American jobs in the future.

"As companies such as AT&T and Wells Fargo keep demonstrating, corporate America will keep siding with wealthy shareholders at the expense of fair treatment of their workers unless our elected officials step in," said CWA's Director of Legislation, Politics, and International Affairs Shane Larson. "These practices, including offshoring, won't just end on their own. We thank Rep. Doggett, Sen. Whitehouse, and their numerous co-sponsors for introducing this important legislation and for fighting for a fairer economy that works for all of us."

Maryland HB126 - Right To Work

Under this proposed legislation introduced by 7 Republican lawmakers, no one in Maryland could be forced to join a union as a condition of employment. So-called Right-To-Work (RTW) legislation entitles employees to the benefits of a union contract—including the right to have the union take up their grievance if their employer abuses them—without paying any of the cost.

This means that if an employer mistreats a worker who does not pay a union representation fee, the union must process that worker's grievance just as it would a dues-paying member's, even if it costs tens of thousands of dollars. Non-dues-paying workers would also receive the higher wages and benefits their dues-paying coworkers enjoy, even though they didn't pay a penny toward the costs of negotiating those wages and benefits. RTW laws have nothing to do with whether people can be forced to join a union or contribute to a political cause they do not support; that is already illegal. Nor do RTW laws have anything to do with the right to have a job or be provided employment.

MD HB126 was introduced on January 21, 2019 and on February 14, 2019 it received an unfavorable recommendation by the Economic

Labor Night With D.C. United



SUNDAY MAY 12, 2019

7:00PM

AUDI FIELD



Join us for the Annual Labor Night as D.C. United and Wayne Rooney take on Sporting Kansas City! Tickets start at just \$30 per ticket. Share your personal link to be seated next to your friends! For groups of ten or more, please call Tristan Atterbury at 202.655.2854 or email: tatterbury@dcunited.com. For less than 10 tickets please follow this link to purchase your tickets online:

<https://www.fevo.com/edp/Labor-Night-at-DC-United-h2ZzLkk>

Three hundred seventy CWA members in MD, VA, DC and Clarksburg, WV are going to share in a back pay award of over \$205,000, thanks to a grievance filed by Local 2108 in March of 2014, under the watchful eye of our Executive Vice President Amory Proctor. It took five long years, but last month an arbitrator ruled in our favor. At issue was the Lump Sum Attendance Payments Verizon paid in March of both 2014 and 2015, and what is meant by the term "incidental absence".



When the Absence from Duty Letter of Understanding (see page 179 of our contract) was negotiated in October, 2012, it capped paid incidental absence days at ten per year (in most cases). The LOU included a lump sum payout to reward employees who used four days or fewer of paid or unpaid incidental absence annually, paying what many call an Attendance "Bonus" of between one to five days' of pay.

At Verizon (and its predecessors Bell Atlantic and C&P Telephone Company) "incidental absence" has been defined for many, many decades as an employee's absence due to his own illness or off-duty accident, during the first seven calendar days (as short term disability begins on day eight). When the Lump Sum Payments were paid, however, Verizon decided to take it upon themselves to define "incidental absence" differently. They counted unpaid FMLA-covered absences that our members took to care for ill family members as incidental absences, thereby giving some members a smaller Attendance Bonus than they earned, and not giving others the Attendance Bonus they earned at all.

Twenty nine grievances were filed about this specific issue; ten in PA, two in VA, and seventeen in Local 2108. CWA and Verizon agreed that one arbitration would be held in PA to hear those ten cases together, and that when the decision was rendered it would apply to the VA and MD grievances, also. The PA arbitration was won by CWA in October, 2015, with the arbitrator agreeing that FMLA-covered absences to care for an ill family member were **not** an incidental absence, and should not affect an employee's Attendance Bonus. The arbitrator ruled that Verizon had to pay the ten PA grievants the full Bonus owed them, unreduced due to FMLA-covered absences to care for family. After this ruling, Verizon ceased reducing the Attendance Bonuses for this reason, beginning with the March, 2016 payout for plan year 2015.

