

Covid-19 Modifies Primary Election Plans in Maryland



As you are aware, most of the country is currently locked-down due to the coronavirus pandemic and this has caused a significant wrinkle for election plans in the upcoming primaries. The Maryland State Legislature has been working to try and balance the need to stem the spread of this highly contagious virus through social distancing and avoid what happened in Wisconsin when that state's Supreme Court blocked the Governor's executive order to suspend in-person voting.

For the 2020 Presidential Primary Election:

All registered and eligible voters will receive a paper ballot in the mail. You must be registered with the Democratic or Republican parties to vote for President and most other contests. If you are not registered with either party, you may only be eligible to vote for school board candidates if your jurisdiction has a school board election this year. You can check your registration status and party registration by following the following link: <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/VoterSearch>.

Use a black ink pen to fill in the ovals next to your choices. You can return your voted ballot by mail using the envelope provided. **All mailed ballots must be postmarked by Election Day, June 2, 2020.** You can also drop off your voted ballot at designated drop off locations from May 21, 2020 through June 2, 2020. Absentee ballots will be scanned at the local election office.

- If you are unable to vote by mail, you can vote in-person on Election Day at designated vote centers in the jurisdiction where you live. On Election Day, you will either hand mark a paper ballot or make your selections on an accessible ballot marking device. After you review your ballot choices, you then place your voted ballot into the privacy sleeve and take it to the scanner. An election worker will direct you to insert your ballot into the scanning unit to cast your vote. Your ballot will be scanned and dropped into a secure ballot box.
- For provisional voting on Election Day, you will be issued a paper ballot. Use a black ink pen to fill in the oval next to your choices. Provisional ballots are returned to the local election office in secure bags on election night. Provisional ballots will be scanned at the local election office.

When may I apply to register to vote?

You can use Maryland's Online Voter Registration System (OLVR) or submit a voter registration application to your local board of elections or the State Board of Elections at any time. However, an application must be postmarked by the voter registration deadline in order to vote in the next scheduled election. If you submit a voter registration application during the period that registration is closed, your application will be held at the local board of elections and processed when registration reopens. The close of voter registration is: May 27, 2020, for the Presidential Primary Election If your using Maryland's Online Voter Registration System (OLVR) and October 13, 2020, for the Presidential General Election.

You can also register to vote on Election Day. To access the Maryland Online Voter Registration System, follow the following link: <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/OnlineVoterRegistration>

For the 2020 Presidential Election:

In order to secure everyone's ability to vote in November, CWA joined over 150 other organizations to demand that Congress allocate at least \$4 billion in funding for election protection this year for the November elections and mandate critical reforms to ensure everyone in America has equal access to the ballot box.

With \$400 million appropriated for state election support in the March 27 COVID-19 package, the chaos in the Wisconsin primary revealed initial funding is woefully insufficient to cover the costs needed for states to hold safe and secure elections around the country. To uphold everyone's right to vote in America this year, Congress must provide states with the funding they need in the next COVID-19 legislative package, as well as mandate much needed reforms to ensure that Americans do not have to choose between their health and their vote at the polls this year. Congress must enact reforms that include:

- That states take steps to protect the health and safety of poll workers and voters.
- Expanding voter registration options such as online registration and same day registration.
- Requiring states to expand early voting to prevent lines and crowded polling places where people could be exposed the virus.
- Enacting no-excuse vote-by-mail as an option for every voter in America. By instituting common-sense, pro-voter policies, people of all ages in every state will be able to vote without fear for their health.

CWA will be calling on all members to contact their legislators to ensure that election protections are put in place by November.

Please Donate to the Community Services Agency of The Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO

Since 1991, the Community Services Agency of the Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO (CSA), through its Emergency Assistance Fund, has helped thousands of union members facing hardship due to no fault of their own with financial assistance to help pay rent, utilities and keep food on the table. Today, tens of thousands of hotel, restaurant, cafeteria, stadium and even health care workers are laid off as a result of the COVID-19 shutdown.

