

Verizon to Mandate Covid-19 Vaccines For All Employees

On October 14, 2021 Verizon announced that management and non-union employees who report to company buildings and retail stores will be mandated to be vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they have a medical or religious exemption. They also notified CWA of their intention to mandate the COVID-19 vaccine for the unionized workforce. CWA has requested to bargain over the impact that any mandate may have on our members.

In March, the CWA Executive Board issued a COVID-19 vaccine position statement which **supports voluntary vaccination programs and opposes mandatory vaccination as a condition of employment. It reiterates that employers should bargain in good faith all conditions of workplace vaccine-related policies and procedures.** CWA does recommend that CWA members be vaccinated with an FDA approved vaccine to protect themselves, their families, their co-workers, and their communities as vaccines are a proven infectious disease prevention tool.

Verizon has indicated that they need to comply with the federally mandated requirement issued by President Biden on September 9, 2021 which aims to increase the vaccination rate by requiring shots across public and private sectors.

Under the mandate:

- **Employers with 100 or more employees will be required to have their employees either be fully vaccinated or get tested weekly to come to work. Biden said the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration would implement the requirements that will affect more than 80 million workers.**
- **Federal workers and employees of contractors that do business with the federal government will be required to be vaccinated.**



Since the announcement of the Presidential mandate, there has been significant push-back with at least 20 states with Republican governors, including Arkansas, Florida and Texas, prohibiting proof-of-vaccination requirements. That means businesses, schools and local government institutions can't enforce a vaccine mandate. (The same goes for requiring face masks.) The prohibitions went into effect through either legislation or executive orders.

In one such challenge involving the Southwest Airlines Pilots Association a Texas judge last week dismissed a request for an injunction against an impending vaccine mandate brought by a union that represents pilots at Southwest Airlines, a significant blow against their attempt to sidestep President Joe Biden's mandate for government contractors.

In her ruling, Texas District Judge Barbara M. G. Lynn denied SWAPA's request for an injunction, stating it was "premature" under the Norris-LaGuardia Act, a 1932 law that gives labor unions the right to organize and strike or use other economic means to influence management.

SWAPA also had argued that Southwest violated the Railway Labor Act, alleging the airline failed to maintain a status quo during the ongoing "major" dispute between the parties. That dispute is a previous

lawsuit filed by SWAPA involving claims of unfair labor practices during Covid. "The Court agrees that it lacks subject matter jurisdiction over the parties' disputes as to the complained-of policies," according to the ruling.

But Lynn said vaccination requirements under the Biden's administration's mandate is a no-brainer: "Requiring Southwest employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19 will likewise improve the safety of air transportation, the efficiency of Southwest's operations, and further the [collective bargaining agreement]'s goal of safe and reasonable working conditions for pilots. In addition, because Southwest is a federal contractor, the Vaccine Policy is required by law," the judge said.

On August 26, 2021, AT&T informed CWA that it intended to implement a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy requiring all Wireline employees represented by CWA in Districts 3, 4, 6, 9 & CWA T&T, be vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of employment. Utilizing the Union's legal authority, in an effort to prevent the Company's proposed mandate and to provide additional protections for our members, CWA demanded that AT&T bargain over their decision to implement the policy.

CWA's National Bargaining Committee entered into negotiations with AT&T. Throughout the course of these discussions, the Union held

Verizon Vaccine Mandate (continued on page 4)

Biden's Nominees Champion CWA Concerns at the FCC

Last month, President Biden showed his commitment to bringing reliable, high speed internet service to every American by re-nominating Acting FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel and nominating Gigi Sohn to fill the FCC's vacant seat. Rosenworcel and Sohn understand our complex telecommunications and media landscape, and will champion the concerns of workers and consumers as we build back better from the pandemic.

Jessica Rosenworcel is an experienced leader with a steady hand. Since her appointment as Acting Chair in January 2021, Rosenworcel has moved quickly and effectively to help consumers during the pandemic and close the digital divide. She understands the needs and concerns of the people who are most affected by the FCC's decisions -- teachers and students, health care workers and patients, first responders and small businesses, and tens of thousands of telecom and media workers, including CWA members. Her focus on greater opportunity, accessibility, and affordability in our communications services, especially broadband services, and her tireless advocacy on behalf of workers and consumers has never been more important. Rosenworcel is exactly the kind of leader we need at the FCC.

Gigi Sohn has spent her career advocating for affordable internet access. She was a key ally for CWA members as we fought to protect jobs during the T-Mobile/Sprint merger, and she supports CWA's effort to hold broadband service providers accountable through state regulatory oversight. Her voice, experience and expertise are needed on the FCC as it tackles major issues in the years ahead.

