

“Voting Safely” - Make Your Voice Be Heard



According to a recent Reuters poll, 72% of Americans want an option to mail in their ballots amidst this pandemic, and for good reason. Voter's ability to mail-in their ballot, in addition to safe in-person voting locations, is a critical component of protecting voters and safeguarding democracy.

Despite the many myths about voting by mail, the reality is that absentee ballots are a safe and secure method, and do not advantage one party over the other. Even before the public health crisis, millions of voters took the opportunity to vote absentee with no evidence of serious fraud. That's because voter fraud is already punishable with serious criminal and civil penalties. Voter fraud in the United States is exceedingly rare, with mailed ballots and otherwise. Over the past 20 years, about 250 million votes have been cast by a mail ballot nationally. The Heritage Foundation maintains an online database of election fraud cases in the United States and reports that there have been just over 1,200 cases of vote fraud of all forms, resulting in 1,100 criminal convictions, over the past 20 years. Of these, 204 involved the fraudulent use of absentee ballots; 143 resulted in criminal convictions.

Let's put that data in perspective.

One hundred forty-three cases of fraud using mailed ballots over the course of 20 years comes out to seven to eight cases per year, nationally. It also means that across the 50 states, there has been an average of three cases per state over the 20-year span. That is just one case per state every six or seven years. We are talking about an occurrence that translates to about 0.00006 percent of total votes cast.

In Maryland, a recent change in the law required the State Board of Elections and each local board of elections to refer to absentee ballots as "mail-in ballots" and absentee voting as "mail-in voting." Please note that this change in terminology does **NOT** change the process of mail-in voting. But first, you have to be registered to vote. The deadline to register to vote or update your voter registration information is October 13, 2020. **To register to vote or to check your registration status, go to: <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/VoterSearch>.**

You may also register to vote or update your voter registration information in person during early voting or on election day. If you update your address on election day, you will be asked to complete a provisional ballot. An election judge will assist you with this process.

Requesting a Mail-In Ballot



Requesting a mail-in ballot is safe and easy. To vote by mail, you must request a mail-in ballot from the State Board of Elections by going to: https://elections.maryland.gov/about/county_boards.html.



You can request a mail-in ballot by mail, fax or using the online system. Your local board of elections must receive your request by October 20, 2020. If you request a ballot by mail, please leave five business days for the United States Postal Service to deliver your application to your local board of elections.

The State Board of Elections will automatically send all eligible voters an application for a mail-in ballot by first class U.S. Mail. The application comes with a postage-paid return envelope to make it easy and free to request your ballot.

Your application will arrive in the mail at the end of August or the beginning of September.

Simply fill out the application and make sure that it is received by your local board of elections on or before October 20, 2020. There is no need to wait. Return your application at your earliest convenience.

If using the online system, you may request your mail-in ballot at any time before 11:59 pm on October 20. Using the online system, you can choose to receive your mail-in ballot in the mail or by email. If you choose to have the mail-in ballot mailed to you, it will come with a pre-paid postage return envelope. If you choose to have your ballot emailed to you, you will need to print your ballot and pay the postage to return it.

Vote by Mail (Mail-in Ballot)

Maryland voters who have requested a mail-in ballot can expect to receive their ballot beginning at the end of September. If you chose to receive your ballot by email, you will receive an email with a link that will allow you to print and mail your ballot. If you chose to receive your mail-in ballot by U.S. Mail, simply follow the instructions with your ballot and return it in the postage-paid return envelope that accompanies your ballot.



Your mail-in ballot must be mailed or dropped in a designated drop box location by 8 pm on Election Day, November 3. If you mail your ballot, it must be postmarked on or before November 3, 2020 to be counted.

Returning your Ballot

First Class Mail – U.S. Post Office

CWA Local 2108 is urging all members to return their ballots as soon as possible due to backlogs at the U.S. Postal Service. Your ballot comes with a postage-paid return envelope, so submitting your ballot by mail is free. Your ballot must be postmarked on or before November 3. Putting your ballot in a mailbox on November 3 does not mean it is postmarked.

Drop Box Locations

Marylanders can use a ballot drop box to return their mail-in ballot. At least 270 drop box locations will be available statewide. Ballot drop

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boxes will be open until 8 pm on November 3. The list of drop box locations will be posted on the Board of Elections website (<https://www.elections.maryland.gov/>) and will be available to drop off mail in ballots starting in October.

Voting In Person:

Vote during Early Voting

Marylanders who would like to vote in person have the option to vote during the early voting period.

Early voting will take place over an eight-day period beginning on Monday, October 26 to Monday, November 2 (including Saturday and Sunday) from 7 am to 8 pm, with early voting centers also open on election day, Tuesday, November 3.

On early voting days, approximately 80 vote centers will be open statewide. Voters can cast their vote at any vote center in their county of residence. The list of early voting centers are posted on the Board of Elections website. <https://www.elections.maryland.gov/>

Vote on Election Day

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, The State Board of Elections is mailing every voter an application for a mail-in ballot and encouraging you to vote by mail. If you prefer to vote in person, early voting centers will be open and some (but not all) neighborhood polling places will be open on election day. You will receive a mailing in October that will tell you where and when you can vote in person.

To make in-person voting safe, voters will be kept six feet apart and number of people inside vote centers will be limited. This may result in lines and wait times. The best time to vote in person is on weekends during early voting and between 10 am and 3 pm on election day.

On election day, approximately 350 vote centers will be open statewide, including the early voting centers. Voters can cast their vote at any vote center in their county of residence, and residents in the City of Baltimore may cast their vote at any vote center in the city.

