

## CWA Negotiates 4 Year Extension to Verizon Contract

Coming off the heels of one of the biggest strikes in recent history, Verizon approached CWA earlier this summer to propose early negotiations to extend the current contract. While there was much skepticism whether such negotiations would be beneficial given the nature of the past three rounds of bargaining, CWA agreed to meet with Verizon and limited the discussions about a possible contract extension to wages, benefits and the duration of a proposed extension. The current contract was set to expire on August 3, 2019.

On July 19<sup>th</sup>, CWA announced that they had reached a tentative four-year contract extension with Verizon representing approximately 34,000 workers in CWA and the IBEW. The agreement, which is still subject to ratification by members in good standing, would extend our current labor contract to Aug. 4, 2023.

The new deal includes a compounded wage increase of 11.2 percent over the life of the extension, with 2.5 percent in each of the first two years, 2.75 percent in the third year and 3 percent in the fourth year. "We saw this as an opportunity to make improvements for our members without the lengthy conflict we experienced two years ago. This is a solid agreement that will improve the living standards of our members across the region." said Ed Mooney, Vice President for CWA District 2-13, which covers Maryland, Washington DC, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia and Virginia.

In addition to wage increases, Verizon will continue to award Corporate Profit Sharing distributions in each year of the extension, with a minimum distribution of \$700 each year. All pension bands will be increased 1% on September 15<sup>th</sup> of 2019, 2020 and 2021. There will be no changes to the lump sum cash out option for pensions.

While there are slight increases to the costs in the health care plan, wage increases significantly outpace those costs. For instance, a Cable Splicer's pay will increase approximately \$775 per month from 2019 to 2023 but in that same time frame, monthly premiums for members enrolled in the MCN will only see an increase of \$64/month for the family plan and \$32/month for the individual plan. In another example, a Consultant's pay will increase nearly \$650 per month while the annual deductible for the MCN only increases by \$100 by 2023. Co-pays in the MCN and MEP health care plans, with the exception of Emergency Room Visits, will remain unchanged through the extension.

There were also improvements made in the retiree medical plans. After 2019, the Pre-Medicare Retiree monthly premium for post 12/31/2012 retirees enrolled in the MCN or MEP Medical Plan will be frozen at \$44.19 for Individual and \$75.76 for Retiree plus1 and Family. There are also new provisions included to provide the Union the **option** of offering a redesigned plan and/or HRA **if** the "2008 Retiree Contribution Caps" are exceeded for pre-Medicare retirees.

CWA Local 2108's Election Committee will be mailing out ratification ballots on Thursday, July 26<sup>th</sup> to all members in good standing. They will retrieve the ballots from the post office on Thursday, August 9, 2018 and count them. CWA will announce the results of the ratification vote on August 10, 2018.

A separate agreement was reached covering 40 Verizon Wireless retail workers in Brooklyn, as well as 7 workers in Hazleton, PA, who voted just last month to join CWA. That agreement provides for a \$900 signing bonus for Brooklyn Wireless employees, creates a first-ever floor for the merit pay pool, creates a new Labor-Management committee to address further improvements in scheduling, and strengthens the grievance procedure. About 90 Verizon Wireless technicians will receive the 11.2% compounded wage increases over the term of the extension and will have improved language regarding transfers by seniority. Please call the Local and speak with an office to get any questions you may have answered before you vote.

### Verizon Announces Freeze For Laterals & Downgrades

Per RAMP guidelines, Verizon has announced that effective July 2, 2018 through Aug 31, 2018 all Wireline Field Operations in the Mid Atlantic South, Potomac under Andre Sanders, Terry Minor and Amy Quinn will freeze all RAMP lateral movements and downgrades in the job titles of Cable Splicing Technician, Systems Technician, Outside Plant Technician and Services Technician.

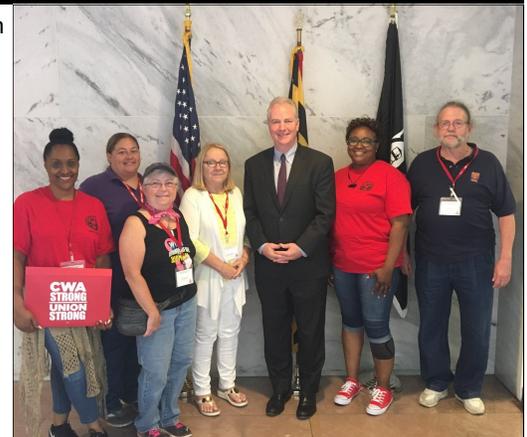
### RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

Summer has arrived and with it comes hope of a ratified contract extension with Verizon that will benefit retirees as well as those still working.

