

## Legislative Changes Offers More Flexibility to Spending Accounts

Recent legislation enacted as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act provides relief to flexible spending accounts in light of the disruption caused by COVID-19. This notice explains how the new rules apply to your spending account(s) at Verizon.

### Grace Period Extensions:

The March 15 grace period deadline has been extended to December 31, giving you more time to use the money in your Health Care Spending Account (HCSA), Limited Purpose Health Care Spending Account, or Dependent Day Care Spending Account (DCSA).



- Any balance remaining in your 2020 spending account can be used for eligible expenses through December 31, 2021. You will have until January 31, 2022 to submit claims for reimbursement for these expenses.
- Any balance remaining in your 2021 spending account can be used for eligible expenses through December 31, 2022. You will have until January 31, 2023 to submit claims for reimbursement for these expenses.

Please note that the grace period extension for the DCSA could result in tax consequences if you are reimbursed for more than the \$5,000 maximum in one year. You should consult with your tax advisor for guidance on your specific situation.

### Change to DCSA age limit for 2020 eligible dependents:

If you were enrolled in the DCSA in 2020, had an eligible dependent who turned 13 in 2020, and had an unused DCSA balance at the end of 2020, that balance can be used to reimburse the dependent's day care expenses that were incurred during 2020 or 2021 and before the dependent's 14th birthday.

### Spending Account – Special Mid-year enrollment or change in election amount beginning April 15

As a result of the pandemic, mid-year election changes may be made to your HCSA and DCSA even if you have not had a qualified life event. Beginning April 15, you may enroll or update your annual election amount online via BenefitsConnection. Any updates made will apply prospectively only, they will not apply retroactively.

- From About You go to BenefitsConnection
- On the BenefitsConnection home page select "Life Events"
- Select the Life Event entitled "Change in Spending Account Election(s)"
- Follow the prompts

If you want to enroll or make a change to your spending account election without a qualified life event, you must do so between April 15 – May 31. Please note that if you wish to reduce your election amount,

you may only reduce to the amount you have a) contributed year to date or b) been reimbursed for - whichever is greater. If you elect to enroll or increase your election, the new amount will be taken ratably over the remaining paychecks in the year.

After the special enrollment period has ended, you may only make changes to your spending account if you experience a qualified life event.

A Summary of Material Modification regarding these changes will be sent at a later date and will also be available for review in the Library section of BenefitsConnection.

If you have any questions, contact the Verizon Benefits Center at 855.349.4437. This is a dedicated phone line to assist with inquiries specific to these spending account changes. Representatives are available Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 5 PM Eastern time.

## Maryland Right To Work Bill Dies in Committee

Under this proposed legislation introduced by Reid Novotny (R-District 9A, Howard & Carroll County), 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 co-workers 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 February 8, 2021 and on March 17, 2021 it received an unfavorable recommendation by the Economic Matters Committee rendering that piece legislation dead for this legislative session.



I got my first "Fauci ouchie" last week, and it couldn't have been easier!



While deciding whether to get the COVID-19 vaccine is a personal decision, I hope all of our members and retirees will research the issue and seriously consider receiving the vaccine to protect themselves, their families and their coworkers.

While none of the vaccines provide a 100% guarantee that you won't catch one of the COVID-19 variations, the odds are very high that you won't get sick enough to be hospitalized or die if that happens after you are fully vaccinated.

More than 30 million Americans have been confirmed as infected by COVID-19 over the past year, resulting in more than 540,000 deaths. Following two months of declines in new cases in Maryland, that trend has leveled off recently after a state-wide relaxing of public health restrictions. **The pandemic has not gone away yet, and it is vitally important that we not let our guards down now.** Almost 900 hospital beds were used by COVID patients in Maryland last week, the highest number in the past three weeks. Understandably, all of us are experiencing "COVID fatigue" after a year of missed birthdays, graduations, vacations, weddings and funerals, in addition to drastic changes to our everyday lives. (In the past year I've entered Lord and Taylor once, and I haven't sat down inside a restaurant at all.) **While we're all ready for this pandemic to be over, sadly it isn't.**



Maryland has administered more than 225 million vaccines to date, and is currently averaging more than 43,000 shots/day. Per the CDC, if we continue to maintain social distancing, wear our masks in public and keep up with our hygiene and cleaning protocols until most are vaccinated we will finally be able to get back to some degree of "normal".

