

Puzder Withdrawal A Victory for Working Families

Facing massive opposition from CWA and other labor groups and allies, anti-worker Labor Secretary nominee Andrew Puzder withdrew his name from consideration the day before his scheduled Senate hearing.

For months, CWAers and allies including Good Jobs Nation and the Working Families Party have been flooding senators' offices with phone calls and rallying against Puzder's disdain for working people.

CWA President Chris Shelton said, "The withdrawal of Andrew Puzder for consideration as Secretary of Labor is a victory for working families and demonstrates the power of grassroots resistance and mobilizing against corporate greed.

"Puzder was an outrageous pick for Labor Secretary and to head an agency responsible for promoting the welfare of wage earners, job seekers, and retirees. His long record of public statements and action opposing a fair minimum wage, overtime pay, and other basic policies that support working families made him an unacceptable choice.

"The Department of Labor is supposed to be on the side of working people when it comes to keeping jobs safe, stopping employer abuse, and safeguarding workers' rights on the job. That's what working people want from the Secretary of Labor."

APT College and The Sage Group Merge to Bring You New Choices For Education and Learning!

The Sage Group and APT College have joined forces to create a more formidable commitment to your education. From coast to coast, our new organization is concentrated on delivering greater educational opportunities for each of you in the telecommunications and cable industries.

We will provide students with broader access to additional educational subject areas as well as greater choice in delivery methods including:

- **Distance Learning**
- **Self-paced Learning**
- **Traditional Instructor-led Classroom Education**
- **Blended Learning Solutions**

And you should know that APT College will continue to provide classes and curriculum for AAS degree and certificate programs.

At present we are adjusting our web sites, social media platforms, and coordinating instructors, logistics, curricula, transferring credit from one school to another, and other key operational priorities. We encourage you to reach out and touch base with your educational representative as they focus their efforts to assist you with your educational goals. For additional information, contact **Katrina Nidiffer** at **615-415-0122** or katrinan@aptc.edu.



ACFC

Advisory Council on Family Care

*Help When You Need it,
Where You Need it.*

The ACFC is a joint CWA and Verizon work/life committee serving the CWA-represented employees in the Mid-Atlantic region. We think diligently about how to help you with your work, your life, and your family responsibilities. We accomplish this by providing resources, securing programs, and offering toolkits with the negotiated money the committee receives.

Since 1986, the ACFC has been responsible for researching, developing, evaluating, funding, monitoring, deploying, and communicating programs and initiatives in the following areas:

- Child and elder care resource and referral services.
- Community development programs to increase and expand family care services and educational programs in the communities where employees reside or work.
- Family care education programs for employees and their families.
- Surveys, studies, and reports addressing the needs of employees and the changing scope of family care.
- Programs available to employees outside of work time to help them deal with stress.

ACFC program highlights:

- **Active Parenting:** Self-paced, online class and online group exchanges provide pointers and approaches to use in response to your child's behavior as it changes from one age to another. Day-to-day challenges become opportunities to teach responsibility as you create a home environment where your children will thrive.
- **ACFC Care Fairs:** These worksite events bring together internal and external vendors who provide expert materials, takeaways, and access to a representative to help you learn about the resources available to you through work and your community.
- **MY TUTOR:** Free online help from certified tutors is available from 2:00 p.m. through 1:00 a.m., 7 days a week, for help with math, science, social studies, and English. Help is provided to students of all ages, from kindergarten through college.
- **Domestic Violence and Awareness Training:** This program raises awareness to decrease the occurrence of domestic violence by delivering on-site training and offering valuable resources for assistance.
- **Anthem EAP:** Sponsored by Verizon, this is a one-stop, confidential EAP and work/life resource and referral service. Use your 5 free sessions per topic to discuss emotional, mental or physical issues with a certified professional. In addition, call Anthem anytime you need information on a topic, including finding child care facilities, identifying a roofer, locating pet services, choosing vacation attractions and summer camps, and more.

