

Zenimax Workers Ratify Historic First Contract

CWA Local 2108's newest members at Microsoft-owned ZeniMax Media, have voted to ratify their first union contract after two years of negotiations.

It's a historic moment for ZeniMax Workers United-CWA that will help usher in substantial across-the-board wage increases and new minimum salaries for employees.

The agreement also includes protections against arbitrary dismissal, grievance procedures, AI provisions, and a crediting policy will ensure QA workers are recognized.

The contract covers over 300 quality assurance Microsoft workers represented by CWA Locals 2108 and 2100 in Maryland and CWA Local 6215 in Texas. The vote comes less than a month after ZeniMax Workers United-CWA reached a tentative contract agreement with Microsoft—and two years after the union was formed in 2023.

Although Microsoft helped pave the way for workers to unionize by signing a labor neutrality agreement with the CWA ahead of its Activision Blizzard merger, the company has regularly been called out by employees for allegedly hampering negotiations.

Back in April, ZeniMax Workers United-CWA voted to authorize a strike and accused Microsoft of failing to address the concerns of union members.

"QA workers from across the country continue to lead the charge for industry-wide change," said Page Branson, senior II QA Tester and ZeniMax Workers United-CWA bargaining committee member. "Going toe-to-toe with one of the largest corporations in the world isn't a small feat. This is a monumental victory for all current video game workers and for those that come after."



greater.

- The job title minimums will have increased by **4%** in 2028.

Medical, Dental, Vision, and Other Benefits:

- Existing employee benefits remain unchanged for the life of the Agreement including, Medical, Dental, Vision, Life, Disability as well as a \$1000 Wellness Credit with \$500 paid out in January and June.

Artificial Intelligence (AI):

- **Microsoft's AI Policy:** Fair, Reliable, and safe.
Private and secure Inclusive - should empower and engage people.
Transparent - should be understandable.
Accountable - those who deploy AI systems are accountable for their behaviors.
- **Implementation of AI:**
AI must be "human centered."
The Labor Management Committee (see article X) will discuss AI as it relates to QA work.
The Employer shall provide notice when implementing AI and we can bargain over the effects of such implementation.

Leaves of Absence:

- **Immediate family members** - Employees will have 10 days of paid bereavement leave following the death of an immediate family member. Bereavement leave is to be taken within 60 calendar days of the individual's passing and does not have to be taken consecutively.
- **Close relatives** - Employees will have 5 days of paid bereavement leave following the death of a close relative. Close relatives are defined as cousins, sibling-in-laws, aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews.

Highlights of the General Agreement

Wages:

- **\$500** signing bonus.
- On July 1st, full-time employee (FTE) wage rates will increase by **13.5%**.
- Guaranteed annual raises are newly established and will be paid in January.
January 2026 - 1.5%
January 2027 - 3%
January 2028 - 3%
- Merit based raises are granted on top of the Annual Raise in January at the company's discretion.
- When promoted the employee will either receive a **6%** increase OR move to the new minimum for the new position, whichever is

Contracting-Out

- The company can outsource QA work, however outsourcing cannot result in layoffs or reduction of hours.

Hybrid Work MOU:

- Beginning July 1st, everyone is expected to work in-office 3 days per week.
- Initially, Wednesday is mandatory in-office, the other 2 days are the employee's choice.
- Beginning September 1st, Tuesday will also be mandatory in-office, with the remaining 1 in-office day as the employee's choice.
- All approved time off will count towards your in-office days.
- Employees may apply for a remote work status exception or other variance from this policy at any time.

Unions Push to Remove A.I. Accountability Ban From Budget Bill

In a joint letter, the AFL-CIO and 32 national labor organizations called on senators to strip a provision from the budget bill that would overrule existing state and local A.I. laws and ban any further legislative guardrails for a decade.

In its current form, language addressing the issue in the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” would bar states from enforcing regulations related to artificial intelligence (AI) or automated decision systems. This federal preemption provision would override state and local authority, stripping our communities of the ability to safeguard workers and the general public against harmful and unregulated AI use. It should be stripped from any final bill. It is one of many reasons to oppose the current legislation.