There are hundreds of places to get the vaccine in Maryland, including pharmacies, grocery stores, hospitals, clinics, health departments and mass vaccination sites. I wasn't willing to devote hours every day to checking websites and calling different locations to see if they had vaccines available that day. I found the state-wide website **covid-vax.maryland.gov** to include everything I needed. It helps you find a site near you, or you can call **1-855MDGoVAX** (855-634-6829) if you need help. I had previously registered with my county, but by the time I read their emails advising that I could schedule an appointment all the time slots were taken! When I signed up at **covidvax.maryland.gov** I got to chose my top two mass sites I was interested in. Four days later I received a couple text messages confirming I was still interested and scheduling me for my first shot five days later, and my second shot three weeks after that. I chose to go to Six Flags in Upper Marlboro and it couldn't have been easier. I didn't even have to get out of my car! From the time I entered the facility until I left (after waiting 15 min-

utes to ensure I had no adverse reaction ) was under an hour. The process ran like a well-oiled machine, and the nurses who administered the vaccines and the soldiers who directed traffic couldn't have been nicer!

While Maryland currently has six Mass-Vax sites in operation, six more sites are being added in April. Verizon employees who aren't currently eligible to sign up for the vaccine due to your age or pre-existing health conditions will be able to register in Maryland once the state moves to Stage 2C in less than two weeks. Those who live in the District are able to make an appointment now.

Verizon has decided to give our members the necessary company-paid time (up to four hours) to get the vaccine if you are unable to get an appointment out of work hours. Notify your supervisor as soon as you receive your vaccine appointment and follow your work group's process to get the time needed to get your vaccine excused.

In line with current regulations in Prince Georges' County, I'm happy to say that we will hold our Membership Meeting April 14th in person, and hopefully we can continue to do that thereafter. Masks will be required to enter, and social distancing will be practiced. I look forward to seeing those of you who can attend!

In Solidarity,

*Marilyn*



## The CWA Joseph A. 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. In his capacity as the first CWA President, Joe Beirne took great pride in the roles he played in the fields of education and learning and other areas of social concern.

Sixteen partial college scholarships of \$4,000 each are being offered for the 2021-2022 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 2021-2022 school year is April 30, 2021.**

To apply online, go to:

<http://www.cwa-union.org/pages/beirne>

**To receive CWA action alerts via text message,  
Text CWAAction to 69866**

Final regulations under the Internal Revenue Code have made some changes to the rules that apply to hardship withdrawals from 401(k) plans. The new rules expand the types of expenses that qualify as a hardship. Specifically, the rules include expenses and losses incurred by an employee on account of a federally declared disaster that qualifies for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) individual relief for the area in which the employee principally resides or works ("disaster-related hardship withdrawals").

Prior to this change in the law, the Internal Revenue Service would periodically extend hardship withdrawal availability for certain high profile disasters. The change in the law is a benefit for participants who need access to their 401(k) funds on account of a disaster. The final regulations also allow casualty-related hardship withdrawals (a pre-existing and separate category from disaster-related withdrawals) to continue to be made based on casualty without regard to whether the casualty relates to a federally declared disaster.

In accordance with changes to the final regulations relating to 401(k) plan hardship withdrawals, The Verizon Savings and Security Plan for Mid-Atlantic Associates ("Savings Plan") will be amended and administered to allow disaster-related hardship withdrawals and to continue to allow casualty-related hardship withdrawals without regard to whether the casualty relates to a federally declared disaster. The changes were made effective March 1, 2021.

## Thinking About Retirement?

You may want to check out this important workshop presented by **Networth Financial** Group to see if the reality of retirement is on your horizon!!

### Retirement Preparedness Score Webinar

**Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 6:30 PM** - Please join this meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

To join by phone - Dial In: **(267) 831-0333** or **(301) 715-8592**

**Webinar ID - 972 8851 8366 Password: 134679**

### Retirement - What to Expect Webinar

**Thursday, April 29, 2021 at 6:30 PM** - Please join this meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

To join by phone - Dial In: **(267) 831-0333** or **(301) 715-8592**.

**Webinar ID - 998 6364 3465 Password: 134679**

Reservations are required and to RSVP you may call Networth at (800)-859-2212, or register online at [Networth.net](http://Networth.net).



## CWA & Verizon Extend Covid-19 Agreements

CWA and Verizon have reached an agreement to extend an earlier COVID-19 agreement which will protect our members, while at the same time maintaining our network and providing service to our customers. The following agreements have been extended:

**COVID-19 Home Garaging - Renewal** - This agreement has been extended through April 30, 2021 for all eligible employees who are home garaging.