For more information, go to
www.ACFCcares.com

*Having a Union gives us a say
In our working conditions from day-to-day
Verizon would rather make all the rules And
treat their workers like rented mules Off-
shoring our work for \$2.00 an hour
Ensuring Lowell has all the power*



*CWA tried to bargain a fair contract from Summer 'til Spring
"I'll have no parts of that!" said Lowell, the King
"Our all-mighty billions we will not share
With those who sell, install, repair"
And so Verizon fought us tooth and nail,
hoping they could make us fail
A strike was called, we had no choice,
demanded Verizon hear our voice
We walked the line in sun and rain,
suffered heat and cold, our feet in pain*

*Verizon was shocked that they couldn't break us;
They cancelled our benefits,
but they still couldn't make us
Give up the fight, accept their greed,
allow our retirees to lose benefits they need*

*We knew our strength was in sticking together
To demand a fair contract, no matter the weather.
And for forty-nine days we did just that
'Til we won our battle against the corporate fat cats.
We returned to work, a fair contract won,
With a sense of pride and solidarity, second-to-none.*

Since we settled our contract over nine months ago, you might wonder why I wrote this little poem now. My inspiration was three-fold:

- It's a nod to Dr. Seuss, as today is his birthday,
- I believe we should constantly remind ourselves of what our strike accomplished, thanks to everyone's sacrifices,
- I'm disappointed to report that Verizon's attack on our union members continues.....

What is Verigreedy up to now, you ask? **They decided to pro-rate the Corporate Profit Sharing Checks and the Attendance Lump Sum Payments for those who were on strike for the entire month of May!** Verizon reduced these payments by 1/12th for those who are eligible for the payments but did not cross the picket lines, and therefore didn't work any days in May, 2016. We already know that, under the law, scabs reap the same benefits from the contract that the members who struck to earn them receive. That's a hard enough pill to swallow. Now Verizon is trying to invent contract language which does not exist to justify paying the scabs more than what those who fought for the payments will receive. Unbelievable!

Our contractual language regarding the **Lump Sum Payment for Attendance** (see Absence from Duty Letter of Understanding, beginning on page 178) states that the payment will be prorated by twelfths to correspond to the number of months the employee was on the payroll during the calendar year, "**exclusive of SADBP (Sickness and Accident Disability Benefit Plan-aka Short Term Disability) absences and paid and unpaid leaves**". Being on strike is not a disability absence, and it is certainly not a paid nor unpaid leave. The different types of leaves of absence which are available to our members is

clearly listed in our Summary Plan Description benefits books. You must apply for each of those leaves and be approved, and exactly zero of them apply to time on strike. Since we accrued service credit for our time on strike, I don't see how Verizon can claim we were not "on payroll" in May, either.

Article 17, which begins on page 29, explains the rules pertaining to the **Corporate Profit Sharing Plan**. Several scenarios are listed which would result in that check being prorated, but again, none of them have anything to do being on strike.

It appears to me that Verizon still has one feeling left, and you all hurt it! The fact that all of you strong, determined CWA members demanded fairness and refused to cower to Verizon's intimidation tactics, refused to cross those picket lines for forty nine days, is obviously still stuck in their craw. This Fortune 13 corporation, with their billions in profits monthly, is now withholding your money for no other reason than to be a bully. They thought they could break this Union by scaring you into returning to work. They underestimated you. And they obviously haven't gotten over it yet.

CWA is in the process of determining the best way to fight this issue on your behalf. We will have more information to share with you in our next issue of the 2108News, if not sooner. In the meantime, hold your head up high and be proud of what you accomplished in those forty nine days last Spring!

In Solidarity,

Marilyn

The Vincent & Patricia Maisano Labor Scholarship Program

This scholarship 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 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://district2-13.cwa-union.org/pages/scholarship-d213>

Are you "WEARING RED" on Thursdays?

Can You Hear Me Now?

Hopefully you cannot, if you are currently driving a company vehicle. Verizon management recently announced they are increasing discipline if we are found to be using a cell phone while driving. Previously, the company issued a five-day suspension for a first offense, which is now being increased to ten days. While backing accidents were most common in the past, in 2016 front-end accidents were most prevalent for the first time. The company feels that "distracted driving" is to blame for this shift, and that the distraction is often a cell phone. The decision was made to double the discipline as a way to get our attention, so that we follow the law and the Potomac Work Rules and don't use a cell phone while driving.

Now that my commute is 110 miles each day, I feel like I see it all on the beltway or highways I travel, and a great many of my fellow commuters are absolutely "distracted". They have cell phones up to their ears, are drinking or eating, are reading the newspaper, or are twisted around dealing with kids in the back seat. Taking their eyes off the road for a couple of seconds can absolutely delay reaction times to changing traffic conditions, resulting in an accident. It's not surprising that I pass at least one accident on my way to work or back home most days.