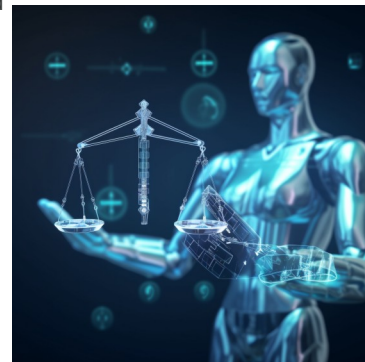
In the states, lawmakers have come together to protect civil liberties, advance worker protections and prevent discrimination in the artificial intelligence context. All 50 states have introduced legislation or regulations related to AI, algorithms, and machine learning, and around 40 have passed legislation. Many of these legislative efforts have been bipartisan. The proposed moratorium would nullify enforcement of these and any future state laws across the country, unless they fall into very narrow exceptions. States are the laboratories of democracy, and banning existing and future policymaking will shut down those laboratories and leave everyone vulnerable to wide-ranging abuses stemming from irresponsible AI.

The states’ policymaking efforts are critical. While properly regulated AI has the potential to boost productivity, it also has the potential to cause great harm to workers and the broader public if left unregulated. The examples are manifold:

- Transportation workers are seeing an onslaught of AI-enabled autonomy that opens the door to eliminating the human in charge despite the safety threats to the traveling public.
- Health care workers, such as nurses, find their schedules and patient assignments determined by secret algorithms that put speed over quality of patient care and worker well-being. AI and other technologies are also being used at the bedside to replace the clinical judgement of health care providers, and in some cases displace or deskill registered nurses, jeopardizing patient safety and quality care.
- Workers in creative industries, such as journalists, behind-the-scenes

film and television crew, writers and performers, see their work, including their likeness, being stolen by generative AI. In recent years, AI has come to directly threaten the livelihoods of creative workers and the integrity of their professions.

- Schoolteachers and higher education workers face a flood of AI technologies targeting education and even attempts by some to substitute their skill and judgment with AI technology.
- Federal workers have faced mass layoffs, with brazen attempts to replace their deep expertise with shoddy AI systems.
- Warehouse workers face technologies that create unsafe working conditions and are monitored in bathrooms at work and private spaces outside of work.
- Discriminatory hiring algorithms and surveillance systems can unfairly put entire groups of people – based on race, gender, or other protected characteristics – at a permanent disadvantage. Unregulated AI can destroy equal opportunity for all.



Artificial intelligence systems are evolving at a rapid pace. It is difficult to predict what they will be capable of or what new harms will befall people from them next year, let alone over the next 10 years. The moratorium suggests, however, that there is nothing to worry about, and we should put the interests of Big Tech over the concerns of ordinary people. The moratorium’s exceptions are so narrow that they would not save from preemption any actual guardrails against unsafe or irresponsible AI.

Federal preemption would endanger progress in the states and silence local voices responding to real-world harms from worker surveillance and algorithmic firing, to automated price and wage manipulation that undermines economic fairness, to deepfakes and disinformation that undermine safety and public trust, and to dangerous experimentation with AI-enabled automation systems. With Congress failing to enact meaningful AI regulation, states remain our last line of defense.

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!!

CWA District 2-13 Retirement Benefits

Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 6:30 PM - Via Zoom

On-line workshop for all CWA locals

Retirement Cash Flow Planning

Thursday, June 12, 2025 @ 6:30PM - Via Zoom

On-line workshop for all CWA locals

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

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



FOURTH OF JULY UNION-MADE SHOPPING GUIDE

HOT DOGS

BALL PARK (UFCW, IBT)
BUTTERBALL (UFCW, IBT)
FARMER JOHN (IBT)
HEBREW NATIONAL (UFCW, IBT)
HORMEL (IBT)
OSCAR MAYER (UFCW, IBT)

BUNS

ARNOLD (BCTGM)
BALL PARK (BCTGM)
SCHWEBEL'S (BCTGM)