Because most CWA members working in the telecommunications industry are considered "essential employees" we have been fortunate not to have missed a paycheck. Your support is needed now to help these members and their families, some of whom do not qualify for unemployment or the stimulus package that many of us received.

Please consider making a generous contribution by check payable to the Community Services Agency, 815 16th Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20006 or by visiting the following web address and click the "Please Donate Now" button to make a secure contribution.

<http://www.communityservicesagency.org/>

I recently read an amazing editorial in The New York Times about the times in our country's history that we have emerged, stronger and more resilient, from some of our darkest hours. For example, in 1862, even as Confederate victories raised doubts about the future of the Union, Abraham Lincoln enacted three landmark laws that shaped the nation's next chapter: The Homestead Act allowed Western settlers to claim 160 acres of public land apiece; the Morrill Act provided land grants for states to fund universities; and the Pacific Railway Act underwrote the transcontinental railroad.



During the Great Depression seventy-five years later, with jobs in short supply and many Americans reduced to waiting in bread lines, President Franklin Roosevelt proved to be similarly farsighted. He concluded the best way to revive and sustain prosperity was not to just pump money into the economy but to rewrite the rules of the marketplace. At the 1936 Democratic Convention, President Roosevelt defined liberty as the opportunity to make a decent living, "a living which gives man not only enough to live by, but something to live for". Working with Congress, his administration enshrined the right of workers to bargain collectively, imposed strict rules and regulations on the financial industry, and created Social Security to provide pensions for the elderly and disabled.

The corona virus pandemic has exposed how the fabric of our democracy has been stretched thin over the past half century. The current unbalanced concentration of economic power has not been seen in the past hundred years. Too many Americans have no financial security, while the top 1 percent of U.S. households hold more wealth than that held by the bottom 80 percent combined.

While many bemoan the current stay-at-home orders, hundreds of thousands of Americans do not even have homes, and are sleeping in public spaces. Our enduring racial inequalities, in both wealth and in health, are reflected in the pandemic's death toll. In Michigan, for example, African-Americans make up just 14 percent of the state's population, but 40 percent of their COVID-19 deaths. More than 26 million Americans have filed for Unemployment Insurance in the past five weeks, a number which likely exceeds the highs of the Great Depression.

While several stimulus packages have been enacted to provide temporary financial help to the millions of Americans who are struggling and suffering right now, some politicians are asserting that the crisis does not warrant permanent changes. I disagree, and believe the corona virus has exposed our weaknesses and the changes that need to be made to get our country back on track. When we come out on the other side of this nightmare (and one day we will), **I hope** we enact laws that provide good healthcare to all Americans, as a right, not a privilege. **I hope** that the people who are keeping us fed right now get pay raises so they can begin to earn a living wage. **I hope** that manufacturing is brought back into our country, to not only put more Americans to work, but to also make us less reliant on other countries for our goods. **I hope** that corporations decide to invest heavily in the U.S. infrastructure by building new bridges and roads, and upgrading our power grid and communications networks to provide good jobs and move our country ahead in the twenty first century. **I hope** parents remember how much they appreciate their kids' teachers right now, and that memory doesn't fade over time, so teachers are shown the respect they deserve. **I hope** that healthcare professionals who are putting their lives on the line every day to care for complete strangers are never without adequate PPE ever again. **I hope** that we can return to a day when our economy worked for all Americans, not just the ultra-rich; that we can return to a time when parents can watch their children enjoy opportunities and success and live even better than their parents did.

In the 20th century, after Roosevelt's New Deal, we saw Johnson's Great Society, which created programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and Head Start. These policies embodied a broad and strong concept of liberty; that government should provide all Americans with the freedom that comes from a stable and prosperous life. Since the late 1960s, the federal government has largely abandoned this goal. As our economy

shifted from manufacturing to services, corporations successfully resisted the unionization of new jobs, taking away that protection from workers. Companies were not required to provide employees with basic benefits like paid leave, and were permitted to classify many full-time workers as contractors. Business leaders shifted corporate obligation from workers to maximizing shareholder returns.