CWA enthusiastically supports these nominations and we urge the Senate to act quickly to confirm Rosenworcel and Sohn.

Today it was announced that 5 million people globally have died from Covid-19. Sadly, this number is almost certainly an undercount due to both a lack of testing and to people dying at home without any medical attention, especially in India. While the U.S., Brazil, India, Mexico and the U.K. account for only 1/8th of Earth's population, they account for more than half of the Covid deaths. In the United States alone, over 740k lives have been lost so far, more than in any other nation. Globally, Covid is now the third-leading cause of death, after heart disease and stroke.

The good news is that we now have free, easily accessible access to a Covid vaccine. While getting vaccinated does not guarantee that we will not catch the virus, odds are it will protect us from getting so sick from the virus that we need to be admitted to an ICU or that we die. That fact is worth repeating: 99% of those who die from Covid-19 are not vaccinated.

As you can read on page one, we are currently waiting to learn what the vaccine mandate will mean to all of us. Will our choices be to get vaccinated or lose our jobs? Because of the federal mandate, that is a very real possibility. But to keep that in perspective, remember that laws have been passed for many years that require vaccines as a measure of public health. In order for any of our kids to be admitted into Kindergarten in Maryland we must prove they've been vaccinated against tetanus, diphtheria, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox and Hepatitis B. Additional vaccines are required as they get older.

CWA has heard from many of our members on both sides of the vaccine mandate issue. Some are adamant that vaccines should be a personal choice. Others want to be sure everything is being done to keep them safe in the workplace so they don't get sick or carry the virus home to their families. We understand those on both sides of this issue.

But vaccine concerns are nothing new. Refusing vaccines actually started in the early 1800s when the smallpox vaccine started being used in large numbers. In the 1970s some thought the DTP vaccine was linked to neurological disorders. My own children were born and began getting vaccines in the '80s and I remember having much anxiety about the possible side effects and a lengthy conversation with my pediatrician about the safety of the vaccines. As doctors are doing today, he assured me that the small risks were outweighed by the huge benefits. Dr. Stephen Cobb, a family medicine specialist who sat on the Colorado Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Project explained it this way: "Bottom line, vaccines are safe. They aren't perfectly safe, but complication rates are far lower in comparison to the risk of contracting a deadly infection." In the United States alone, more than 419 million Covid-19 vaccine doses have been administered to date. While there have been some reports about some temporary side effects, they pale in comparison to the reports of Covid deaths.

Again, I ask those of you who have chosen not to get vaccinated yet to do more research and to reconsider before or if Verizon issues a mandate. While CWA will fight against vaccine mandates, I'm not optimistic that we will be successful. I want everyone to be safe, and I certainly don't want anyone to lose their job. I'm sure some of you who are opposed to the vaccine will be angry with me because of this article, but please know that is not my intent. As always, I am trying to relay information to you about your job so you can make the best decision for you.

As a follow up to my article last month about the first active member of Local 2108 to pass away due to Covid-19, it was brought to my attention that Jehovah's Witnesses are NOT opposed to vaccinations. I was referred to a great website, JW.org, which explains their faith and dispels a lot of myths about their beliefs. The website explains that Jehovah's Witnesses do seek quality medical care, appreciate the many advancements of medical science to reduce the risk of serious illness, and that many of their faith choose to get vaccinated. I appreciate being provided with that website to learn more about Jehovah's Witnesses' position on vaccines.

In Solidarity,

Marilyn

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

Throughout the years, CWA retirees we have gone through many challenges together. We had the benefit of having the backing of many members of CWA to support us during these years as we fought for the benefits we enjoy today.



Today, the challenges are still present. Healthcare has always been important to us all and will remain an important issue for us as we negotiate these political times. While we must stay safe during these times, we also need to be vigilant. To ensure all retirees remain informed, The RMC will continue to have our monthly meetings on Zoom. We will continue utilizing this platform until we can be sure that it is safe for in-person meetings again.

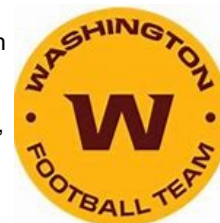
Our next meeting will be on November 10, 2021 at 11:00am. Notifications will be sent by e-mail with access information prior to the meeting. If there are login problems, please call Janice Crowe 410-533-5370 or Jenny Sylvester 301-873-9645

Stay Safe !

Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108

Support the Washington Football Team and the Community Services Agency at Fed-Ex Field

The Washington Football Team invites the Community Services Agency of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Labor to FedExField for an NFL game day experience! Come enjoy a fun filled day with friends and family on Monday, November 29, 2021 at 8:15pm against the Seattle Seahawks.



