



Communications
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I received an anonymous letter in the Local today "On behalf of the Silver Spring FSC", regarding their unfair work schedules. Since I don't know who sent the letter to respond to those individuals directly, I decided to write an open letter and post it on Local 2108's Facebook page and website. I hope those who sent the letter see my response. As always, you are welcome to call the Local and discuss any of this with me if you would like.

Before I discuss the issues you raised, I would like to begin this letter by saying that I understand your frustration and upset. I have no doubt that working until 9p, 10p or 11p each evening and three out of four Saturdays each month makes it very difficult to find any kind of work/life balance. I'm a big believer that work/life balance is necessary for our physical and mental health and happiness. I'm sure these tours make finding childcare, care for an ailing parent, or time to maintain a relationship very difficult.

It seems you believe that your Union, your Local or your Chief Steward negotiated your schedules, which is not the case at all. You work for Verizon, and as your employer, they get to decide how to run their business. It is not the case that the Union cannot or simply refuses to negotiate better work schedules for our members. We don't get to do it at all. CWA does not have a say in your office's operating hours, the number of people needed on each tour, or the number needed to work weekends. Our Contract was once described to me as spelling out the power that CWA wrestled away from Verizon in bargaining. As long as something is not a violation of the law or the Contract, Verizon gets to decide how it will be handled. Let's think about that as it applies to your schedules:

While Article 25, Section 1 (Schedules, page 50) states that "Work schedules will be established by the company.....", the Article also states when schedules will be posted and how much notice you must be given before your tour is changed. Minus sufficient notice, you have the option to choose to work both tours (the original tour and the tour they changed it to). Verizon, as the employer decides when they need their workers to work, but the Union negotiated how much notice you are given of your tour so you can plan your life. Minus this article, VZ could tell you today what time to be at work tomorrow.

Article 34, Section 5 (Seniority) states, "To the extent permitted by work requirements, service conditions and the ability of the employee, seniority shall be the controlling factor in the selection of tours..." Once again, VZ determines the tours, but the Union negotiated that they are selected by seniority. Minus this language, the boss could assign the least senior person in the work group to work the tour you want, and you couldn't do anything about it.

Actually, the Union is partly to blame for the later hours you are working, and the increase in weekend tours. In our 2012 and 2016 Contracts, we negotiated a minimum percentage of customer calls that must be answered by our members. For 2017 and each subsequent year, Tech Support Centers in the Mid-Atlantic footprint will together handle an aggregate regional call volume that is equivalent to at least **55%** of all calls originating from Mid-Atlantic footprint customers in that year that are routed through the ERS to Tech Support Centers and contractor locations. If that percentage is not reached in

any quarter, Verizon is forbidden from laying off any Tech Support Center associates holding a job title that handles calls during the next quarter. Verizon did not meet that required percentage prior to extending your office hours and increasing the Saturday tours, but they have met it since. In our 2016 Contract, CWA also negotiated the requirement that VZ hire 84 Fiber Customer Support Analysts in FSCs and EVRCs located in Potomac.

A huge amount of your work was previously done by contractors, often in foreign countries. It has been a major focus of our Union to bring as much of that work back into the bargaining unit as possible. It is my understanding that your Center has won awards based on your great work, and that the customer satisfaction scores are higher when our members answer the phones. You should be proud of your accomplishments, and how highly regarded your work is. It is in the best interest of all of us for your center to be successful, to remain open, and to grow.

You say that you are not made aware of any Union meetings or events, and are therefore denied the opportunity to offer feedback and exercise your rights. Local 2108 Membership Meetings have been held on the second Wednesday of the month since before I began attending them in 1989. The only change that has been made was the time was changed from 7p to 6p in the '90s. We are the only Local I am aware of in District 2-13 that mails a newsletter to our members' homes (and posts it electronically on our website) each month, and all meetings and events are listed there. I know you are thinking "I'm at work at 6p." You are always welcome to call the Local or to stop by to talk with your officer (or me). If memory serves me, three of your coworkers came to the Local to discuss these issues back in March.

In your letter you asked, "Why does the Union make decisions on our behalf without our input or consent, especially when the contract and decisions affect us the most?" I hope I've clarified for you that there weren't any decisions made on your behalf about the days and hours you work, as this decision rests solely on Verizon. The decision to bring work back into the bargaining unit and to hire more FCSAs was negotiated by CWA in our 2016 contract, and that was overwhelmingly ratified by our members last June.

In closing, I'd like to make two points: First, "Not caring" is different from understanding that VZ has the contractual right to determine the tours our members work, and the number of workers needed each day, including weekends and holidays. Secondly, while I empathize with the impact these new tours are having on you and your loved ones, I'm glad that you are not writing to me because you got laid off and can't support yourself and your family. Minus CWA and the language our bargaining committee was able to bargain in 2016 (thanks to those who bravely struck for forty-nine days last Spring), you might be sending me an entirely different letter. While the work you do is superior to that of contractors, without our Contract we all know that VZ could choose to take the low road and off-shore your work to folks working for a couple dollars an hour. No one wins in that case. While my letter doesn't change your situation, I hope you have a better understanding of CWA's role in it.

In Solidarity,

