

CWA Calls For Renegotiation of the USMCA Agreement

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is the renegotiated version of NAFTA that President Trump signed during his first term in office. In the time since, it has become clear that the USMCA pact has not fixed the fundamental problems with the original NAFTA:



good-paying jobs continue to be shipped abroad to take advantage of labor rights violations, abysmally-low wages and lax pollution controls, and the USMCA is still packed with corporate-giveaway provisions that undermine sound public policy in all three countries.

The mandated, six-year review of the USMCA is fast approaching and presents a crucial opportunity to either make the substantial changes needed for the pact to finally deliver on its promises to working families — or for the U.S. to remove itself from the trade agreement altogether.

What absolutely cannot happen is for the United States to agree to a 16-year extension of the USMCA beyond its current 2036 deadline without first making the changes needed to end the deal's ongoing harm to our communities.

A successful USMCA review process must result in significant changes to the agreement so that it benefits working families and contributes to the development of a resilient and fair economy in the United States and across North America. If these needed changes cannot be secured, the United States should not only refuse to extend the agreement's term beyond its current 2036 expiration, but should instead withdraw from the USMCA altogether.

At the time of the USMCA's establishment, President Trump told the nation that the pact would bring "jobs pouring into the United States," be "an especially great victory for our farmers," and provide other concrete benefits to the American people. Instead, the U.S. trade deficit with Mexico and Canada has skyrocketed under the USMCA; corporations continue to offshore good-paying American jobs to Mexico where workers' labor rights are still violated and wages remain a pittance; and vital American economic sectors from autos to steel to aerospace to agriculture are being undermined by surging USMCA imports.

After a thorough review, CWA believes a successful USMCA review process must result in renegotiation of key terms to:

End the offshoring of good-paying jobs. Under the USMCA, companies continue to offshore good-paying jobs from the United States to Mexico to take advantage of weak labor rights, low wages and lax pollution controls. To end such offshoring, existing USMCA labor and environmental provisions must be strengthened, expanded and their enforcement improved. This includes strengthening and broadening the application of the agreement's innovative rapid response mechanism, which has proven to be an effective tool for holding companies accountable for failing to respect workers' rights. With respect to climate and the environment, new commitments to reduce emissions from the industrial sector and to ensure data transparency in pollution intensity of major energy

-intensive products including steel and aluminum are likewise needed; facility-specific enforcement tools similar to those for labor must also be added for existing and strengthened environmental standards.

Raise wages across the region. There is zero evidence the USMCA has meaningfully increased wages for working people in the United States, Mexico or Canada. The most straightforward way to address this problem is for the renegotiated agreement to condition application of the agreement's benefits to goods and services produced by workers making a fair wage and to require better supply chain transparency, including tracking of the wages associated with exported goods and services. The parties should establish a North American minimum wage for manufacturing workers in key sectors, premised on workers getting equal pay for equal work. Coordinated trilateral increases in key MFN tariffs will also create the basis for a higher wage North American production bloc. By raising wages in Mexico, not only can Mexican workers start to purchase the goods they produce and U.S. and Canadian exports, but companies will have less of an incentive to move jobs there to take advantage of lower wages.

Strengthen rural communities. Agribusiness interests continue to reap huge profits under the USMCA, while family farmers and working people in rural communities suffer. While the prices consumers

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CWA Local 2108 Town-Hall Meeting

Understanding FMLA & State Leave Policies

Join us online March 26th along with **CWA District 2-13 Health Care Benefit Coordinator, Inez Millard** to discuss FMLA and other State Leave policies.

Wednesday, March 26, 2025 at 7:00pm - via Zoom

Please use the following link to join us!!

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83793042055>

Or you can join by phone:

- Dial by your location
- +1 301 715 8592 US (DC)
 - +1 305 224 1968 US
 - +1 309 205 3325 US
 - +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
 - +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
 - +1 646 931 3860 US
 - +1 360 209 5623 US
 - +1 386 347 5053 US
 - +1 507 473 4847 US



CWA Members Build Skills at the Minority Leadership Institute

Last month, leaders from across our union participated in CWA's week-long Dennis Serrette Minority Leadership Institute (MLI).

Over the course of the week, the MLI students studied a variety of topics, including effective speaking and writing, the legal rights of union activists, leading for workers in the political arena, and organizing labor-community coalitions. IUE-CWA President Carl Kennebrew, who chairs the CWA Executive Board Diversity Committee, and CWA Secretary-Treasurer Ameenah Salaam (who joined via Zoom) gave opening remarks. CWA staff, instructors from the University of Iowa Labor Center, and other guest speakers conducted training sessions throughout the week.

