

## As President, Biden Will Champion Labor's Issues

Strong unions built the great American middle class. Everything that defines what it means to live a good life and know you can take care of your family – the 40 hour work week, paid leave, health care protections, a voice in your workplace – is because of workers who organized unions and fought for worker protections. Because of organizing and collective bargaining, there used to be a basic bargain between workers and their employers in this country that when you work hard, you share in the prosperity your work created.

Today, however, there's a war on organizing, collective bargaining, unions, and workers. It's been raging for decades, and it's getting worse with Donald Trump in the White House. Republican governors and state legislatures across the country have advanced anti-worker legislation to undercut the labor movement and collective bargaining. States have decimated the rights of public sector workers who, unlike private sector workers, do not have federal protections ensuring their freedom to organize and collectively bargain. In the private sector, corporations are using profits to buy back their own shares and increase CEOs' compensation instead of investing in their workers and creating more good-quality jobs. The results have been predictable: rising income inequality, stagnant real wages, the loss of pensions, exploitation of workers, and a weakening of workers' voices in our society.

Biden is proposing a plan to grow a stronger, more inclusive middle class – the backbone of the American economy – by strengthening public and private sector unions and helping all workers bargain successfully for what they deserve.

### **As president, Biden will:**

- Check the abuse of corporate power over labor and hold corporate executives personally accountable for violations of labor laws;
- Encourage and incentivize unionization and collective bargaining; and
- Ensure that workers are treated with dignity and receive the pay, benefits, and workplace protections they deserve.

This plan is a critical addition to Biden's proposals to ensure all workers have access to quality, affordable health care; to guarantee all workers are able to send their children to quality public schools and have access to universal pre-kindergarten; to provide education and training beyond high school, including federally Registered Apprenticeships; to support a clean energy revolution that creates millions of unionized middle-class jobs; and to meet our commitment to invest first in American workers and ensure that labor is at the table to negotiate every trade deal.

### **Biden will ensure employers respect workers' rights. Specifically, he will:**

**Hold corporations and executives personally accountable for interfering with organizing efforts and violating other labor laws.** Biden strongly supports the Protecting the Right to Organize Act's (PRO Act) provisions instituting financial penalties on companies that interfere with workers' organizing efforts, including firing or otherwise retaliating against workers. Biden will go beyond the PRO Act by enacting legislation to impose even stiffer penalties on corporations and to hold company executives personally liable when they interfere with organizing efforts, including criminally liable when their

interference is intentional.

**Penalize companies that bargain in bad faith.** Too many employers pretend to bargain with unions ("surface bargaining") with no intent of reaching an agreement. Biden will give the NLRB the necessary power to force any employer found to be bargaining in bad faith back to the negotiating table, as called for in the PRO Act. And, he will require those companies to pay a penalty, in addition to making workers whole for the time the company stalled negotiations.



**Encourage and incentivize union organizing and collective bargaining.** Unions and collective bargaining are essential tools for growing and sustaining a stronger, more inclusive middle class. 16 million workers in the United States are union members or are in a job that provides them union representation. More than six in ten of those individuals are women and/or people of color. Union workers earn roughly 13% more than non-union workers on a similar job site. They also experience drastically lower rates of labor standards violations, like employers engaging in wage theft or failing to meet safety and health requirements.

But today, union members make up just 10.5% of the American workforce.

[\(See Biden on page 3\)](#)

## CWA & Verizon Extend Covid-19 Agreements

CWA and Verizon have reached agreements to extend earlier COVID-19 agreements which 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 Work at Home Agreement:** This agreement has been extended through September 30, 2020 for all eligible employees working from home. In addition, an associate may withdraw from work-at-home. If an associate does so, he/she will only be eligible to subsequently re-elect work-from-home at the Company's discretion. The Company will honor an associate's notice to withdraw from work at-home as soon as practical (generally within 14 days but no more than 30 days). The Union and the company also agreed to specify that in the event that "face to face" feedback is required, such feedback will take place electronically.

**COVID-19 Home Garaging Agreement:** This agreement has been extended through September 30, 2020 for all eligible employees who are home garaging.

**COVID-19 Backup Child/Elder Care Agreement:** The Company will eliminate the annual limit on the number of hours an employee can utilize on Bright Horizon back-up care benefits and will pay for all hours an employee utilizes on such benefits instead of having that funding come out of the ACFC Committee funds. Additionally, any hours an employee utilizes on Bright Horizon back-up care benefits will not be counted towards their annual limit if such a limit is reinstated.