A limited amount of tickets will be sold for \$35.00 on a first come-first served basis. You will receive a confirmation email from letsgo@fevo.com immediately following your transaction. Need to purchase 10 or more tickets? Contact Christopher Carter at (301) 276-6713 or email Christopher.Carter@washingtonfootball.com

Support your team! For every ticket you purchase, \$10 will go back to the Community Services Agency!

The Washington Football Team prohibits the resale of discounted group tickets. Tickets purchased through this link are not eligible for resale. There are no refunds, exchanges or cancellations.

To purchase tickets, go to: <https://fevo.me/dclabor>

Thinking About Retirement?

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 Benefits Webinar

Thursday, November 11, 2021 at 6:30 PM - Please join this meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

To join by phone - Dial In: (267) 831-0333 or (301) 715-8592
Webinar ID - 845 6829 0686 Password: 231028

Medicare Basics Webinar

Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 6:30 PM - Please join this meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

To join by phone - Dial In: (267) 831-0333 or (301) 715-8592
Webinar ID - 870 0702 7062 Password: 712100

Reservations are required and to RSVP you may call Nettworth at (800)-859-2212, or register online at [Nettworth.net](https://www.nettworth.net).



The 78th CWA Convention, held virtually for the first time was in order to prioritize the health and safety of members, leaders and staff during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In his keynote address, CWA President Christopher Shelton acknowledged the difficulties of dealing with a global pandemic and how its impact has

been exacerbated by the ongoing challenges facing working families; namely the climate crisis, public health crisis, political extremism, attacks on voting rights, and corporate greed. President Shelton reminded delegates that "in hard times like these, our job as leaders is to nurture hope, to help it grow, to spread the spirit of hope to our members and to our communities."

"During the early months of the pandemic, having a union literally made a life and death difference to working people," said President Shelton, and then he added, "we should be so proud of how CWA responded to this crisis!"

He recognized the CWA activists who mobilized to elect pro-worker candidates like Joe Biden and win back the U.S. Senate in the last election. He encouraged all CWA members to build on this momentum and beat back the increased attacks on voting rights and our democracy. "Just as every generation has had to stand up and fight against reactionary forces that want to take us backwards, now is our time to stand up and say ENOUGH! We will not turn back. We will fight to expand our voting rights and defeat the campaign to undermine our democracy."

One of CWA's top priorities has been to counter the consequences of the ongoing pandemic and the effect it has had with day-to-day operations of the Union. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 created an unprecedented global health crisis with a serious financial impact on our union and our members. The funds freed up by the Funding Our Fight for the Future resolution allowed CWA to avoid layoffs and drastic reductions in service to locals and members in the short run. But these funds are not enough to compensate for the long-term effect of pandemic layoffs combined with workplace shutdowns and other permanent job losses.

CWA was faced with a choice: Manage the downsizing of an ever-smaller, declining union through hiring freezes and service reductions or invest in a brighter, better future for our members and all working families. The Biden administration offers a window of opportunity, and recent organizing gains have CWA poised to lead a significant rebound of worker power.

Delegates to the 78th CWA Convention adopted the Support Members and Rebuild Together (SMART) resolution that will allow for a portion of the existing Strategic Industry Funds to be allocated for direct service to members and organizing to build our power. Under the resolution, the allocated funds will be used to hire new, permanent CWA Staff Representatives and Organizing Coordinators to support locals and members by bargaining and enforcing contracts, delivering training, mobilizing, and helping workers organize. This is an important and necessary step to mitigate the financial hardship our union has faced due to the ongoing pandemic.

In other Convention action, some of the resolutions passed by the delegates:

Build Broadband Better and End Digital Divide: CWA will continue to advocate for policies and requirements at the federal, state, and local levels for public funding used for broadband infrastructure that: prioritizes the buildout of fiber optic broadband over other, inferior technologies, gives preference to high road employers who directly employ their workforce and respect workers' rights to bargain and organize, provides an active role for state and federal regulators to ensure strong accountability and oversight of the projects, and works to address affordability for all Americans.

Personals

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

John Joseph "Joe" Jordan, a retiree and father of retired member **John E. Jordan** who passed away on September 19, 2021.

Retiree **Loren Show**, who passed away on October 22, 2021.

Congratulations to:

Tamera Tyson on the birth of her son, **Ali Brown**, who was born on August 25, 2021.