This pandemic has shown us how fragile our nation's social safety net really is. Americans need reliable, affordable access to health care, child care and elder care. No one, and especially not children, should ever go hungry. Everyone deserves a place to call home. Choices can be made to make secure, good-paying, safe jobs available to all. The United States has a chance to emerge from this latest crisis as a stronger nation, more just, more free and more resilient. **I hope** we seize the opportunity.

I also hope you and your families will continue to follow the CDC guidelines as far as social distancing, the wearing of masks and cleanliness are concerned, both on and off the job, so this virus can be contained. I'm eager to get my hair cut and go out to dinner, just like everyone else, but until that is a safe option, let's all hang in there!

In Solidarity,

Marilyn

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 June 30, 2020 for all eligible employees working from home

COVID-19 Home Garaging Agreement: This agreement has been extended through June 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, from March 16th through June 30, 2020 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.

COVID-19 Bonus Pay Agreement: This agreement has been extended to eligible employees who report to work and who either live or work in a jurisdiction that has a stay-in-place/shelter-in-place order or equivalent order in place.

Use Your Carry-Over Vacation by May 31

Still have some 2019 carry-over vacation at Verizon? Recent negotiations modified how unused vacation days from calendar year 2019 may be scheduled and utilized by May 31, 2020 because of the Covid-19 virus. Just so you know, any and all requests for specific dates to be used in 2020 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 2019 Vacation, paid or unpaid Excused Work Days not selected and not taken by May 31, 2020 shall be forfeited and not eligible for selection or "in lieu of" payment after May 31, 2020.

CWA Local 2108 is advising all members who have unused vacation from 2019 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 May 31st.

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

Retirement Preparedness Score Webinar

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at 6:00 PM - Please join this meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone. In order to fully participate in the webinar, please sign in at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2729910756524501261>
Webinar ID:281-957-203 Or join by phone - Dial In: **(415) 655-0052**
Access Code: 481-862-589

Reservations are required and to RSVP you may call Nettworth at (800)-859-2212, or register online at Nettworth.net. **After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.**

CWA Urges Congress to Pass P.A.I.D. Leave Act

The Communications Workers of America (CWA) is urging the House and Senate to immediately pass a bill introduced by Senator Murray, Senator Gillibrand, and Rep. DeLauro. The "P.A.I.D. Leave Act", is a comprehensive bill to provide all workers with paid sick days and paid family and medical leave, in response to the current coronavirus crisis, and to have these benefits in place for workers and families to deal with future crises and life events.

The P.A.I.D. Leave Act would:

- To respond aggressively to the current coronavirus crisis, require the federal government to cover the cost of 7-days of accrued paid sick leave, 14 paid emergency sick days, and the 12-weeks of paid emergency leave outlined below until January 2022. Under the bill, employers will submit documentation to the Department of Labor (DOL) that they provided paid sick days or paid leave. DOL is required to certify the documentation within 5 days as being true and tell the Treasury Department to issue a check to the employer within 2 days, fully reimbursing them.
 - Require all employers to allow employees and independent contractors to accrue up to 7 days of paid sick leave at 100% of wages.
 - Require all employers to provide a separate amount of 14 days of paid sick leave at 100% of wages that is immediately available at the beginning of any public health emergency (including in the current crisis upon passage of the bill). Under the bill, a qualifying Public Health Emergency could be declared at the federal level or the state or local level and still trigger the additional 14 paid sick days.
 - Require all employers to provide 12-weeks of paid leave at 2/3 of wages during a public health emergency.
 - Expand the list of qualifying events for the use of paid sick days and paid leave to include:
 - If your child's school is closed for a public health emergency
 - If your employer is closed for a public health emergency
 - If you or a family member needing care are quarantined or isolated because of exposure linked to a public health emergency
 - The list of qualifying events still includes the original events, being: for your own medical issue, for going to the doctor, for a family member's medical issue or doctor's visit or need for care, for attending a child's school meeting on medical issue, and for addressing domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
 - The requirements in the bill would extend to all employers, regardless of size, and would also cover independent contractors.
- Please go to www.cwa-union.org and follow the link about the P.A.I.D. Act to urge legislators in Congress to extend paid sick days and paid family leave to all workers!



