

Urge Your Senator to Reject The McConnell Proposal and Pass “The Heroes Act”

After months of sitting on his hands, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has finally released a proposal for COVID-19 relief. The package is called the HEALS Act, but unfortunately this poorly named bill will heal nothing and will only hurt working people and our families.

The relief package proposed by McConnell on July 27 is \$2 trillion short and 73 days late. The bill drastically reduces the \$600 in weekly unemployment benefits that thousands of America’s families are relying on right now. While the HEROES Act requires an emergency OSHA standard, McConnell’s proposal does nothing to keep workers safe and instead only protects corporations from liability. And during a time when millions of working people are without a job, health care or retirement security, the package also includes a bill from Sen. Mitt Romney that fast-tracks Social Security and Medicare cuts.

The HEROES Act is the road map to rebuilding America and saving working families.

We need to keep all workers safe and healthy on the job by demanding that government agencies charged with keeping us safe at work do their job and function properly. As front-line workers heroically put themselves and their health at risk every single day, we will stand up and say with conviction that workers are essential, not expendable.

Every worker would rather earn a paycheck than receive an unemployment check. We must ensure that working people are kept on the payrolls for the duration of this crisis, and we demand that the government protect our earned pension benefits.

THE MCCONNELL PROPOSAL:

- \$0 FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
- \$0 FOR THE POSTAL SERVICE
- \$0 FOR HAZARD PAY
- \$0 FOR NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
- \$0 FOR THE UNINSURED/UNDER-INSURED

While this pandemic continues to unfold, our vital public services are being stretched to the breaking point. Congress needs to invest in our state and local governments, our public schools and the U.S. Postal Service.

America is going through a health crisis, yet the first thing millions of people are losing is their health insurance. We cannot have a healthy economy without a healthy workforce. We need to expand health care coverage by stressing the need to make COBRA benefits available and affordable for all workers who are now out of work.

With the highest number of unemployed Americans since the Great Depression, we need to provide good jobs for all workers. This is a wake-up call to make long-overdue investments in a key pillar of the economy: our infrastructure. There is no better time than now to reinvest in the vital infrastructure we need to protect our country and boost the creation of good jobs.

We demand that our elected leaders—especially our senators—step up during this time of unprecedented challenge. They must do the right thing for America’s workers and our families. This is a moment that demands clear action and common purpose. Any meaningful

recovery will require our government to prioritize working families.

Keep Front-Line Workers Safe and Secure

- America’s workers need us to reopen safely, not prematurely. Decisions should be rooted in science, not politics.
- In 40 states, there has been a surge in COVID-19 cases.
- The HEROES Act requires the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to issue an emergency temporary standard on infectious disease within seven days and a permanent standard within 24 months.

- As millions of Americans are working from home, the essential workers directly exposed to the coronavirus are disproportionately people of color. As these workers continue to keep us safe, we must make sure they are safe on the job as well.

This legislation prohibits employers from retaliating against workers who report infectious disease control problems or wear their own personal protective equipment if it’s not provided by their employers.

Keep Workers Employed and Protect Earned Pension Checks

- The additional \$600 a week in unemployment insurance benefits that became available to those collecting unemployment amid the COVID-19 pandemic expired at the end of July.
 - Right now, at least 35.8 million workers are either on unemployment benefits, have been approved and are waiting for benefits, or have applied recently and are waiting to get approved. That is more than 1 in 5 workers. Nearly 28 million Americans are at risk of eviction.
 - Black women have experienced the largest drop in employment of any demographic group.
- In the face of mass unemployment, America’s workers need the HEROES Act, which will extend COVID-19 unemployment benefits and create a framework to keep workers on payroll and protect the pensions of America’s workers and retirees in the public and private sector.

Keep State and Local Governments, Our Public Schools and the U.S. Postal Service Solvent and Working

- The COVID-19 economic crisis is threatening the finances of state and local governments, our public schools and the Postal Service, critical resources for America’s communities.
- President Trump is ordering schools to reopen in the fall without any plan or additional funds to keep children and educators safe. The HEROES Act provides more than \$1 trillion to state and local governments and \$25 billion to the Postal Service.