As our August meeting has been cancelled, please join us at our next meeting in September so we can talk about those benefit changes and discuss the upcoming election.

Our next meeting will be on September 12, 2018 at 11am. See you there!!

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



Members of CWA Local2108's Legislative Committee and Local 2108's Retired Member's Council meet with Senator Chris Van Hollen at this years CWA Legislative Conference in Washington DC.

**Are you "WEARING RED"**  
**on Thursdays?**

# Supreme Court Decision Attacks American Workers With Janus Ruling

For those of us who have been following the Supreme Court case Janus –vs- The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 31, the decision was never about First Amendment rights. It was about destroying labor unions.

When the U.S. Supreme Court announced that it would rule on a case that was critical to the future of public-sector unions after President Donald Trump's appointment of conservative-leaning Justice Neil Gorsuch, many expect the court to rule against the unions. Such a decision would energize the recent resurgence of state laws that effectively reduce the power of unions in both the public and private sector.

The lead plaintiff, Mark Janus, was a child support worker in Illinois who argued his free speech rights were being violated by the requirement that he pay dues to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the largest public employee union in the country, even though he chose not to join it and does not support its political views and positions.

Illinois, like Maryland, is currently one of 22 states where nonunion members still have to pay agency fees to unions that negotiate and provide representation on their behalf.

The Court majority suggests that agency fees paid by non-members challenge the freedom of speech of workers who choose not to join a labor union. As the Court minority points out in their dissent, that is not the actual issue at hand. Unions do not inhibit the freedom of speech of members or non-member agency fee payers. Workers in the public sector are not obligated to join the union but the compromise that was established, and been in operation for 41 years in many states that permit public sector unionism, was that those who choose not to join would contribute towards representation costs. Thus, an individual worker who decides not to join the union may, nevertheless, face an issue for which they need representation. Representation costs money. A case may go to arbitration, for instance, which can be very expensive. There may be issues that have to be litigated in court. Indeed, an issue may need to go to a legislative body. These steps can be very expensive. The Supreme Court majority knows this and, essentially, turned their backs on American workers in order to fuel the Trump corporate machine.

The matter before the Court came down to whether workers who are represented by a union have an obligation to contribute towards the cost of representation. In any other institution the matter would be simple. If, for instance, you live in a town or city and you are required to pay taxes, you do so in order to cover the collective costs of that jurisdiction. Individuals cannot declare one day that as a result of differences with a government body that they should be able to avoid taxes.

Public-sector union membership has already been on the decline. Between 2000 and 2016, it dropped about 8 percent, to 34.4 percent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Still, that's far greater than in the private sector where only 6.5 percent of employees belonged to a union in 2016, according to the BLS. The shrinkage of unions can partially be attributed to the recent rise of "right-to-work" laws, which prohibit unions -- private or public sector, depending on the state -- from forcing people to pay dues. Of the 28 states that have passed right-to-work laws, six did it in the last five years. (Most of the rest passed this legislation in the 1940s and 1950s.) In general, the states with the lowest union membership have right-to-work laws. The right to work is only one of a series of recent attacks on public-sector unions. There have also been ongoing efforts to curtail collective bargaining, which gives unions the right to negotiate with management over wage and other employee-related issues. The passage of Act 10

in Wisconsin in 2011, for example, severely restricted collective bargaining for most state and local government employees. This year, Iowa passed similar legislation, which is now the topic of a union lawsuit.

The anti-union ruling in the Supreme Court case called Janus v. AFSCME, means that all states would, in effect, be right-to-work states for the public sector. In states where collective bargaining is permitted, all employees in a bargaining unit would still be covered by negotiated agreements, but non-members wouldn't have to pay the union for services rendered on their behalf.

In a statement by CWA President Chris Shelton on the U.S. Supreme Court's decision, Shelton stated, "Today's Supreme Court decision on the Janus v. AFSCME case marks a sad day for all working people. This decision continues a long campaign by corporate interests and right wing groups to restrict our ability to stand together. While these special interest groups might be celebrating their victory against workers' freedom to join together in strong unions to speak up for themselves, their families, and their communities, union members will be using this as a rallying cry to fight back harder than ever before.