Welcome to Local 2108

New Members

Tambu Hall



Brandon C. Moore
James L. Cohen
Darnell L. Jenkins
Michael D. Williams

Damon A. Smith
Imani L. Fletcher
David E. Mason



Transferred Members

Tamera Nelson

Jason Zinszer

Congratulations to Recent Retirees:



Tony Combs
Sally Young



Ending the Filibuster and Saving Our Democracy: For many years, CWA has played a key role in the broad movement working to strengthen and protect our democracy. Our priorities include expanding access to the ballot, freeing our political system from the corrupting influence of massive secret corporate spending and reforming our electoral and legislative systems to ensure that all Americans, not just the 1%, have a voice. CWA members recognize that we cannot make progress on the issues important to us -- from bargaining rights to retirement security, from health care reform to keeping good jobs in the United States -- if we don't remove the barriers that block working people from participating fully in our democracy. CWA urges passage of The Freedom to Vote Act by the U.S. Congress and will fight to repeal the voter suppression measures enacted in a number of states and to block similar pending efforts in other states. CWA demands that the U.S. Senate act immediately to change the rules of the Senate to eliminate the filibuster and allow legislation to pass when approved by a majority of Senators voting.

National Day of Action Against AT&T's Outsourcing, Job Cuts and Union Busting: AT&T promised to create 7,000 new jobs when lobbying for the 2017 Trump corporate tax cuts, and instead has CUT more than 42,000 jobs. CWA shall support a day of action in December 2021 against AT&T's outsourcing, job cuts, and union-busting, involving a range of different kinds of actions across the country fitting the needs and abilities of Locals in the area.

Additionally, CWA convention delegates passed the following resolutions: **A Path Forward to Build Worker Power, Safe, Secure, and Private Elections for National Officers, Securing Our Labor Rights in the Climate Transition, Solidarity Across Borders, Protecting Frontline Airline Members From Abusive Passengers and Violence In The Workplace, and Organizing at the Convergence of Telecommunications, Media and Technology to Build Worker Power.** You can read about these resolutions by going to:

cwa-union.org/cwa-convention-proceedings-and-biennial-reports.

firmly to their position that vaccinations should not be a mandatory requirement as a condition of employment. AT&T was just as adamant that the Company would not agree to any proposal that did not include a mandate. As a result, the parties were unable to come to terms on an agreement and reached an impasse in "Decisional Bargaining."

CWA then utilized the full extent of authority under federal labor law governing the bargaining process and impasse by immediately demanding that the Company enter into "Effects Bargaining" with the Union. The National Bargaining Committee commenced negotiations with the Company over the terms of their proposed policy, its implementation, and its effects in the workplace. During the course of these negotiations both parties have affirmed their unwillingness to move off their respective positions relative to the issue of mandatory vaccinations as a condition of employment.

As it stands today, AT&T presented the Union a "last, best, and final offer," which incorporated certain modifications to their proposed policy, based on CWA's bargaining demands. The deadline for the Company's vaccination requirement has now been pushed back from January 1, 2022, to February 1, 2022. The Company will provide employees who are not vaccinated by February 1, 2022, with a 60-day unpaid reconsideration period. Any employee who is discharged by the Company for violating their policy will be marked as rehirable. Additionally, the Company's policy will provide a process for employees to request an exemption from the vaccination requirement for both religious and/or medical reasons. However, because AT&T's last, best, and final offer still included mandatory vaccinations as a condition of employment, the CWA Bargaining Committee rejected their proposal. As a result, the parties have now reached a second impasse.

Under federal labor law, a Union and a company are required to bargain until they reach agreement or until they reach impasse. If an impasse is reached, a Company is, by law, entitled to implement its final proposal as long as it is bargained with the Union. To summarize these negotiations, because CWA would not agree to the Company's insistence on a COVID-19 vaccine mandate, the parties inevitably reached an impasse and the company intends to invoke their legal right under federal labor law, to implement their COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.

While we are waiting for final guidelines from the Department of Labor regarding the COVID-19 mandate, Local 2108 will keep all members informed of bargaining as it progresses. Updates will be posted on our website (cwalocal2108.org) as well as our Facebook page.

Local 2108 Calendar

NOVEMBER 2021

- 7 Daylight Savings Time Ends
Set clocks back 1 hour
- 10 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am - Via Zoom
- 10 Membership Meeting - Cancelled
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 11 Veteran's Day
Local Office Closed
- 25-26 Thanksgiving Holiday
Local Office Closed



DECEMBER 2021

- 8 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am - Via Zoom
- 8 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 24 Christmas Holiday
Local Office Closed
- 25 Christmas

- 31 New Year's Holiday
Local Office Closed

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, November 18, 2021 - 6:00 - Cancelled
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, November 10, 2021 - 11:00am - Via Zoom



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Local Office: (301) 595-2108 :: Local Fax: (301) 595-2412

Tamera Nelson - Vice President

LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President

Marilyn Irwin - President

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