THE MCCONNELL PROPOSAL
ABANDONS WORKER SAFETY

CALL YOUR U.S. SENATORS:
866-832-1560
PASS THE HEROES ACT

AFL-CIO

(Continued on page 3)

This month marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, under which women earned the right to vote. To put that into perspective, my mother was a teenager when this Amendment became law. To be more accurate, though, my first sentence should have stated that WHITE women earned the right to vote a hundred years ago, thanks to the 19th Amendment.



Sadly, most people of color didn't earn the right to vote in America until I was nearly a teenager! And that was due, in no small part, to Representative John Lewis, an American icon who was just laid to rest.

John Lewis was born to sharecroppers in the Jim Crow South. He experienced racism firsthand as a youth in Alabama when his family moved from the country into town. There he observed signs separating whites from blacks for the first time; it was there he was refused a library card because "books are not for coloreds". When Lewis questioned his parents about the segregation and discrimination he witnessed, they responded, "That's the way it is. Don't get in the way. Don't make trouble", due to their fear for his safety.

Lewis went on to live his life getting in the way and making trouble...."good trouble, necessary trouble", (as he described it), as he became a leader in the Civil Rights movement, progressive social movements and human rights struggles in our country. As an original Freedom Rider, he challenged segregation at interstate bus terminals across the South by simply sitting in seats reserved for white patrons. He organized sit-in demonstrations at segregated lunch counters as part of his non-violent protests against discrimination and injustice in the Deep South. Due to these non-violent protest he was beaten with baseball bats, chains, lead pipes and stones, fumigated and jailed repeatedly. But it was his protest on March 7, 1965 that helped to finally give the right to vote to all Americans, regardless of their race.

On that day, as a representative of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, John Lewis led a march from Selma to Montgomery, a march which became known as "Bloody Sunday". Seventeen marchers were hospitalized that day, including fourteen year old Amelia Boynton, after they were beaten by State Troopers on the Edmund Pettis Bridge, under orders of Governor George Wallace. Photographs of young Amelia, laying beaten and unconscious on that bridge with injuries that required 35 stitches above her eye and on the back of her skull were front page news around the globe, and shocked our nation. In response, eight days later, President Lyndon Johnson sent what became the Voting Rights Act to Congress, and on August 8, 1965 he signed it into law.

In my opinion, the best way to honor the life of John Lewis and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and the 55th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act is to make plans to vote in the General Election on November 3rd, which is just three short months from now.

Thanks to COVID-19, voting in this election will be like no other. In the Maryland Primary election in June, ballots were mailed to the homes of all registered voters and we could choose between "voting from home" by mailing the ballot, or voting in person at a polling site. Even though that process worked well and actually increased the number who voted, Governor Hogan has decided to handle the General Election differently. Ballots will only be mailed to those who request them. At some point an absentee ballot application will be mailed to all registered MD voters which we can fill out and mail in to request a ballot be mailed to us.

Instead of waiting for that form, I just went online and requested a ballot be mailed to me so I can vote from home. The process only took me about five minutes, and I would like to suggest that all our

members and retirees request your mail-in ballot now, too, to avoid the rush.

Just go to the MD elections website from your computer (or most mobile devices), at www.elections.maryland.gov, input the requested information (name, address and driver's license number) and you can request your ballot be mailed to your home, too. You will receive your ballot sooner this way, and you can mail it in earlier, thereby avoiding worries about your vote not being counted due to mail delays. There will even be drop-boxes at certain voting locations in each county where you can drop your ballot if you are uncomfortable putting it in the mail. It is so important that we vote in this General Election, but no one should have to risk their health to do so. Voting from home is the perfect solution. The election website can also be used to register to vote or to update your name or address if they have changed, and it even has a feature that allows you to verify that your vote was received and counted!