Make no mistake about it, the Coronavirus isn't going anywhere any time soon. As states begin to "reopen" after a nearly three-month shut down, the U.S. has just broken the record for the most new, confirmed nationwide cases of COVID-19 in a single day. With daily reported cases increasing in a majority of states, at least two of them (Florida and Texas) have begun closing parts of their economies again, and it appears more states will soon follow suit. The experts don't know when a vaccine will be available, how often we will need to get vaccinated once it is available, and what impact the mutations of the virus will have on vaccine effectiveness in the future. Unfortunately, living with COVID-19 is our new normal.



In our June 2108News we reported that Verizon decided to send our technicians back into customers' homes and businesses as of June 1. CWA attempted to convince VZ to keep our techs out of customer prems for at least one more month to assess the situation after states started to reopen, to no avail. Verizon felt that they had stockpiled a sufficient supply of PPE (KN95 masks, hand sanitizer, wipes, etc.) to keep our techs safe, and that it was important for the business that our techs again enter customer prems to connect and restore their service.

**Effective July 5th, VZ has now decided to stop the \$60 daily Bonus Pay that our members who can't perform their jobs from home have been paid since March 29th.** Several techs have asked me why CWA would agree to this, especially since the techs are in greater danger now than they were prior to June 1 when they were only performing work outside of customer prems. I would like to explain. While I believe paying the Bonus is absolutely the right thing for VZ to do under the circumstances, they are under no obligation to continue to pay it. To put it simply: **VZ wanted to pay the Bonus Pay before (and of course CWA agreed to it), but VZ doesn't want to pay it anymore.** Period. Of course CWA encouraged VZ to continue the Bonus Pay, but they are not interested in doing so. We have a contract in place that doesn't expire until August of 2023, and we have no leverage to force VZ to pay Bonus Pay, even during this, a world-wide pandemic, the likes of which none of us have ever seen.

My message? **Technician, protect thyself!!!** Please don't let your guard down just because the states are starting to re-open and VZ is sending you back inside customers' homes and businesses. While they want to jump-start the economy, this virus has not gone away, and the experts say it won't for a very long time. Customers are being pre-screened prior to your arrival to ask if anyone in the household has tested positive or is being quarantined due to COVID-19, but we are hearing of cases where customers mention someone in the household tested positive or is being quarantined after the tech arrives. On **every single visit** you make to a customer prem, please do the following:

- Politely ask the customer at the door (prior to entering) if anyone there has tested positive for or is being quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure. If the answer is "Yes", excuse yourself and call your supervisor from your vehicle. VZ does not expect you to enter the prem in this scenario and you should not do so.
- If the answer is "No", explain to the customer that you are wearing your mask, and you need anyone who will be near you in the home to wear one also. Explain that you will need everyone to maintain at least six feet of distance from you in an effort for both you and them to remain safe. If anyone in the household doesn't cooperate with these procedures, excuse yourself and call your supervisor from your vehicle.
- Wear and use your PPE religiously! Wear your gloves, mask, etc. anytime you are inside a building or within six feet of someone else. Dispose of them properly when you are done with them. Wipe down remotes and other customer equipment with your wipes before touching them. Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer after leaving every customer prem. This keeps you

safer, and prevents you carrying the virus to your next job or home at the end of the day. Don't shake hands with customers or give them a fist bump, even if you might have done so in the past. That is not being rude, it's being smart and cautious. Don't let your guard down over time and omit any of these steps to save time. It's like math....For every precaution you take, the likelihood of you getting the virus is decreased exponentially. Think of this new PPE the same way you think of body belts, hard hats or 188-A tools. Stock up on PPE every time you go to the garage.

- As a reminder, you have the right to refuse work if you have a reasonable good-faith fear that performing it could cause serious injury or illness. There is a proper way to do it, though. Explain the unsafe situation to your supervisor, and give the company the opportunity to rectify the unsafe situation. If they are unable to do so, you should ask for other work to perform which doesn't require you to work unsafely. You should notify your steward immediately if VZ refuses to rectify the situation or give you more work. In the cases I'm hearing about, though, most supervisors are agreeing that the situation is unsafe and removing the tech from it. You must communicate with your supervisor and give him/her the opportunity to fix it.

I'm sorry that VZ has sent our techs back in customers' homes and businesses so soon, and I'm sorry that the Bonus Pay is being stopped while our members are still performing their essential work in situations that could be quite dangerous. Protect yourself and your families by following the PPE safety standards every single time, without fail. Don't get complacent or take shortcuts. Your health could depend on it. As always, let your steward or officer know if you need help.

