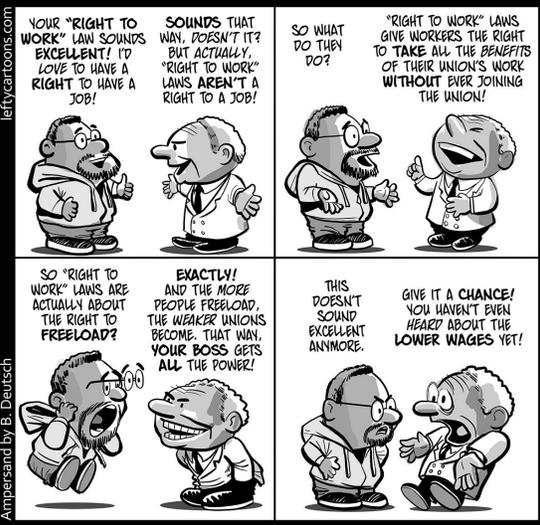


GOP Legislators Introduce National “Right To Work” Legislation

On February 14, 2019, Senator Rand Paul took part in his favorite pas-time, introducing a National Right to Work bill. Just like last year, Paul will be the main sponsor on the bill that would make the 23 free bargaining states right to work.



The bill, which was introduced in the Senate as S.525, currently has 16 sponsors. Of those supporters all but one, Corey Gardner (R-Colorado), come from states that are currently Right to Work. In a press release, Paul encouraged passage of the bill to “follow the lead of Kentucky” by taking away a worker’s

thousands of dollars. Non-dues-paying workers would also receive the higher wages and benefits their dues-paying coworkers enjoy, even though they didn’t pay a penny toward the costs of negotiating those wages and benefits. RTW laws have nothing to do with whether people can be forced to join a union or contribute to a political cause they do not support; that is already illegal. Nor do RTW laws have anything to do with the right to have a job or be provided employment.

At their core, RTW laws seek to hamstring the ability of unions to help employees bargain with their employers for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. Unionization raises wages for individual union members as well as for nonunion workers in unionized sectors. Research confirms that both union and nonunion workers in RTW states have lower wages and fewer benefits, on average, than comparable workers in other states.

If history is any guide, a national Right to Work law will be a disaster for working men and women. Wages are lower and workplace accidents and deaths are higher in Right to Work states. Of course, this is what Paul, Trump and their Tea Party backers want, a world where employees have no voice and businessmen like Trump can take advantage of them

voice in their workplace.

The National Right to Work Committee has been working for years to get the President to sign a National Right to Work law. This would make it illegal for a private or public-sector union to charge agency fees, which are fees that are charged to employees who work under a union contract but are not members of the union. While this bill has always had fringe support from Senators like Kentucky’s Rand Paul, Presidents usually have avoided supporting it. However, a new mailer sent out by Senator Paul Rand and the National Right to Work Committee is telling their supporters that Trump has personally promised to sign the bill if it comes across his desk.

Signing a National Right to Work bill would only be the latest in a long line of attacks on organized labor from Trump. Not only did he appoint the deciding vote in favor of *Janus* which made the entire public sector Right to Work, but he has also repealed or rolled back numerous safety standards that Obama put into place.

Under federal law, no one can be forced to join a union as a condition of employment, and the Supreme Court has made clear that workers cannot be forced to pay dues used for political purposes. So-called Right-To-Work (RTW) legislation goes one step further and entitles employees to the benefits of a union contract—including the right to have the union take up their grievance if their employer abuses them—without paying any of the cost.

This means that if an employer mistreats a worker who does not pay a union representation fee, the union must process that worker’s grievance just as it would a dues-paying member’s, even if it costs tens of

- On average, a worker in a RTW state earns \$1,540 a year less (when all other factors are subtracted) than workers in states without RTW laws, according to the AFL-CIO, citing the Economic Policy Institute.
- Median annual household income in states with RTW laws is \$6,437 less than in non-RTW states (\$46,402 vs. \$52,839), says the AFL-CIO, based on statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau.
- In states with RTW laws, 26.7 percent of jobs are in low-wage occupations, compared with 19.5 percent of jobs in non-RTW states, according to the AFL-CIO, citing the Corporation for Enterprise Development.



