

CWA Call Center Survey Underway

For more than a year, CWA has been working with Professor Virginia Doellgast at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations and Sean O'Brady at McMaster University on a study of technology changes in our call centers and the effect these new technologies have had on our members.

We are carrying out this survey to gather information on digital technologies used at work, management practices and worker well-being at call centers – with the aim of identifying 'best practices' that help to reduce stress and improve job quality for call center workers. The survey includes a series of multiple choice and short answer questions concerning yourself, the practices or policies in your workplace, and your experiences at work. The survey will take around 15 minutes.



The data from the survey will be collected and analyzed by Professors Doellgast and O'Brady and their research team at Cornell and McMaster: your individual responses are completely confidential and will not be shared with your employer or with the CWA. Only the research team will see your de-identified survey results. They will collect your IP address to identify your general location, and this will be transformed into a randomly generated code. This data will only be maintained until the end of the research. The results of the analysis will be summarized in a report to the CWA and made available to CWA representatives and members. **Also, your responses will be kept confidential, and your individual privacy will be maintained in all publications or presentations of the research.**

Taking part in this study is voluntary and you may discontinue the survey at any time, or skip any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. By completing the survey, you are agreeing to participate in the research. Participation presents no greater risk than everyday use of the Internet. There is no compensation associated with participating in this survey.

CWA Local 2108 is encouraging all members who work in a call center to participate in the survey and to call into the local on 301-595-2108 to update your personal email address so the link to the survey can be sent to you. Understanding your experiences will help us bargain more effectively and advocate for better policies that improve job quality for call center workers. The survey closes on January 13, 2023.

Are you "WEARING RED" on Thursdays?



The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is in a funding crisis. "We need a fully funded NLRB to investigate unfair labor practices and conduct union elections," says the AFL-CIO.

CWA Local 2108 is urging every member to send a letter to your senators to demand funding for the NLRB. All over the country, workers are organizing to win union elections and fight illegal corporate union-busting. The NLRB is supposed to back workers up by enforcing labor law and worker protections, but it's severely underfunded and doesn't have enough staff to do its job. "Without the NLRB, we can't hold corporations accountable or build worker power through stronger unions," says the AFL-CIO. "It's that simple."

The budget for the National Labor Relations Board for fiscal year 2022 was \$274 million, which might sound like a lot of money. But it is the same amount as the Board's budget for Trump-era fiscal years 2021 and 2020, and that is a problem.

In fact, the NLRB has not had an increase in funding since 2014, the year that the Republicans took control of Congress during the Obama administration and reignited their decades-old campaign to deep-six workers' rights to unionize.

The Biden administration had sought a 10 percent funding increase for the NLRB this year. But Republicans dug in to oppose an increase, claiming the cost was too high. Privately many were simply doing the bidding of their corporate backers to further weaken an agency already in trouble. When the overall budget was finally passed in March, the administration had accepted flat funding.

President Biden claims to be pro-worker and pro-union. He has supported the PRO Act, recommended greater worker rights in the federal government, issued a pro-worker message to employees at Amazon's Alabama warehouse, and jubilantly told Amazon "Here we come!" after the first union win in Staten Island. And he has nominated a General Counsel and new Board members that care about enforcing the National Labor Relations Act.

But without sufficient funding for the NLRB, all of Biden's statements could end up being little more than hollow promises. Unions and labor activists need to demand that the Biden administration find additional resources for the NLRB now. Adequate funding for the agency has got to be a major issue for the labor movement or else the wave of new organizing that has ignited our imaginations and revived an understanding of the importance of labor may wither away.

“And what happened then? Well, in Whoville they say – that the Grinch’s small heart grew three sizes that day.” – Dr. Seuss’ How the Grinch Stole Christmas



No matter which holidays people celebrate, this is the time of year when smiles seem a little brighter, interactions seem a little kinder, and hugs last a little longer. The feeling of brotherhood and the spirit of giving is heartwarming, and makes our world feel like a better place for awhile.

No matter how we choose to give---whether we “adopt” a needy family to provide food and/or gifts, donate money to the Salvation Army for community assistance, or provide toys to the Marine Corp’s Toys for Tots program --- this time of year is definitely a time of giving.

Today, I want to ask you to join me in giving help to some of our Union “siblings”. Approximately 150 union members have been on strike against the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in Pittsburgh since October. They are the workers who are responsible for designing, printing, distributing, advertising sales, accounts receivable and content for the newspaper. These strikers are proud members of CWA Locals 14842 and 14827, Teamsters Local 205/211 and Pressmen’s Union GCC/IBT Local 24M/9N.