In Solidarity,

## 2021 Union Plus Scholarship Program Accepting Applications Now

Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$4.8 million to students of working families who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education. Over 3,200 families have benefited from our commitment to higher education.

### **Eligibility**

Current and retired members of participating unions, their spouses and their dependent children (as defined by IRS regulations). At least one year of continuous union membership by the applicant, applicant's spouse or parent (if applicant is a dependent). The one year membership minimum must be satisfied by May 31, 2021.

### **Application Timeline:**

Applications are available starting in mid-June, and a complete application must be received on or before 12:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) on **January 31, 2021**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

### **Scholarship Award Amounts:**

Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2021. Students may re-apply each year.

### **Award date:**

The Scholarship Committee will determine recipients of scholarship awards by May 31st each year.

### **To apply, go to:**

<https://www.unionplus.org/benefits/money/union-plus-scholarships>

That's down from 35% in the 1950s. It is no coincidence that this decline has occurred at the same time as rising income inequality. When workers are blocked from organizing and engaging in collective bargaining, stagnant wages and a declining middle class are the predictable result.

Joe Biden believes the federal government should not only defend workers' right to organize and bargain collectively, but also *encourage* collective bargaining. That's the mission put forward by the National Labor Relations Act, signed into law in 1935, which states that "encouraging the practice and procedure of collective bargaining" is part of the "policy of the United States."

**Make it easier for workers who choose to unionize to do so.** Today, workers face an uphill battle of anti-union intimidation and intense employer opposition when trying to organize a union. And, too many employers are able to "run out the clock" on negotiating an initial collective bargaining agreement.

**Ban state laws prohibiting unions from collecting dues or comparable payments from all workers who benefit from union representation that unions are legally obligated to provide.** Currently more than half of all states have in place these so-called "right to work" laws, which in fact deprive workers of their rights. These laws exist only to deprive unions of the financial support they need to fight for higher wages and better benefits. As president, Biden will repeal the Taft-Hartley provisions that allow states to impose "right to work" laws.

**Ensure that workers can exercise their right to strike without fear of reprisal.** The right of workers to withhold their labor, or to strike, is fundamental to balancing power in the workplace.

**Empower the National Labor Relations Board to fulfill its intended purpose of protecting workers.** Congress created the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to encourage union organizing, support collective bargaining, and protect workers' rights. The Obama-Biden Administration appointed officials to the NLRB who supported workers' right to organize and collective bargain, and made critically important decisions such as ensuring that workers could organize in micro-units. Trump has undermined this progress and the intent of the NLRB by appointing board members with long histories of anti-union activities.

## Local 2108 Member Wins Scholarship Award

Congratulations to CWA Local 2108 member Tiffany Gladden whose son Jordan Brittingham, has been selected as a winner of the 2020 CWA Bernie Foundation Scholarship. The CWA Joe Birne 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. Congratulations Jordan!!

## RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

I hope everyone is healthy and coping with all the changes that we are all going through. These are crazy times and this too shall pass.

We need to remain vigilant to bring positive change in November and help our country do the same. We need to make sure we are registered to vote, as well as all of our family members. We need to make sure that we have completed the census request and return it on time. We need to make sure our voices are heard!!

The RMC will be continuing to conduct monthly meetings via ZOOM. We hope that by having our meetings on Zoom we can keep everyone safe until meetings can be conducted in person.

The July meeting will be on July 8 @ 11:00am on Zoom. Members will receive a notice by e-mail with login credentials. If you have any questions, please contact Janice Crowe on (410) 533-5370.

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



## Personals

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

**Harold G Anderson** a retired member who passed away on November 5, 2019.

**John R Smith**, a retired member who passed away on January 4, 2020.

**Leonard Strachan**, father of retired member **Deborah Strachan** who passed away on April 14, 2020.

**Patty Forecade**, wife of retiree **Bob Forecade**, who passed away on April 29, 2020.

**Alice H Anderson**, mother of **Ed Anderson** who passed away on June 2, 2020.

**Frances Hartley**, mother of **Angela Hartley** who passed away on June 10, 2020.

**Rose Whiting**, an active member who passed away on June 16, 2020.

**Victor Cosca**, father-in-law of **Elvis Cigarrista** who passed away on June 17, 2020.

**Alyce Wiley**, mother of **Brian Wiley** and mother-in-law of Pamela Graham-Wiley who passed away on June 18, 2020.

**Keith Kilby**, a retired member and brother of retired member **Chuck Kilby** who passed away on June 19, 2020.

**Dija Arrington**, wife of **Aaron Arrington** who passed away on June 23, 2020.

## Congratulations to Recent Retirees:

Diane Sweeney  
Glenn Miller  
Rose Whiting

Michael Conneen  
Tatia Bell  
Shelley Archer-Barron  
Jay Ramella



## Thinking About Retirement?

Please join us for a retirement benefits webinar presented by **Nettworth Financial Group** to see if the reality of retirement is on your horizon!!