The right-wing attack on union fair share fees is all about making it more difficult for working people to defend themselves when corporations abuse their power. Today's decision is an attempt to further concentrate power in the hands of the wealthy few by taking away resources from working people who are represented by unions.

But there's something happening here in America. We've seen it from CWA members as workers at Verizon, AT&T Mobility, Frontier Communications, and Momentive Performance Materials have gone on strike and won gains through strong collective bargaining. Our public worker membership is growing, even in states like Texas that prohibit collective bargaining for public employees. We've stood in solidarity with teachers and other public employees in many different states walking out and standing up to special interests -- and winning.

Corporate special interest groups have been working for decades to strip away workers' freedom to join together and negotiate for fair wages and benefits, and to improve our workplaces. They want to turn back the clock on achievements like Social Security, civil rights, wage and hour and safety laws, Medicare, and public education that unions fight every day to preserve.

Union members will show them that nothing can stand in the way of working people standing together. We call on elected officials at the local, state and national level to stand with working people and make it easier for them to join together in unions."

## 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!!

### Reality of Retirement Workshop

**Elks Lodge**, 2210 Old Washington Road, Waldorf August 1<sup>st</sup> - 6:30pm  
**Dutch's Daughter**, 581 Himes Avenue, Frederick August 7<sup>th</sup> - 6:30pm  
**Local 2108**, 10786 Rhode Island Avenue, Beltsville August 11<sup>th</sup> -10am

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



I believe the Executive Orders issued by president Trump recently in regard to Government workers send an ominous message to all union members as to how he views us and our contribution and value in the workplace.



The Executive Orders state that Federal Collective Bargaining Agreements are to be re-opened to change, among other things, progressive discipline language to allow "poor performers" to be fired more swiftly, and to decrease the amount of on-duty time union representatives can be paid to represent their members in grievances, disciplinary matters, etc.

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) general counsel David Borer expressed concern that these changes will equate to "greatly diminished representation" for their members. The White House sees it differently, obviously, since a White House official explained, "If they have to pay the costs, then they won't be bringing **Mickey Mouse grievances.**" The Trump administration recently also demanded that unions move out of government-paid office space that they have occupied for decades.

Under Trump, the Federal Labor Relations Authority has issued a number of anti-union decisions already. One reversed years of case law that had allowed unions to bargain over changes to employees' conditions of employment, such as changes to job duties. The administration also disbanded advisory labor-management forums at federal agencies created in the Obama era to foster dialogue. A WH official said the forums were a **"waste of resources and sucking up a ton of our time"**. Unions have described the forums as valuable tools that improved productivity and resolved disputes before they required costly arbitration.

Public workers have a man named James Sherk to thank for many of these changes. Sherk used to work at conservative think tank Heritage, where he wrote policy papers on the need to roll back public employee labor rights. Sherk helped Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker engineer a plan to bust the state's employee unions in 2011. He has argued for freezing federal salaries and said the 1993 FMLA law encourages employee time card abuses. Trump was so impressed by Sherk's anti-worker, anti-union positions that he was plucked to join the transition team to tackle "labor challenges". Sherk now sits on the Domestic Policy Council. In quick succession, federal employees have been subjected to budget cuts, a hiring freeze, a proposed pay freeze and \$143 billion in proposed cuts to retirement benefits. Last month management sharply curtailed tele-work to one day per week, a benefit previously in place to save expensive office lease costs and to keep cars off the road. Trump officials say they suspect tele-work leads employees to **slack off.**

AFGE has called the Executive Orders a "direct assault on the constitutional rights of federal workers and a challenge to the democratic principles on which this nation was founded." AFGE Council 222 President Holly Salamido declared that the president "can't just use an Executive Order to override a contract." Almost two dozen unions, led by AFGE and NTEW, are scheduled to go to court in late July to fight these orders. A bipartisan group of 44 House members and 45 Senate Democrats have sent letters to the president, urging him to rescind the orders. Earlier this month four current and former House members, including Maryland's own Elijah Cummings, submitted a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of the unions in their federal court challenge. The brief says the Executive Orders would upend the "merit-based, non-partisan" civil service.