CONDIMENTS

FRENCH'S MUSTARD (UFCW)
GULDEN'S MUSTARD (UFCW)
GREY POUPON (UFCW)
HEINZ KETCHUP (IBT, UFCW)
VLASIC RELISH (IBT, UFCW)

SOFT DRINKS

COCA-COLA (UAW)
7 UP (BCTGM)
A&W (BCTGM)
DR. PEPPER (BCTGM, UAW)

ICE CREAM

GOOD HUMOR (IBT)
PRAIRIE FARMS (IBT)

SNACKS

CHEEZ-IT (BCTGM)
FRITOS (BCTGM)
MISSION TORTILLA CHIPS (IBT)
RITZ (BCTGM)
RUFFLES (BCTGM)
SUN CHIPS (BCTGM, IBT)
TRISCUIT (BCTGM)
WHEAT THINS (BCTGM, IBT)

Be an Ethical Consumer
BUY UNION
Labor 411

Last year, all CWA Districts who had THRYV members, including CWA Local 2108, filed grievances against THRYV regarding the diminishment of compensation resulting from changes made to the Compensation plan in 2024. THRYV denied any violation and CWA filed for binding arbitration.



As nothing comes quickly or is guaranteed in arbitration, the parties came to a non-precedent settlement to apply the remedy at a \$2,000 formulae level vs. the \$4,000 formulae level outlined in Article 9 of the current collective bargaining agreement.

All active Sales Representatives working under the then in effect plan will receive some remedy based on results. Those who finished at the Q1 level \$3,000, Those at Q3 level \$1,000. Those at the Q2 level approximately \$ 2,000. Q4 and Q5 will receive \$ 500.

Payments will be made in two tranches at the request of THRYV for corporate cash flow purposes

Supreme Court Upholds Constitutionality of Universal Service Fund

In response to the Supreme Court's opinion issued last month in *Consumers' Research v. Federal Communications Commission* considering the constitutionality of the Universal Service Fund, the Communications Workers of America (CWA) releases the following statement:

The Supreme Court upheld what most observers know to be true: the federal Universal Service Fund (USF) is fully constitutional. As the amicus brief signed by CWA explained, "Universal service principles have been a key element of American communications policy since the nation's founding."

While the legality of the Fund's structure should never have been in doubt, the communications industry has changed since the USF was originally created in 1996. As technicians and customer service representatives in the telecommunication industry, CWA members see the positive impact of the USF every day. We also recognize that broadband internet and other emerging technologies now play a central role in our daily lives. It's time for Congress to recognize this and take action to modernize the contribution mechanism supporting the fund to ensure that these essential services are available and affordable for all Americans.

We are gratified that Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Telecommunications and Media Subcommittee, Senator Deb Fischer (R-NE) and Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), along with House Communications and Technology Subcommittee Chair Richard Hudson (R-NC9) and Ranking Member Doris Matsui (D-CA7), have re-started the Universal Service Fund Working Group. The working group puts Congress in a good position to take the action needed.

This round of litigation and briefing before the Supreme Court emphasized that support for the Universal Service Fund and the programs it supports are strong and broadly held. Companies and organizations as diverse as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the National Foreign Trade Council, NCTA – The Internet & Television Association, the School Superintendents Association and the American Library Association, filed amicus briefs in support of the constitutionality of the fund, and illustrating the many devastating consequences that would arise if it failed.

CWA members stand ready to ensure that the USF is used to provide support to building and maintaining high-quality, fiber broadband infrastructure in rural and remote areas of the country and that low-income households can afford to purchase those services. Without such a network that reaches everyone and that everyone can afford, the well-being of our communities and our nation will be under threat.

Personals

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

Member, **Tonjalei Williams**, who passed away on June 22, 2025.