### Retirement Benefits Seminar

**Thursday, July 9, 2020 @ 6:30 PM**

### Medicare Basics

**Thursday, July 23, 2020 @ 6:30 PM**

Now, more than ever, we want you to know that we are available for you. Whether you have questions about retirement benefits, retirement income, the market, or any other planning topic please don't hesitate to contact us. We hope to make this easy for you by offering individual calls, virtual seminars and virtual appointments.

Reservations are required and to RSVP you may call Nettworth at (800)-859-2212, or register online at [Nettworth.net](http://Nettworth.net). Instructions to join will be emailed within 24 hours of the webinar.

## CWA Executive Board Statement on the Need to Dismantle the Racism that Plagues Our Communities

As we reach a tragic milestone of 100,000 deaths due to COVID-19, we find ourselves confronting the other plague that has been rampaging through our communities since long before the pandemic: Racism. Compounding the devastation of a global pandemic, which has disproportionately impacted Black communities, Black people in America continue to face threats, brutality, and death for going out jogging. For being poor. For sleeping in their own bed. For watching birds in a park. For being Black.

The murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and the blatant display of racism in the Central Park incident with Christian Cooper demonstrate, again, this grim reality. These names are not the first, and without a profound change in ourselves and this country, they will not be the last.

The CWA Executive Board is committed to moving beyond an endless string of reaction statements and demonstrating our continued commitment to justice for Black people through our organizing, representation, political, and movement building work. We commit to creating dedicated spaces for open dialogue on race for our members and leaders to determine outcomes and clear steps the union must take to fight racism in the union, within the industries we represent and the community at-large.

There is no in-between. There is no neutral option. The only real way to dismantle racism and build the working-class power we seek is for every worker to take on the struggle for justice for Black people in this country as their own and to embrace the actions that "an injury to one is an injury to all" demands of us.

It is not enough to punish the perpetrators who have taken these Black lives. It is not enough to simply identify a "few bad apples" to fire or prosecute - a course of action which our deeply flawed legal system makes difficult to pursue. We must also do the hard, transformational work of rooting out racism in America's consciousness and the institutions that uphold it.

This work is necessary because these incidents did not happen in isolation. They happened in the context of 400 years of structural and systematic anti-Black racism. They happened in the context of centuries of stolen labor; economic pillaging by corporate America of Black communities; underfunding of public schools and services; over-criminalization and incarceration of Black bodies; the use of police as military-like forces in poor, Black and Brown neighborhoods; outsourcing of good, union jobs; persistence of food deserts in urban areas; the treatment of addiction as a crime rather than a disease; the fractured, profit-driven health care system; and the "surgical precision" of Black voter disenfranchisement.

The only pathway to a just society for all is deep, structural change. Justice for Black people is inextricably linked to justice for all working people - including White people. The bosses, the rich, and the corporate executives have known this fact and have used race as one of the most effective and destructive ways to divide workers. Unions have a duty to fight for power, dignity and the right to live for every working-class person in every place. Our fight and the issues we care about do not stop when workers punch out for the day and leave the garage, call center, office, or plant.

We will never build enough power as working people if an entire community is living under the threat of death and subject to discrimination based on the color of their skin. We will never build enough power if an entire community has its neck under an oppressor's knee.

If we are to make progress, we must listen to the experiences and stories of Black CWA members, Black workers, and the Black community. We must join together - every one of us - to dismantle this system of oppression. This means every White union member, Black union member, Latino union member and every ally, must fight and organize for Black lives. Thoughts and prayers aren't enough. No amount of statements and press releases will bring back the lives lost and remedy the suffering our communities have to bear. We must move to action.

## Local 2108 Calendar

JULY 2020

4 Independence Day



8 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am - Via ZOOM  
8 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR: RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, July 8, 2020, - 11:00am- Via Zoom



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Marilyn Lwin - President

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## ADDRESSES SERVICE REQUESTED

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