2019 Verizon CPS Award - \$799.00

Verizon notified CWA that the Corporate Profit Sharing award payout for plan year 2018 will be \$799.00. The CPS award will be pro-rated for part-time employees and those employees who participated for more than 3 months but less than 12 months in the plan year.

The award will be paid on March 8th based on employees’ regular payroll distribution schedule.



West Virginia teachers were at it again in last month! Reminiscent of their coal miner ancestors, the teachers walked out of their classrooms and protested at the Capitol Building in Charleston to demand that a bill which had passed the Senate not be voted into law.



Their story begins a year ago. I'm sure you remember February of 2018, when 20,000 teachers from all 55 WV counties went on strike, closing 700 schools for nine days. At that time the issue was pay, benefits and respect for their role in our children's lives. WV teachers were ranked 48th in pay in the U.S. before the strike, and their rising healthcare costs meant the average teacher took home \$450 less in 2016 than s/he had the previous year. There were 700 classroom vacancies at the time because teachers took jobs in neighboring states to get paid nearly \$10,000/year more than they would in WV.

Until the mid-90's, teachers were paid almost as much as other educated workers, according to the Economic Policy Institute's analysis of Labor Dept. data. As of 2017, they were paid an average of 18.7% less. As pay declined, class sizes grew larger and working conditions for teachers and learning conditions for students declined radically. WV has been especially hard-hit by the opioid crisis, resulting in students being much needier. In addition to teaching them, teachers have been stepping in to find ways to keep their students fed over the weekends, or get their electric turned back on.

What is shocking is the fact that WV teachers don't even have the right to strike or bargain collectively! This resulted in the teacher unions becoming more practiced at lobbying state officials who set their members' compensation than at confronting them. In defiance of state law, after four years of no across-the-board raises, it was the rank-and-file teachers who decided to walk out of the classrooms and strike when Governor Justice proposed a 1% raise in each of the next five years....a raise that wouldn't keep pace with the cost of living, and would mean the teachers would actually lose money due to their skyrocketing out-of-pocket healthcare costs. Lawmakers had cut corporate and business taxes for more than a decade, resulting in losing millions of dollars in state money to fund local schools. The teachers were met with a huge wave of support from students, parents and the general public (including CWA, who participated in many rallies and picket lines). School service personnel joined the teachers on the picket lines. When Senate and House leadership played hardball and sent a take-it-or-leave-it ultimatum to the teachers, they were shocked when the teachers decided to "leave it" and the strike continued. After nine cancelled school days and with an offer of a 5% pay raise, an 18 month freeze on health insurance premiums and the creation of a task force to find a dedicated funding source for the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA), the teachers ended the strike and returned to the classrooms.

The 2018 strike caused a tsunami that was decades in the making, due to state budget cuts after the Great Recession that squeezed school spending and teacher salaries. Teacher strikes followed in Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona, Colorado and North Carolina, thanks to the creative tactics and early success in WV. These strikes by more than 100,000 public school teachers have had broad public support, forcing lawmakers to raise pay and fueling a national movement to boost investment in public education. Teacher strike action contributed to the largest increase in labor action the U.S. has seen in decades, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

While WV teachers vowed to "Remember in November" and vote for legislators who would support them, Republicans, most of whom opposed the teachers' demands, kept control of both houses in the state legislature during the recent elections. This year the legislators revived proposals that helped prompt the 2018 strike (plus added some devastating new proposals). At issue: S.B. 451, the Bill giving a raise to teachers, was tied to funding Charter Schools and School Vouchers, shifting more school costs to counties and taxpayers, plus would make it easier to fire teachers without considering seniority during layoffs. A clause would invalidate the entire legislation if any part of it was struck

down. Forty years prior, the WV Supreme Court recognized that children have a fundamental right to an adequate and equitable education. WV teachers consider the charter and voucher provisions of S.B. 451 as an existential threat to that fundamental right to education. They want to guarantee quality public schools remain free and accessible to all children, rather than to a select few who win a school lottery or whose parents can afford to send them to private school with the benefit of an education savings account. American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten called the bill "retaliation against teachers who stood up for students last year", and said the Bill appeared to be driven by outside wealthy interests like Americans for Prosperity that, like Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, want to eliminate public schools.