Some of these union siblings have over 45 years of service. Their strike was called after seven years of unsuccessful bargaining with an employer who never found any of the Union proposals acceptable. Many of these members have not had a pay raise in the last sixteen years. The workers finally went on strike after their health insurance was terminated October 1st because the P-G owners, Block Communications, refused to pay an additional \$19 per employee per week to maintain their existing health coverage.

Block Communications is owned by multi-millionaire twins John and Allan Block. Block Communications acquired the P-G in 1926, and the media company also owns The Blade in Toledo OH, four cable networks and six broadcast stations. They have spent millions of dollars to try to bust their workers’ unions, rather than attempting to reach a fair contract with the writers, editors, photographers, artists, designers and other journalists whose hard work has provided the Pittsburgh community with award-winning journalism since the late 1700s.

Picket lines have been set up 24 hours a day since the strike began, in the cold and the rain, including on Thanksgiving Day. In addition to picketing the P-G, picket lines have also been set up at the Butler Eagle, where scab P-G newspapers are being printed. Other unions, including the UMW and the IUE have joined the picket lines to offer support. Picketers were even joined last month by Scabby the Rat (wearing a veil, of course) outside the Duquesne Club in Pittsburgh, while John Block’s wedding reception was held inside!

These fellow union members desperately need our help! I’m sure you all remember how hard it was when we struck Verizon for forty-nine days in 2016. A Solidarity Fund was created, which was funded by generous donations from many other unions. While there was not enough money to help everyone who needed it, many in the most dire straits did get money from the fund to prevent eviction, utility cut-offs and the like. If you got help from the Solidarity Fund in 2016, now is the time to pay that help forward, and help these strikers! For the rest of us, even though we didn’t get help from the Solidarity Fund in 2016, we haven’t had a strike, had our benefits cancelled or lost a paycheck in six and a half years. We have a contract that won’t expire until August

of 2026, so we don’t have to prepare for the possibility of a strike for quite some time. I’m hoping that during this time of giving that we can all dig deep and find a way to make a contribution to help our striking union siblings.

You can make your contribution by check or online. Checks should be made out to “Pittsburgh Striker Fund” and mailed to:

**Pittsburgh Striker Fund
Newspaper Guild of Greater Philadelphia/TNG-CWA Local 38010
1329 Buttonwood St
Philadelphia PA 19123**

It’s even easier to contribute online. The link is: <https://actionnetwork.org/fundraising/donate-to-support-striking-Pittsburgh-Post-Gazette-workers>.

Please give, and be as generous as you can. As always, I wish you and yours a holiday full of love and laughter, and a new year full of health and happiness.

In Solidarity *Marilyn*

NLRB Alleges Verizon Violated Law

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) recently issued a complaint against Verizon Wireless, alleging the company violated the law by illegally firing Jesse Mason, a former Specialist at Verizon Wireless’ Seattle Northgate and Aurora Village retail store locations, for engaging in union activity earlier this year.

The complaint follows the filing of an Unfair Labor Practice Charge (ULP) back in April by the Communications Workers of America (CWA), who alleged Mason was suddenly terminated from his position after attempting to organize his colleagues and attending Verizon Wireless workers’ union vote counts for nearby Everett and Lynnwood stores in solidarity.

Following a formal investigation, the NLRB is seeking a remedy by asking the company to reinstate Mason, provide him with compensation for lost wages and consequential damages, and issue a letter of apology for terminating his employment in an act of retaliation. The complaint also finds evidence that management at Mason’s retail location misled and intimidated workers in an effort to discourage them from organizing, including threatening to withhold benefits from employees if they voted for a union.

“After almost seven months since I was fired, I’m excited to get back to work in the stores where I belong,” Mason said. “The feeling of walking back in after being illegally fired will be amazing. Workers have rights, including the right to organize, and this will show Verizon and every other union-busting mega-corporation that their illegal actions have consequences. The union movement won’t be stopped by petty corporate law-breaking and bullying.”

A hearing in front of an NLRB administrative judge has been scheduled for February 14, 2023, in Seattle. Verizon has until November 18, 2022, to file an answer to the complaint.

In total, CWA has issued five ULP charges with the NLRB against Verizon Wireless on behalf of retail workers in or near Seattle, as well as additional charges on behalf of Verizon Wireless workers at two stores in Portland, Ore. In addition to the charge related to Mason’s illegal termination in Seattle, charges include issuing unfair dress code violations, disciplining workers for speaking out on low staffing levels, and other instances of retaliation and efforts to undermine union membership.

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

This scholarship award is being presented as a tribute to Vince and Patricia Maisano, the second CWA District 13 International Vice President and the former Secretary-Treasurer of CWA Local 13000. Both of these individuals retired in April of 2005. Vince and Pat both placed a high priority on education.



All CWA District 2-13 members, their spouses, children and grandchildren (including dependents of laid-off, retired or deceased CWA District 2-13 members) who are or were members in good standing at the time of separation from the Union may apply. 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. Prior winners may not apply.