I'll end with this quote from John Lewis: **"Your vote is precious, almost sacred. It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have to create a more perfect union."** Please join me by making plans to vote safely during this pandemic!

In Solidarity,

Marilyn

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 - What to Expect

Thursday, August 6, 2020 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. Access Code: 832505**

Webinar ID - 934 2169 4948

Medicare Basics

Tuesday, August 25, 2020 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. Access Code: 297917**

Webinar ID - 960 4933 1796

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

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

The RMC Executive Board hopes that all our members and their families are enjoying a safe and healthy summer. We will have our next RMC meeting on September 9, 2020 at 11:00am, via Zoom. A notice will be sent out by email prior to the meeting with access information. If you have any questions, please contact Janice Crowe on 410-533-5370.



If you have not already done so, please remember to register to vote!!

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

UnionPlus Assistance for CWA Members During the COVID-19 Crisis

CWA Members who currently have a Union Plus Mortgage, Credit Card, Personal Loan, or Supplemental Insurance programs may be eligible for additional hardship assistance through the Mortgage Assistance Program and Union Plus Hardship Help. The Union Plus Mortgage Assistance Program provides interest-free loans and a \$1000 grant to help eligible members make mortgage payments when disabled, unemployed, furloughed, locked out or on strike. Union Plus Credit Card holders are eligible for a \$300 job loss grant if they have been laid-off or furloughed for 45 days or more due to COVID-19. The eligibility criteria and application process can be found at www.unionplus.org/hardship-help/union-plus-hardship-help-benefits.

The Free College program is making available additional financial aid to students who may need additional assistance for education-related expenses due to COVID-19. Info on Free College is here: <https://www.unionplusfreecollege.org/>

CWA & Verizon Negotiate Extension For “Reserve Time” Agreement

Last year CWA and Verizon negotiated language that dealt with the administration of “Reserve Time” vacation. Under that agreement, employees were able to schedule all remaining carryover days in reserve time and that as long as vacation scheduling percentages hadn’t been exceeded, the employee could use them on any day available up to March 31st of the following calendar year. This agreement has now been extended into 2022.

For Calendar Year 2020, Vacation and Excused Work Days, which may currently be scheduled as “Reserved Time”, “Not Scheduled” or are currently scheduled during 2020, can be requested and scheduled between the effective date of the Agreement and March 31, 2021. Any and all requests for specific dates to be used between the effective date of the Agreement and March 31, 2020 will be considered on a first come, first serve basis and approval will be based on the contractual 18% and 12% ratios set forth in the “Vacation Scheduling Percentages” Letter of Understanding. Any 2020 Vacation, paid or unpaid Excused Work Days not selected and not taken by March 31, 2021 shall be forfeited and not eligible for selection or “in lieu of” payment after March 31, 2021.

Pursuant to Article 31, Section 10(c) of the CBA, scheduling of 2021 Day-at-a-Time Vacation and Excused Work Days will take place during the second and final round of selections. During this round, days shall be selected from those available during the current calendar year (2021). However, pursuant to this Agreement, the Company will also allow days to be selected from those available in the first quarter of the following calendar year (January 1, 2022-March 31, 2022). At the completion of 2021 Day-at-a-Time Selection, any subsequent requests for days between January 1, 2022 and March 31, 2022 will be approved on a first come, first serve basis on the contractual 18% and 12% ratios set forth on the “Vacation Scheduling Percentages” Letter of Understanding.

If an employee chooses not to schedule allotted 2021 Vacation, paid or unpaid Excused Work Days, the remaining number of days will be set aside as “Reserve Time”. “Reserve Time” for purposes of this Agreement shall be defined as days not currently scheduled but available for request during calendar year 2021 through March 31, 2022. Any 2021 Vacation, paid or unpaid Excused Work Days not selected and not taken by March 31, 2022, shall be forfeited and not eligible for selection or “in lieu of” payment after March 31, 2022.

Personals

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

Charles H Wells, a retiree who passed away on March 3, 2020.