The legislators, who thought the teachers would see the 5% pay raise in S.B. 451 and ignore the rest of the detrimental language tied to it, were shocked when the teachers and support staff walked out again on two weeks ago. In an effort to guarantee that quality public schools remain free and accessible to all children, rather than a select few, these teachers selflessly struck against a bill that would have given them a much-needed and deserved raise. The teachers returned to the classrooms two days later, after the detrimental Bill was defeated in the House of Representatives. "Our voices were heard," Fred Albert, president of the WV chapter of the AFT, said at a news conference, while pledging that union leaders would monitor deliberations in the state legislature to oppose any new charter school proposals.

I find the grit and determination of the WV teachers inspiring. By standing together and demanding respect and reasonable pay for their valuable work, plus a quality public education for all children, they fueled a national movement to boost investment in public education. I'm also reminded how important it is that we elect legislators who share our values. Had that been done in WV, the most recent strike would not have been necessary. Remember the bumper sticker "If you can read this bumper sticker, thank a teacher!?" If you read my article, thank a teacher!

In Solidarity,

Marilyn

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

As you know, lawmakers are back in Washington DC and there might just be a glimmer of hope on the horizon compared to some of the legislation proposed last year.

In 2018, there were proposals to change age requirements for eligibility to receive Social Security benefits as well as changing the Medicare eligibility rules. 2019 offers some hope for seniors in America. Recently, legislation introduced by Senator Bernie Sanders (VT) and Representative Peter DeFazio (OR) titled the Social Security Expansion Act that would remove caps on wages over \$250,000, require taxes on unearned income (investment income) and Social Security Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) would be calculated using the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E). The CPI-E more accurately reflects the rising cost of goods and services used by older Americans such as health care and housing, than the current formula. These changes would extend the solvency of Social Security by more than a half century.

We can hope this is the beginning of positive change for us older Americans!! CWA 2108 RMC will continue to keep our members informed of things that can affect our future. Our next RMC luncheon meeting will be on March 13, 2019 at 11:00am. I hope to see everyone there!!



Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108

Did you know? As a member of CWA Local 2108, you and your immediate family members have the chance to receive a \$5,000 scholarship.

For more than 30 years, the law firm of Ashcraft & Gerel, LLP has been offering union members and their families throughout the Washington, D.C. area the opportunity to alleviate the stressors that come with paying for the high cost of education.

Each year, the law firm awards a one-time grant of \$5,000 to an eligible student for education expenses. That student could be you or an immediate family member!

A committee of union volunteers screen the applicants and a finalist is chosen by an independent party. To obtain your scholarship application, call **Liliana Chang at 703-931-5500**. The deadline to submit your application is **March 15, 2019**.

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 2019-2020 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 2019-2020 school year is April 30, 2019.**

To apply online, go to:

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

Thinking About Retirement?

You may want to check out one of these important workshops presented by **Nettworth Financial** Group to see if the reality of retirement is on your horizon and get treated to a free meal!!

Retirement Benefits Workshop

Thursday, March 14, 2019 - 6:30pm - Ruths Chris, 106 Crown Park Ave, Gaithersburg, MD

Saturday, March 16, 2019 - 10:00am - CWA Local 2107, 1825 George Avenue, Suite 3, Annapolis, MD

Tuesday, March 19, 2019 - 6:30pm - Ruths Chris, 1110 Town Center Blvd, Odenton, MD

Reservations are required and to RSVP you may call Nettworth at (800)-859-2212, or register online at Nettworth.net. **Space is limited and the workshop is limited to CWA members and their spouse only.**

Personals

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

Carol Canada, mother of **Brian Canada** who passed away on February 4, 2019.

Welcome to Local 2108

New Members

Mike Foster

Darius Harris

Transferred Members

Mike Foster

Leonard Joyner, Sr.

Rob Willis

Nelson Valdes

Congratulations to Recent Retiree:

Scot McElroy

Are you "WEARING RED" on Thursdays?