Make Sure "You" are Counted!!

Every 10 years, every resident in the United States is counted, providing valuable statistics and information about the status of our communities, and our country. The census counts our population and households, distributing more than \$675 billion in federal funds annually to support states, counties and communities' vital programs.



This information, required every ten years by the Constitution, is used for important decision-making that affects working people — not only at the federal but also at the state and local levels of government.

Why Does It Matter?

Census data shapes the future of our community and future generations. Census data also determines our political power, representation in congress, and funding for education, transportation, healthcare, and so much more.

- **Fair Representation & Political Power**— Every 10 years, the results of the census are used to reapportion the House of Representatives, determining how many seats each state gets. The results are also used for redistricting which is designed to ensure that Congress and state legislatures are representative of the communities they serve.
- **Funding in Our Community** – The results of the census are used to support federal funding in our community. Federal funding supports programs that are crucial to the well-being of all families, including health, transportation, education, senior centers, public safety and housing.

How does the Census benefit working people?

Resources benefit everyone in our community and include good union jobs in areas such as the medical industry, trades, and public sector. The better we are counted, the better we are funded. Key federal programs also rely on data and allocations derived from the census, including:

- **Medicaid**
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**
- **Medicare Part B**
- **Highway Planning and Construction**
- **Section 8**
- **Title I Grants**
- **State Children's Health**

How will we be counted?

When it's time to respond, most households will receive an invitation in the mail. Every household will have the option of responding online, by mail, or by phone. Depending on how likely your area is to respond online, you'll receive either an invitation encouraging you to respond online or invitation along with a paper questionnaire. Once you receive your invitation in the mail, just follow the instructions on how to get counted! Keep in mind, starting **May 13 through July 31, 2020**, if a household does not respond to any of the invitations, a census taker will follow up in person.

Are you "WEARING RED" on Thursdays?

May Membership and RMC Meetings Cancelled

Due to the State of Maryland declaring a "State of Emergency" because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the regularly scheduled membership meeting and the RMC meeting on May 13, 2020 have been cancelled in order to comply with mandated regulations surrounding gatherings of more than 10 people and social distancing.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our next regularly scheduled membership meeting on June 10, 2020 at 6pm.

MetLife Legal Plans to Provide Free Legal Document Review and Consultations Through July 31, 2020

MetLife Legal Plans is helping union members and their families navigate this challenging time by offering no-cost document reviews and consultations through July 31, 2020. Union members can contact MetLife Legal Plans Network Attorneys through July 31, 2020 for no charge advice, consultations and document review for many issues, including:

- Healthcare proxies or other estate planning
- Home refinancing or personal insurance forms
- Elder law questions for caregivers

Union members will also have access to MetLife Legal Plans Self-Help Document Library to complete wills, living wills and power of attorney documents.

To access the Self-Help Document Library:

Follow this link: (<https://info.legalplans.com/Home/#tab-forms>) and enter the access code: **9790010**.

Click "Covered Services" in the top navigation and then select the "Self Help Documents" tab, and then click the "Access Now" button to browse the document library. If you need assistance, please contact Customer Service Center at 800-821-6400, Monday-Friday 8am - 8pm EDT. If you are not enrolled in MetLife Legal Plans, you will need to state you are with Union Plus and provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number, and indicate that you are interested in the document review and consultations services being offered as part of the Disaster Relief Plan.

Local 2108 Calendar

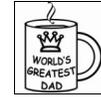
MAY 2020

- 10 Mother's Day
- 13 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am - **Cancelled**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 13 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm - **Cancelled**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 25 Memorial Day
Local Office Closed



JUNE 2020

- 3 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:30am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 5 CWA Presidents Meeting
Washington, DC
- 10 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 10 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 21 Father's Day



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, May 13, 2020, 6:00pm - Cancelled
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, May 13, 2020, - 11:00am - Cancelled



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LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President

Marilyn Irwin - President

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