## Personals

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

**Shirley J. Mosely**, sister of retiree **Mary Wayne**, who passed away on October 10, 2020.

**Joyce Voorhees Kelly**, a retiree who passed away on January 19, 2021.

**Ed Wheatley**, a retiree and brother of **Paul Wheatley** who passed away on March 7, 2021.

**Sharon Peake**, sister of **Rodney Peake** who passed away on March 24, 2021.

## Congratulations to:

**Kathy Bartmanski** on the birth of her grandson, **Levi Colton Bartmanski** on March 3, 2021.

**Shaketta Hayes** on the birth of her daughter, **D'Vinity Day Rogers** on March 5, 2021.

## Welcome to Local 2108

### New Members

#### Kendra Whitaker Hughes

Na'Kia Hamlett  
Charles N Richards  
Lance A. Davis



#### Tambu Hall

Premas Liverpool  
Chris Martinez

## Congratulations to Recent Retirees:

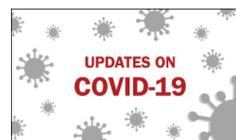


Keith Steward  
William A Larkin  
Sandra R Williams



## RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

The RMC Executive Board is urging our members to continue to stay safe and follow the health recommendations even as the numbers of Covid cases is declining. Many retirees in our chapter are now eligible to receive the vaccine.



The Vaccine eligibility timeline beginning March 23 entered Phase 2A. Marylanders 60 years of age and older will be able to register for a vaccine appointment. To register, call 1-855-MDGOVAX . On March 30, Marylanders age 16 and older with underlying medical conditions that increase the risk for sever COVID-19 illness became eligible for Phase 2B. On April 13, Marylanders age 55 and older, as well as essential workers in critical industries, will be eligible for Phase 2C. On April 27, all Marylanders age 16 and older are eligible to get vaccinated.

The next RMC meeting will be on April 14, 2021 at 11:00am via Zoom. If you have any login issues , please call Janice Crowe on 410-533-5370.

Stay Safe

**Calvin C Foster Jr**  
**President- RMC 2108**

# Former Union Leader to Head Department of Labor

Last month, the U.S. Senate confirmed former Boston Mayor Marty Walsh to lead the Department of Labor. Walsh is the first union member to serve as Secretary of Labor in nearly 50 years. Walsh will become the head of the Labor Department at a critical time, as the pandemic has left millions unemployed and raised concerns about workplace safety.

The former union leader will also serve in a Biden administration that has pledged to protect the power of unions and is looking to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour. An effort to raise the \$15 minimum wage was stripped from the latest coronavirus relief package, but the Biden administration says it's committed to finding another avenue to pass it.



The unemployment rate remains above 6 percent and the number of people who have been unemployed for more than six months is at levels not seen since the Great Recession. And for those in the labor force, workplace safety has become crucial as the country continues to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. This month, the Labor Department launched a new enforcement program designed to monitor companies where workers are at high-risk for exposure to the coronavirus.

The labor department is also now tasked with figuring out what to do with several controversial labor rules written in the twilight of the Trump administration. One broadened who could be counted as an independent contractor, making it harder for workers in the gig economy to be paid a federal minimum wage or gain access to company-mandated health care. Earlier this month, the Labor Department said it's taking steps to reverse that rule. Another Trump-era rule would have allowed restaurants to treat some workers like cooks and dishwashers as tipped workers, meaning they could be subject to the sub-minimum federal wage for people who make tips. A decision on whether to implement that rule has been delayed until next month.

Walsh will ensure that working people have one of their own at the table every time a major decision is made that affects their lives. "President Biden has made it clear that during his administration, encouraging working people to join together in unions to stand up for themselves and improve their workplaces will be a top priority. We are confident that as Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh will carry out this mission," said CWA President Chris Shelton.

# Local 2108 Calendar

## APRIL 2021

- 4 **Easter Sunday**  

- 7 **Chief Stewards Meeting - Cancelled**  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 **RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am - Via Zoom**
- 14 **Membership Meeting - 6:00pm**  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

## MAY 2021

- 9 **Mother's Day**  

- 12 **RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am - Via Zoom**
- 12 **Membership Meeting - 6:00pm**  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 31 **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 14, 2021 - 6:00pm  
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, April 14, 2021 - 11:00am - Via Zoom



10782 Rhode Island Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705

Web Address: [www.cwalocal2108.org](http://www.cwalocal2108.org)

Local Office: (301) 595-2108 :: Local Fax: (301) 595-2412

Tamera Nelson - Vice President

LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President

Marilyn Irwin - President

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LOCAL 2108

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