Students also met with CWA President Claude Cummings Jr. to discuss union activism. Cummings provided a "state of the union," addressing both the national political landscape and the state of CWA. He also highlighted the importance of the labor movement and the role MLI leaders play in protecting workers.



Pictured, left to right: Members of the 2024 MLI Graduating Class included Jacquelyn Wells (District 1), Kenyon Johnson (District 9), CWA Local 2108 Chief Steward, Mornica McLean (District 2-13), Traci Hagans (AFA-CWA), Angela Bates (District 7), Michelle Richardson (Telecommunications and Technologies), Diogenes Miller (District 3), Stacey Breckenridge-Williams (IUE-CWA), Tanya Holmes (District 6), Dana Thomas (NABET-CWA), and Ewuniki Yemi (District 4).

(USMCA from page 1)

pay at the supermarket are higher than ever, the prices paid to farmers in all three countries are often below their costs of production. To strengthen rural economies, the USMCA must be renegotiated to create fair, stable prices for independent family farmers and require mandatory market transparency so that consumers know where their food is coming from and how it is produced. This includes safeguarding governments' rights to manage agricultural supplies at fair prices that at least cover farmers' costs of production and through tariff protections that allow for stable domestic supplies that meet demand by discouraging dumping. A renegotiated USMCA must also establish mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) rules for beef, pork, dairy, egg and seafood products.

Stop abuses by Big Tech. The USMCA was the first major U.S. trade agreement to include extreme "digital trade" provisions that help Big Tech undermine online privacy, data security, AI accountability and anti-monopoly policies. When trade deals enable our personal data to be shipped around the globe without regard to privacy and data security standards, data processing, data storage and other data-driven jobs inevitably get shipped abroad to low-wage nations. The USMCA also contains algorithm and source code secrecy guarantees that gut right to repair policies and prevent effective oversight of Artificial Intelligence (AI), needlessly exposing workers to discriminatory, unsafe and otherwise harmful uses of AI in the workplace. These and other Big Tech giveaways need to be eliminated.

Shut down special rights for foreign investors. To further benefit working families and create a fairer economy, the USMCA must be renegotiated to strip provisions that constrain regulation of foreign investors and other provisions that undermine industrial and public interest policies. This includes completely eliminating Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) and removing so-called Good Regulatory Practices (GRP) provisions that help corporations delay, weaken and derail public interest policies.

Make medicine more affordable. The USMCA renegotiation should also take proactive steps to build stronger, more-resilient supply chains for medical devices, personal protective equipment and affordable medicines. Existing USMCA provisions that privilege pharmaceutical monopolies over access to affordable medicine must be eliminated, including especially "TRIPS-plus" provisions that establish special rights for pharmaceutical monopolies. Provisions affirming governments' right to use compulsory licensing to address public health needs and to negotiate for lower prescription medicine prices should also be added.

Union Negotiated Benefits Pay Big Dividends in March!

It Pays To Belong

Verizon CPS Award For 2024 - \$750.00

The Verizon Corporate Profit Sharing Award for plan year 2024 is \$750.00. The award will be pro-rated for those employees who participated for more than 90 days but less than 12 months in the plan year. Employees who resign or are discharged for cause prior to December 31 of the Plan Year forfeit their eligibility. CPS Distribution for each eligible part-time employee will be prorated as a percent of the normal work week for a full-time employee in the same title.

Attendance Award Paid on March 7, 2025

In 2012, CWA and Verizon negotiated language which provided incentives for employees based on good attendance. Employees who use four days or fewer of paid or unpaid incidental absence in a calendar year will receive a lump sum payment which is prorated for part time employees.

<u>Number of Paid or Unpaid Incidental Absence Days Used in the Calendar Year</u>	<u>Lump Sum Payment</u>
Zero Days	5 Day's Pay
More than Zero Days but less than 2 Days	4 Day's Pay
At least 2 Days but less than 3 Days	3 Day's Pay
At least 3 Days but less the 4 Days	2 Day's Pay
4 Days	1 Day's Pay

Are you "WEARING RED" on Thursdays?

Over the past few years, negotiations with Verizon have modified how unused vacation days from calendar year 2024 may be scheduled and utilized by March 31, 2025. Any and all requests for specific dates to be used in 2025 will be considered on a **first come, first served basis** and approval will be based on the contractual 18% and 12% ratios set forth in the



“Vacation Scheduling Percentages” Letter of Understanding. **Any 2024 Vacation, paid or unpaid Excused Work Days not selected and not taken by March 31, 2025 shall be forfeited and not eligible for selection or “in lieu of” payment after March 31, 2025.**

CWA Local 2108 is advising all members who have unused vacation from 2024 to be aware of potential scheduling conflicts with vacation scheduling percentages. With a “use it or lose it” policy in effect, there may be a mad dash to get unused vacation scheduled as we move closer to March 31st .