AT&T Cuts Over 11,000 Jobs Despite 20 Billion in Tax Savings

February 22, AT&T announced its intention to close three call centers in Meriden, Conn. The company told workers at these locations, many of whom have been with AT&T for more than 30 years, they would have to move to Tennessee or Georgia to continue their careers with AT&T. The centers scheduled to close provide support for AT&T's network operations, including ensuring the reliability of 911 networks across 22 states.

AT&T's own documents show that it eliminated 11,780 jobs in 2018 and is continuing to cut its workforce. The closures in Connecticut follow the company's January announcement that it was closing its Syracuse, N.Y. call center.

AT&T is increasingly under fire for broken jobs promises despite **\$20 billion in tax savings** following the corporate tax bill. AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson once boasted that every \$1 billion in tax savings will create "about 7,000 good jobs for the middle class." But as AT&T is shedding jobs, it is on track to pay out three-quarters of its 2018 profits to shareholders in the form of dividends and share buybacks. CWA has called on Congress to investigate how AT&T and other major corporations are spending the enormous tax cut benefits they received from the 2018 tax bill.

A report by the Communications Workers of America (CWA) examined the telecom giant's continued role in hollowing out the middle class by eliminating thousands of jobs, closing call centers, and shifting customer service and network maintenance to low-wage contractors, including overseas vendors.

AT&T's response to concerns about layoffs with boasts about hiring have been met with skepticism, since hiring to address turnover is not the same as job creation.

How Will The Proposed T-Mobile/Sprint Merger Impact Jobs?

The proposed T-Mobile and Sprint merger is bad news for workers and consumers. While T-Mobile and Sprint are making vague promises that the merger will create thousands of jobs in the U.S., the data and the companies' track records tell a different story.

Wall Street analysts project that the merger will result in massive job cuts from the elimination of duplicative retail stores. When pressed on the issue at a Senate hearing, T-Mobile CEO John Legere conceded that "there'll be a rationalization of jobs in the first year" - a corporate-speak admission that the merged company plans to lay off thousands of workers.

CWA's comprehensive economic analysis finds that the merger will result in the loss of 30,000 U.S. jobs including the loss of 520 retail jobs in the Maryland, Washington DC area.

T-Mobile's January 2018 acquisition of iWireless, a regional carrier in Iowa, shows what happens to jobs when T-Mobile takes over. The company closed more than 72 percent of iWireless corporate stores and more than 93 percent of authorized dealer stores. T-Mobile also shuttered iWireless customer call centers in Des Moines and Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

T-Mobile and Sprint both have long track records of offshoring U.S. jobs. T-Mobile and Sprint offshore a significant portion of call center work to the Philippines, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Mexico, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and Canada.

In 2012, T-Mobile laid off 3,300 workers when it closed seven U.S. call centers. T-Mobile attempted to deny its displaced workers much-needed federal benefits by denying that the work was sent overseas, but a U.S. Department of Labor investigation concluded that the jobs had been offshored. In 2016, Sprint closed U.S. call centers that employed 2,500 people and sent the work overseas to the Philippines.

The companies' well-documented recent history of cutting jobs following a transaction and significant offshoring of U.S. jobs raises questions about the credibility of their future plans to preserve, create, and return U.S. jobs.

T-Mobile has an aggressive policy to deny employees their legal right to form a union. T-Mobile has been guilty of violating U.S. labor law six times since 2015 and has been subject to approximately 40 unfair labor practice charges since 2011. Sprint's violation of workers' rights dates back to the landmark *La Conexion Familiar* case in which Sprint fired 226 employees and closed its Spanish-language telemarketing center in San Francisco to avoid a union election.

The Bottom Line? The FCC should not approve the merger without verifiable and enforceable commitments on jobs and workers' rights from T-Mobile and Sprint

Local 2108 Calendar

MARCH 2019

- 10 Daylight Savings Time Begins
Set clocks ahead 1 hour.
- 11-12 Advanced Stewards Training- 9:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 13 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 13 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 17 St Patrick's Day
- 20-21 New Stewards Training- 9:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

APRIL 2019

- 3 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 10 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 10 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 21 Easter Sunday



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 13, 2019, 6:00pm RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, March 13, 2019, 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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