CWA Condemns NTIA Changes To BEAD Funding Policies

For the past 2 years, CWA Local 2108 Legislative Committee member Marcus Chambers, has been working with Maryland Legislators to help set parameters regarding distribution of Federally approved funds to be utilized in the broadband build out throughout the state. CWA lobbied for strong labor protections, including prequalification requirements for contractors and prioritizing companies with a track record of safety and quality. Maryland was awarded \$267.7 million through the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program to expand high-speed internet access across the state. This funding is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's "Internet for All" initiative and is being administered by Maryland's Office of Statewide Broadband. The goal was to ensure that every Marylander, whether in rural Western Maryland or along the Eastern Shore, had access to reliable, affordable broadband.

Last month, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) put the interests of a few billionaires and satellite companies ahead of millions of Americans in rural communities and thousands of workers. Commerce Secretary Lutnick's attack on approved broadband projects undermines the bipartisan work of the U.S. Congress and the state governments that have invested significant resources in carefully developing programs to bring high-quality broadband and good jobs that meet the needs of their unique communities.

CWA members know that fiber is the best broadband technology of today and tomorrow. A high quality fiber network is the financially responsible choice compared to expensive and unreliable satellite service or fixed wireless. The NTIA's policy change confuses upfront costs with long-term value.

In well-considered plans, state broadband boards have addressed the need to develop the workforce to build and maintain network infrastructure, supported by labor standards and training. The NTIA's elimination of requirements for fair labor practices and workforce development plans will hinder states' ability to appropriately manage local workforce needs, or to create the good jobs that would have attracted and retained a well-trained workforce.

The bipartisan infrastructure bill made a commitment to rural communities to close the digital divide with high-quality networks and good jobs. Secretary Lutnick has betrayed this promise, and undermined the work and hopes of so many rural residents, workers, and state governments.

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

Just a friendly reminder...Our RMC 2108 Luncheon meeting will be cancelled for the months of July and August by unanimous vote at our June meeting. The next meeting will be held on September 10, 2025 at 11:00am. Have a pleasant summer and be safe. See you in September !!



Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108

The Right To Refuse Unsafe Work

Thousands of workers die or are injured because of on-the-job accidents each year. Many more are exposed to unhealthy conditions that cause serious illnesses years later.

When does a worker have the right to refuse dangerous work?

On February 26, 1980, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling which more clearly defined a worker's right to refuse work where an employee(s) has (have) reasonable apprehension that death or serious injury or illness might occur as a result of performing the work. The unanimous decision came in a 1974 case against Whirlpool Corporation in which two workers refused to crawl out on a screen from which a co-worker had fallen to his death only nine days earlier.

In its decision, the court emphasized that the OSHAct provides a worker with the right to choose not to perform an assigned task due to reasonable apprehension of death or serious injury coupled with a reasonable belief that no less drastic alternative is available. Further, the Court held that a worker who utilizes this OSHAct protection may not be discriminated against for such action.

In light of the Supreme Court's decision, what should CWA members who are faced with an imminent danger situation do?

The Supreme Court has said that a worker may refuse unsafe work where she/he has refused the job in good faith. Good faith may be interpreted as an honest belief that the job was unsafe and unusually and objectively dangerous.

Good faith can be demonstrated by the manner by which you refuse unsafe work:

- Explain the hazard to the supervisor and your steward,
- Offer to do other, safe work until the hazard is corrected,
- Give management a chance to respond before doing anything else,
- If the condition isn't corrected, call OSHA and request an "imminent danger" inspection,
- Do not walk off the job. If management won't fix the hazard, force them to take the next step. Make sure you have expressed your reasons for refusing the job and your willingness to do other work,



Local 2108 Calendar

JULY 2025

4 Independence Day
Local Office Closed



9 RMC 2108 Meeting - Cancelled
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
9 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

AUGUST 2025

10 CWA District 2-13 Annual Meeting
Pittsburgh, PA
11-13 CWA 80th Convention
Pittsburgh, PA
13 RMC 2108 Meeting - Cancelled
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
13 Membership Meeting - Cancelled
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

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, July 9, 2025 - 6:00pm
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, July 9, 2025 - 11:00am - CANCELLED



Communications Workers of America Local 2108
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