In addition to these attacks on public workers, the Trump administration has recently attacked all working people with the Corporate Tax Cut

## Personals

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

**Dorothy M Fry**, mother of retired members **Diana Jenkins** and **Jacqueline Darling** who died on April 21, 2018.

**Carroll Willis Grayson**, father-in-law of member **Curtis Haynes Sr.** who passed on June 8, 2018.

**Maggie Mooring Arrington**, mother of member **Charles Arrington Jr.**, who passed on June 14, 2018.

**Frank Burton**, a retired member who died on June 25, 2018.

**Mary E Tippett**, mother of **Tina Mischou** who died on June 26, 2018.

**Hugh Douglass**, father in law of **Troy John** who died on June 27, 2018.

**Stanley Dale Robinson**, a retired member who passed July 3, 2018.

**Tina M. Watts**, wife of member **Edgar Lee Watts**, who passed on July 3, 2018.

## Welcome to Local 2108

### New Members

#### Glen Miller

Kevin Mejia  
Damian Martinez  
Jonathan Tyszko



#### Tony Meeks

Daymyan Bailey  
Jaysen Crain

#### Ken Singleton (Moose)

Michael Tidwell

#### Rob Willis

Jamie Niedomanski  
Richard Melia  
Chiantae Jones  
John Kelly, III  
Davon Spencer

## Congratulations to Recent Retirees:

John Nash  
John E. Wallace  
James J. McGreal  
Gary Hertzberg  
Paul Goldbeck  
Joan L Turner  
David T Hall  
Sandra Nelson  
Lorraine V Brown  
Myron Harris  
Alease Rucker  
James O Higgins



Gloria Hensel  
Jorge Vidal  
Harold Hicks  
Maria Howell  
Steven A Martin  
John E Wallace  
Kevin Terry  
Steven M Davis  
Ben Smith, III  
Elbert Thompson  
Carlton E Tate

bill, the appointment of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court (see our Janus article), and appointments to the Labor Department, NLRB and National Mediation Board who have begun to systematically reduce protections for workers on the job.

While these Executive Orders apply to federal workers today, one has to wonder what Trump and Sherk are plotting to do to those of us in the private sector in the future. For our members who occasionally ask why CWA is involved in politics and endorses candidates, I believe the facts presented in this article answer that question.

In Solidarity,

*Marilyn*

By: Mike Foster, CWA Local 2108 Chief Steward

# You Can't Put a Price on Safety

Safety is something that we are all aware of. The real question about safety is how well we are focused on the topic. We routinely do our jobs and don't really dwell on safety. Do we keep 3 points of contact when we work aloft? Do we use no cut gloves every time we cut sheathing? Do we use our 188a tool every time it is appropriate? For most, it has become "get the job done as quickly as possible and move on to the next task". We have become "creatures of habit". We perform our tasks with an autopilot mentality. And it is this mentality that places us in the most danger. We relax because we have performed this action thousands of times.



The goal for everyone is to go home in the same physical condition as you were when you arrived at work. To achieve this goal we must utilize every tool in our arsenal to keep us safe and injury free. The company provides us Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and the conscientious employee uses PPE without exception. But the employee that focuses on production races to complete the job and safety becomes an afterthought. "Shortcuts" are the norm and the "shortcut" is the nexus of an accident waiting to happen.

The company uses OSHA reportable accidents as a measure of how safe your working environment is. And predictably, they are proud of the low number of reportable accidents. This accomplishment masks the fact that catastrophic accidents can still occur. Unfortunately, some workers will find themselves injured because of an accident. Now you are faced with recovery and possible discipline. Your family suffers as well. The loss of focus has now cost you dearly. The consequences now outweigh the focus on speed.

I remember the old placards that were posted around company property, "No job is so important that it cannot be done safely". This should still be our mantra. That sentiment had significant importance then and it is just as important now. Make and take the time to do your job safely. Take advantage of every piece of PPE. Your life may depend on it.

## Local 2108 Calendar

### JULY 2018

4 Independence Day  
Local Office Closed



11 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

11 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

20 Labor Night at Nationals Park - 7:05pm  
Nationals -vs- Braves

### AUGUST 2018

1 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

1 Finance Committee Meeting - 5:00pm  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

8 RMC 2108 Meeting - Cancelled  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

8 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm

### 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 8, 2018, 6:00pm  
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, August 8, 2018, 11:00am - Cancelled



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Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President

Marilyn Irwin - President

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