Donate to the Federal Worker Solidarity Fund

Federal workers dedicate their careers to public service and the greater good. That's particularly true in the DC region, which is home to the highest share of federal workers in the country.

The unprecedented disruptions happening right now in the federal government has created uniquely difficult hardships in our region. While the labor movement fights to keep workers in their jobs, our communities can also work to reduce the impact of these hardships.

The Federal Worker Solidarity Fund, hosted by the Community Services Agency of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO, is a way for everyone to support fired federal workers who are now experiencing financial hardship.

Federal workers dedicate their lives to our communities. Now, as thousands of workers in our region have been unjustly fired from their jobs, it's time to give back.

Your donation to the Fund will help fired federal workers put food on the table, get life-saving medication, and remain in their home during this time of hardship. Donations are 100% text deductible.

Applications to the Fund are now open. Federal workers part of a union or non-unionized who have lost the job as a result of recent terminations, firings, and lay-offs due to no fault of their own are eligible to request support from this fund. Workers must live in the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO or the Northern Virginia Labor Federation.

This Fund will cover up to \$500, one time, for emergency financial needs including food, prescriptions, or past-due bills for rent, mortgage, utilities, cell phone, internet, car payments, insurance, or medical bills. Payments will be made directly to creditor institutions, not individuals, and supporting documents verifying financial need and federal government employment status are required.

The labor movement is built on solidarity, and now is a moment to put that into action. Please use this link to donate to the fund and be part of helping federal workers throughout the DC region:

<https://www.nfggive.org/donation/52-1718506>



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL
AFL-CIO

Personals

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

Retiree **Clark (CB) Boyer**, who passed away on February 2, 2025.

Retiree **David Underwood**, who passed away on February 17, 2025.

Welcome to Local 2108

Transferred Member



Antonio Miller
Orlandus Hawkins



Thinking About Retirement?

You may want to check out these important workshops presented by **Nettworth Financial Group** to see if the reality of retirement is on your horizon!!

Retirement - What to Expect

Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Via Zoom

CWA District 2-13 Health, Insurance & Medicare

Thursday, March 20, 2025 @ 6:30PM

Via Zoom

Reservations are required and to RSVP you may call Nettworth at (800)-859-2212, or register online at :

<http://www.nettworth.net/event/marylanddcvirginia>



RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

I wasn't too sure with all the snowy weather... but after the past few days, I really think spring is on the way!! Please make plans to get out and enjoy the change of seasons as we have our monthly luncheon meeting on March 12, 2025 at 11:00am. This will be our first in-person meeting of 2025 due to the snow emergencies that disrupted the past two meetings. It will be great to see everyone.



We will be reviewing the last few months of political turmoil together and try to plan for the four years as retirees in America under the new administration.

As always, desserts are welcome.

Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108

To receive CWA action alerts via text message, Text CWAAction to 49484

Zenimax Workers Step Up Mobilization Efforts



The members of ZeniMax Workers United-CWA, one of the largest video game unions in the United States, are now in the process of conducting a strike vote in response to the company failing to adequately address employee issues regarding remote work and outsourcing.

The action involves workers in ZeniMax offices in Texas and Maryland, who do quality assurance work for games including *Fallout* and *Elder Scrolls*.

As you know CWA ZeniMax QA has been negotiating with Microsoft to reach a strong first contract since April 25th, 2023. While the Union has had some successes at the bargaining table, we've also encountered considerable resistance from Microsoft on certain topics. Microsoft remains unmoved on several issues that are important to CWA members at Zenimax. Microsoft's most recent proposal on February 12th fell short of moving us closer to reaching an agreement.

A strike authorization vote is a formal step in authorizing a strike, but it does not automatically mean that a strike is imminent or guaranteed to happen. It simply means the members are authorizing the National CWA President, Claude Cummings, to declare a strike if circumstances justify it. The CWA Constitution requires a membership vote to authorize the President of the Union to call a strike if necessary.

Local 2108 Calendar

MARCH 2025

- 7 CWA MD & DC Presidents Meeting Washington, DC
- 9 Daylight Savings Time Begins Set clocks ahead 1 hour
- 12 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 12 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 17 Zenimax Strike Vote Ballots Counted Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 17 St. Patrick's Day



APRIL 2025

- 9 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 9 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 20 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 12, 2025 - 6:00pm
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, March 12, 2025 - 11:00am

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Communications Workers of America Local 2108




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Tamera Nelson - Secretary-Treasurer
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