All that was left to do was for Verizon to apply the PA arbitrator's award to the nineteen VA and MD grievances as previously agreed, and this issue could be settled. This is where things got interesting! That pesky Amory Proctor, from that pain-in-the-keester Local 2108, had directed his Chief Steward Dedria Tyree (now retired) to file her grievance over this issue on behalf of herself **and all affected members of the bargaining unit**. Verizon agreed to apply the PA award to the nineteen individuals who filed grievances, but refused to apply it to all affected. CWA refused to accept that only the nineteen who knew to file grievances would get the money Verizon owed them, knowing that hundreds were cheated out of their Bonuses. Attempts to reason with the Company were unsuccessful, and CWA was forced to go back to arbitration so an arbitrator could determine to whom the PA ruling would apply. The issue: **Would only the nineteen who grieved the issue get the money owed to them, or would Verizon have to pay all three hundred seventy whose Bonuses were shorted?**

During the arbitration Verizon's high-priced lawyers argued that little Local 2108 had no authority to file a grievance on behalf of all affected

members of the bargaining unit, and that only District 2-13 could do so, in the form of an Executive Level Grievance. CWA argued that from the first step grievance presentation, to the numerous information requests asking the Company to identify who was impacted, to the letter appealing Dedria's grievance to the second step and at the second step meeting, Amory had told Verizon that the grievance was filed on behalf of Dedria and all affected members, every step of the way. Verizon never argued that this was not permitted until we reached arbitration.

On March 3rd, 2019, Impartial Arbitrator Ira Jaffe, Esq. ruled that Local 2108 **could indeed** file that grievance on behalf of Dedria **and all affected members of the bargaining unit**, and that Verizon had to pay ALL 370 affected employees in VA, DC, MD and Clarksburg, WV the proper Attendance Bonuses for plan years 2013 and 2014! We will post when those affected should expect their back pay as soon as Verizon notifies us of the date.

Amory's knowledge, research and tenacity not only benefitted the members of 2108 in this case, but also 285 members who work in VA, DC, WV and in other parts of MD. I'm sure you join me in saying I



RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

Spring has sprung and along with those seasonal changes, come changes to the political landscape that could affect retirees. While we have little control over the weather, we do have the ability to influence proposed changes over Health Care, Social Security and Medicare. The more informed we become with pending changes, we can develop strategies to head off negative impacts and ensure that we can preserve these benefits for future RMC members.



At this month's RMC meeting we will discuss these issues as well as conduct nominations for and an election for a Delegate to represent RMC 2108 at this year's CWA convention.

The RMC luncheon meeting will be on April 11, 2019 at 11:00am in the local office. Deserts are always appreciated!! See you there!!

Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108

In typical Verizon fashion, a perfect public relations opportunity was squandered away so swift and harsh discipline could be administered. Verizon has shown the public their true colors in their latest management debacle by suspending Cable Splicer, Maurice German. On Saturday morning, March 16th, German was approached by locals in the Port Richmond area of Philadelphia with a unique problem. One of the residents' cats had wandered outside and found her stranded at the top of a very high utility pole.

The cat owner had contacted the fire department, animal rescue groups and Verizon for assistance but didn't receive any responses or offers to assist. After 12 hours of the cat being stranded on the top of the pole, her owners were ecstatic to see German and his bucket truck and they pleaded for his help. In his bucket, German was easily able to reach the stranded feline and bring her to safety to the applause of many spectators. But as the saying goes, "no good deed goes unpunished".



In spite of German's bravery, Verizon suspended him from for 15 days without pay citing safety issues. Verizon's decision to suspend German was ridiculed on the Stephen Colbert Show and spurred PETA to not only appeal to the company to rescind the discipline, but to present German with an award.

While CWA doesn't condone unsafe work practices, considerations should have been taken into account. Perhaps, Verizon could have basked in the light of his good deed and earned some well needed public accolades and had an informal conversation on the appropriate way to handle situations such as this. But we all know how they enjoy suspending people!!