With so many of the other drivers on the road being "distracted", it makes it even more imperative that we are aware of our surroundings and alert to changing traffic conditions in order to avoid accidents. Always remember to maintain a safe following distance, observe the speed limit and avoid all distractions, including the temptation to use your cell to talk or text.... Not just because of the threat of a ten-day suspension, but because it could make the difference in whether you or the person in the vehicle you are following lives to return home at the end of the day.

Save the Dates

Labor Night at the Ballpark

Now is the time to pencil in dates on your calendar to join CWA Local 2108 at the annual "Labor Night" at Camden Yards in Baltimore and Nationals Stadium in Washington, DC. At this time, ticket prices have not been announced and are still not available. Updates will be made as soon as it becomes available. Make plans to join us on:

Friday, June 30, 2017 @ 7:05pm

Baltimore Orioles

-vs-

Tampa Bay Devil Rays

Friday, July 28, 2017 @ 7:05pm

Washington Nationals

-vs-

Colorado Rockies

Personals

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

John Digges, Jr., an active member who died on February 9, 2017.

Justin Foster, son of **Gerri Foster**, who died on February 21, 2017.

Welcome to Local 2108

New Members



Mike Foster

Aaron Arrington
Ifedayo Jeter
Maurice Kirkland



Congratulations to Recent Retirees:



Janet Shedrick
Steve Mueller



The 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.

Fifteen partial college scholarships of \$3,000 each are being offered for the 2015-2016 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.

Applications are accepted during the months of November through April. Final deadline for the 2017-2018 school year is April 30, 2017.

To apply online, go to:

http://www.cwa-union.org/pages/beirne_scholarship_application

I'M A UNION WORKER.

That means I'm part of an organization that fights not only for my benefit, but for everyone's.

Union presence in an area puts pressure on employers to give better pay and benefits to their workers, in order to stay competitive. Unions are one of the only forces capable of effectively resisting the continual downward push on employee compensation.

Consumer spending is what creates jobs and prosperity. Increased employee compensation leads to more consumer spending; it pumps more fuel into the engine that drives the whole economy.

That is what unions are fighting for.

That is what I am supporting by working in a union.

In other words...

YOU'RE WELCOME.

Bi-Partisan Bill to Save U.S. Call Center Jobs Introduced in House and Senate

Earlier this month, the "U.S. Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act" was introduced in both the House and Senate, to protect workers and consumers and to curb the off-shoring of American jobs. The legislation requires that U.S. callers be told the location of the call center to which they are speaking, offer callers the opportunity to be connected to a U.S.-based center if preferred, and makes U.S. companies that off-shore their call center jobs ineligible for certain federal grants and taxpayer-funded loans.

The legislation was introduced in the Senate by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) with cosponsors Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO), and in the House by Reps. David McKinley (R-WV) and Gene Green (D-TX).

"We must do everything we can to protect American jobs and consumers and to ensure that Americans have access to good jobs that provide decent wages and benefits," said Rep. Green. "This bipartisan bill will help stem the tide of American jobs being shipped overseas. Along with fellow sponsor Rep. David McKinley, we are committed to working with our Democratic and Republican colleagues and the Trump Administration to move this legislation forward and to protect American workers and consumers."

"This call center legislation is just common sense," said Jennifer Szpara, a consumer consultant with Verizon in Pittsburgh, PA, and a member of Local 13500 who has been with the company for 17 years. "It would help keep good call center jobs here in the U.S. It would give customers who are connected to an overseas call center the right to be transferred back to the U.S. And it would mean that companies that do send good jobs overseas wouldn't be rewarded with taxpayer-funded grants and loans. It's a win for customers, workers, our communities, and our employer."

"The off-shoring of call center jobs is a trend that is bad for American workers and communities and, as this new report shows, harmful to the security of U.S. consumers' sensitive information," said CWA Legislative Director Shane Larson. "At a time when voices across the political spectrum are emphasizing the dangers of off-shoring and the importance of prioritizing American workers, there should be strong support for bipartisan legislation like the new 'U.S. Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act.'" CWAers need to mobilize now to keep good call center jobs in the U.S. Please go to this webpage and sign the petition calling on Congress to take action.

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/tell-congress-stop-call-center-offshoring>

Local 2108 Calendar

MARCH 2017

- 8 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
8 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
12 Daylight Savings Time Begins
Set clocks ahead 1 hour
17 St. Patrick's Day



APRIL 2017

- 5 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:30am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
12 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
12 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
16 Easter



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, March 8, 2017, 6:00pm
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, March 8, 2017, 11:00am



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LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President

Marilyn Irwin - President

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