Barbara D Jackson, mother of retiree **Karen Jackson-Knight**, who passed away on June 9, 2020.

John Butler, an active member and brother of **Andrea Ferrell** and **Carmen Butler** who passed away on July 26, 2020.

Welcome to Local 2108

New Members

Chenee’ Williams

Corey Fasnacht
Christopher Albright
Charles Fisher
Jordan Gifford
Keith Harris



Congratulations to Recent Retiree:

Oded Settles



Maisano Scholarship Awarded to 2108 Member

Congratulations to CWA Local 2108 retiree John Cherico whose daughter Alicia Dillon has been selected as a winner of the 2020 Vincent & Patricia Maisano Scholarship. The award is being presented as a tribute to the second CWA District 13 International Vice President and the former Secretary-Treasurer of CWA Local 13000. Both of these CWA officers retired in April of 2005 and placed a high priority on education.

Since the inception of the scholarship in 2006, this is the third time a CWA Local 2108 member has garnered an award!! Congratulations Alicia!!

Heros Act (from page 1)

Keep America Healthy—Protect and Expand Health Insurance for All Workers

- An estimated 5.4 million workers became uninsured because of job losses between February and May.
 - Black and Latino people in the United States are three times as likely to become infected by the coronavirus than their White neighbors—and nearly twice as likely to die.
- If the HEROES Act was law, there would be 100% federal support for COBRA extensions preserving laid-off workers’ health insurance, as well as free COVID-19 treatment.

Keep America Competitive—Hire People to Build Infrastructure

- Public investment in America’s infrastructure—our schools and hospitals and transportation, energy and telecommunications systems—is key to the immediate job creation we need and to our long-term competitiveness.
- The need for investment in modernized schools, additional hospitals and public assets like universal broadband is particularly important for communities of color enduring digital and health deserts.
- Workers built America. We keep this nation running every day, and we will rebuild America’s prosperity. Now we must stand up and demand action from our government; we must call for the Senate to pass the HEROES Act.

August Membership and RMC Meetings Cancelled



Due to the increasing numbers of cases of Coronavirus, a motion was adopted at the July 2020 membership meeting to cancel the August and September membership meetings. Citing similar concerns, the RMC meeting for August has been cancelled as well. The September RMC meeting will be conducted via Zoom.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our next regularly scheduled membership meeting on October 14, 2020 at 6pm.

Verizon Implements New Wellness Pre-Checks for Employees

As you are aware, Verizon advised CWA that beginning on July 27, 2020, associates who report to work outside their homes will be required to use a new Return-to-Office (RTO) Tool each day they are scheduled to work. Training began on July 20th and employees are now required to do a personal wellness pre-check, including a temperature check every day they report to a company location. Verizon has provided all employees working outside of their homes a personal thermometer.



Employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or who just do not feel well are to contact to their immediate supervisor for further instructions and self report on the COVID-19 resource page on Verizon's website. The initial absence will be coded as "quarantine" and not chargeable under Verizon's Regional Attendance Plan (RAP). If the illness is determined not to be COVID related, the absences may be chargeable from that point forward.

The Local has received numerous calls as to whether or not the company can require employees to perform a wellness self-check and, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued an update to its guidance back in March that now expressly acknowledges that employers may implement temperature screening measures in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Ultimately, the goal of these new guidelines is to ensure that all safety precautions are being met to ensure that CWA members are provided a safe and healthy work environment.

Local 2108 Calendar

AUGUST 2020

- 5 Chief Stewards Meeting - **CANCELLED**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 12 RMC 2108 Meeting - **CANCELLED**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 12 Membership Meeting - **CANCELLED**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

SEPTEMBER 2020

- 7 Labor Day
Local Office Closed



- 9 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am - Via Zoom
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 9 Membership Meeting - **CANCELLED**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

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, August 12, 2020 - 6:00pm - Cancelled
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, August 12, 2020 - 11:00am - Cancelled



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LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

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Marilyn Irwin - President

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