To help offset his lost wages, the community and co-workers set up 2 GoFundMe pages to support German. Their goal was to make up for German losing three weeks of pay. In two days both GoFundMe accounts had exceeded their goals and have since been discontinued. CWA Local 13000 President, Jim Gardler noted that he had a lengthy conversation with Verizon management to try and resolve the situation

401(k) Discretionary Award Set at 3%

Per the 2012 Memorandum of Understanding, employees hired after October 12, 2012 are no longer eligible to participate in the Verizon Pension Plan. Instead, CWA was able to negotiate that those employees would receive a 100% match on eligible 401(k) contributions. In addition, there is an annual discretionary award payout that ranges from 0-3% of the participant's eligible compensation based on company performance. The performance award level for 2018 is 3%. The 2018 Discretionary Savings Plan contribution was deposited to associate accounts on March 27, 2019. It pays to be Union!!

Are you "WEARING RED" on Thursdays?

Personals

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

John McMahan, father of retired member **Diane Kerr** who passed away on March 13, 2019.

Barbara Bennett, a retired member who passed away on March 17, 2019.

Congratulations to Recent Retirees:



Terri L. Powell
Paul M Williams III
Lois Alexander



The Beirne Foundation Scholarship Program

The CWA Joe Beirne Foundation was established in October 1974 by the Communications Workers of America Executive Board to honor the name and memory of the founding President of CWA, who served for more than 30 years.

Sixteen partial college scholarships of \$4,000 each are being offered for the 2019-2020 school year. Winners, selected in a lottery drawing, also will receive second-year scholarships of the same amount contingent upon satisfactory academic accomplishment. Part-time students, less than 12 credits, will receive half of the scholarship monies.

Eligible for the awards are CWA members and their spouses, children and grandchildren, including those of retired or deceased members. Applicants must be high school graduates or at least high school students who will graduate during the year in which they apply. Undergraduate and graduate students returning to schooling may also apply. Applications are accepted during the months of November through April. **Final deadline for the 2019-2020 school year is April 30, 2019.**

To apply online, go to:
<http://www.cwa-union.org/pages/beirne>

Thinking About Retirement?

You may want to check out one of these important workshops presented by **Networth Financial** Group to see if the reality of retirement is on your horizon and get treated to a free meal!!

Social Security Workshop
Thursday, April 4th, 2019 - Ruths Chris 1777 Reisterstown Road, Pikesville, MD - 6:30 PM

Retirement Benefits Workshop
Saturday, April 13th, 2019 - CWA Local 2108, 10786 Rhode Island Ave, Beltsville, MD - 10:00 AM

Retirement Planning Workshop
Tuesday, April 16th - Jerry's Seafood, 15211 Major Lansdale Blvd., Bowie - 6:30 PM

Reservations are required and to RSVP you may call Networth at (800)-859-2212, or register online at Networth.net. **Space is limited and the workshop is limited to CWA members with 15+ years of net credited service and their spouse only.**



CWA Local 2108 Conducts New Steward Training



On March 20-21, 2019, CWA Local 2108 conducted new stewards training at the union hall to help them assist members with day to day workplace issues. Please make sure to thank our newest group of workplace advocates for stepping up to the plate and volunteering their services to represent you !!

Top Row: Ali Hootkany, Sammaro Reynolds, Ronald Davis, Irving Rodriguez, Cliff Dixon, Nantambu Hall, Reuben Hall, Martina Arthur, Drew Franklin, Derrick Spinner, Irving Hinton, Buck Giles

Bottom Row: DeWaine Williams, Katrina Moten, (Instructor) Tasha Carpenter, (Instructor) Matt Klingman, (Instructor) Tamera Nelson, Donte Christian

Local 2108 Calendar

APRIL 2019

- 3 Chief Stewards Meeting - Cancelled
- 10 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 10 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 21 Easter Sunday



MAY 2019

- 8 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 8 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 12 Mother's Day

- 27 Memorial Day
Local Office Closed

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated or have any effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request my union representative, officer or steward to be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to participate in this discussion.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Membership Meeting - Wednesday, April 10, 2019, 6:00pm
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, April 10, 2019, 11:00am



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 Matt Klingman - Vice President
 LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President
 Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer
 Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President
 Marilyn Irwin - President

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