One (1) scholarship, to be paid at the rate of \$1,000.00, will be awarded to an eligible applicant from the District 2-13 Potomac Region.

Applications will be accepted during the months of December through March. **Final deadline is March 31st** of the year in which the scholarship will be awarded.

The winners will be chosen by lottery drawing, To apply for the scholarship, follow the link below:

<https://cwad2-13.org/scholarship-d213>

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 2023-2024 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 2023-2024 school year is April 30, 2023.**

To apply online, go to:

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

Personals

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

Retiree **Carol Broadhurst** passed away June 13, 2022.

Steven Fletcher, father of **Imani Fletcher** who passed away on October 27, 2022.

Retiree **Albert "Al" Scheungrab** passed away November 11, 2022.

Fay Carter, mother of **Tony Miller** who passed away on November 3, 2022.

Retiree **Gary Hertzberg**, brother of **Steve Hertzberg** who passed away November 29, 2022.

Verizon 2023 HCSA Special Enrollment

The IRS has announced that the Health Care Spending Account annual maximum plan contribution limit will increase from \$2,850 to \$3,050 for 2023.

CWA received notification from Verizon that they will be offering a special enrollment period from December 6 through December 15, 2022 to allow you to make changes to your 2023 Health Care Spending Account (HCSA).

If you want to change your HCSA contribution, go to BenefitsConnection through About You. From the home page, go to Life Events > Change 2023 Spending Account Election. Enter the current date (i.e., day you access BenefitsConnection to make the change) to begin the enrollment process. Any changes made to your HCSA election will be effective January 1, 2023.

CWA & Thryv Extend Contract

As contract negotiations are ongoing, CWA and Thryv Inc. have entered into an agreement to extend the current collective bargaining agreement that was set to expire on October 14, 2022 until December 9, 2022. All provisions of the current collective bargaining agreement will remain in full force until then.

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

As the final votes were tallied in Georgia last week, we have a majority in the U.S. Senate. We can hope to see that bring more positive legislative moves in our government in the future.



As CWA retirees, we can help by being aware of legislative action that affects senior citizens and fight to protect the benefits we are entitled to. Health care, pension protection and many other issues that legislators try to diminish can have an affect on our lives. We encourage every CWA Local 2108 retiree to get involved by coming to our monthly luncheon meetings to receive information and get a better understanding of all the issues.

This month's meeting will be on December 14, 2022 at 11:00am. Donating a dessert would be greatly appreciated!! We are also accepting unwrapped toys which will be donated to the "Toys for Tots" campaign and we will be collecting canned food which will be donated to a local food bank.

Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108

CWA Political Action Fund: The Best Investment You'll Ever Make!

There is plenty at stake and you can make a difference!!

It's a simple reality: Everything we win at the bargaining table can be taken away by the state legislature, an act of Congress or the stroke of the President's pen. Wealthy, powerful special interest groups are spending hundreds of millions of dollars trying to do just that and silence the voice of working families in our nation.



That's why we've got to use our voice and demand our seat at the table where political decisions are made that affect our lives.

In politics, money matters. Like it or not, campaign contributions are critical to electing friends of working families. As Union members, we will never have the money to match Corporate America. But we have a resource the wealthy special interest can never match – people.

CWA-PAC is the political action committee of the Communications Workers of America. Your voluntary contribution – as little as \$1.00 a week – combined with the donations of thousands of other CWA members, make us a powerful voice.

Your contribution to CWA-PAC makes a difference by helping us:

- Mobilize CWA Members in support of political candidates who support our issues;
- Make campaign contributions to candidates who support working families;
- Inform you and other CWA members about where the candidates stand on the issues, Ensure that when we speak, our elected officials listen and respond.

Politics is not a spectator sport. If we sit on the sidelines, we lose. But this is no game. The consequences involve everything that matters to us, our jobs, our standard of living, our health insurance, our children's education, our retirement security, and so much more.

Invest in your future. Sign up for CWA-PAC by contacting CWA Local 2108 on 301-595-2108 or talk with the Union Stewards in your workplace today.

Local 2108 Calendar

DECEMBER 2022

- 1-2 CWA District 2-13 Conf. - Via Zoom
- 7 Chief Stewards Meeting- 9:30am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 25 Christmas
- 26 Christmas Holiday - Observed
Local Office Closed



- 31 New Year's Eve

JANUARY 2023

- 1 New Year's Day
- 2 New Year's Day - Observed
Local Office Closed
- 11 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 11 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 16 Martin Luther King Birthday

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, December 14, 2022 - 6:00pm
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, December 14, 2022 - 11:00am



10782 Rhode Island Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705

Web Address: 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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