Plan ahead to determine which voting method works best for you! The list of election day vote centers will be available by following this link: <https://www.elections.maryland.gov/>. Voting centers will be open from 7 am to 8 pm on election day.

CWA Disaster Wildfire Relief Fund

The fires in California have been devastating to CWA members. An official state of emergency has been declared as there are hundreds of wildfires that continue to blaze throughout the state. More than 120,000 acres of land have been scorched in both Northern and Southern California.

Many CWA members have been left without power due to the unprecedented heatwave that has consumed the state and made the air quality reach dangerous levels. We need to come together as a family and help union brothers and sisters when and where we can.

District 9 has set up a CWA Disaster Wildfire Relief 2020 fund to help CWA members impacted by the fires. Every dollar donated to the CWA District 9 Disaster Wildfire Relief 2020 will go directly to assist CWA members in need of shelter, clothing, and household basics. It will take years for CWA families to recover and rebuild their lives. Please help our brothers and sisters by making a contribution.

You can **donate** to the wildfire relief fund by following this link: www.cwa-union.org/ca-wildfires

Checks may be made out to the CWA District 9 Disaster Wildfire Relief 2020 Fund and mailed to:

CWA Local 9404
Attn: Ginny Raines
195 Glen Cove Marina Rd, Suite 101
Vallejo, CA 94591

Trump's NLRB Launches New Attack on Workers

In Late August, the Trump appointed National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) released a series of decisions regarding COVID-19. These decisions are the first guidance that the board has given since the pandemic started in March.

In a series of five memos to their regional directors the NLRB instructed them to dismiss various cases regarding COVID-19 related charges against employers. The board concluded that an employer is not obligated to engage in midterm bargaining regarding union proposals for paid sick leave and hazard pay because of the ongoing pandemic. They also said that an employer does not have to bargain about a temporary closure.

In regards to workers speaking up about a dangerous situation on the job, the board has decided that an individual speaking out about a company's COVID safety procedure is not protected speech. This means that they can be fired by their employer. This guidance came after a case was filed by a nurse who was fired after refusing to work at a nursing home that was requiring workers to share isolation gowns.



While this decision is not unexpected by the NLRB, it does give employers much more freedom to unilaterally create work standards during COVID-19. This gives employers significantly more latitude for forcing workers into possibly dangerous workplace situations as COVID-19 continues to rage across the United States.

In light of the NLRB's decision, what should CWA members who are faced with an imminent danger situation that is Covid-19 related or any other unsafe condition?

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, clearly and in the presence of your steward and/or other workers.

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

This year has been full of many surprises, many that we did not need in our lives. But here we are and the Presidential election is near and hopefully, it will bring some positive changes to our country.

There is one thing that will not change in the immediate future, the RMC 2108 meeting scheduled for September 09, 2020 at 11:00am will still be conducted via the Zoom website. A notice will be sent by e-mail to our RMC members with access information. If you have any questions, please contact Janice Crowe on 410 - 533-5370. Be safe!!

Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108



CWA Local 2108 Officer Nominations and Election

Nominations will be conducted at the **October 14, 2020** membership meeting for the positions of President, Executive Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and the two (2) Vice Presidents. If the October membership meeting is cancelled, nominations will be held at the November membership meeting.

Any member in good standing of Local 2108 may run for office if they wish.

Candidates must be present in order to be nominated. If a candidate cannot be present due to extenuating circumstances a letter of acceptance, written and signed by the candidate, must be presented to **Christopher Smith**, Election Committee Chairperson, prior to the nominations.

Ballots will be mailed on **Friday, October 30, 2020**, and will be picked up from the Post Office and counted on **Friday, November 20, 2020**, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Nominees may observe the process of assembling and mailing of ballots and the counting of ballots, or may appoint an observer to represent them, provided that individual is a member in good standing of the Local and has a letter from the candidate appointing them as observer. This may not be done on union-paid time.

Any candidate wishing to mail campaign literature should contact Christopher Smith at the Local on 301.595.2108. The candidate should forward their stuffed envelopes or flyers to the Local. Within four business days the names and addresses of all members in good standing will be added to the envelopes. None of this may be done on union-paid time. Expenses for campaign literature and postage will be borne by the candidates.

Any members needing a duplicate ballot should contact the Local no later than noon on **Thursday, November 12th** to request it.

The election will be handled in accordance with Local 2108 Bylaws, the CWA Constitution and federal regulations. A copy of our Election Committee Rules is available on the Local website (cwalocal2108.org) and will be printed and made available at the September and October membership meetings. Any questions regarding the election should be directed to Election Committee Chairperson Christopher Smith at the Local.

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

Tuesday, September 15, 2020 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**. **Access Code: 315219**

Webinar ID - 988 4105 8973

Retirement - What to Expect Webinar

Thursday, September 24, 2020 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**. **Access Code: 832505**

Webinar ID - 912 2853 1783

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

Personals

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

Charles Pinkney, brother of member **Phyllis Pinkney**, who passed away July 31, 2020.

Louis Beach, father of member **Jane Beach**, who passed away May 24, 2020.

Coleman Peay Jr., father of member **Laura Tarrant**, who passed away January 30, 2020.

Ryan Cherry, nephew of member **Julian Hamilton**, who passed away April 3, 2020.

Ruth Griffin, mother of member **Julian Hamilton**, who passed away April 16, 2020.

Edward Barlow, a retired member who passed away July 13, 2020.

George E Pritchett, Sr., grandfather of member **Monica Browne** who passed away August 19, 2020.

Congratulations to Recent Retirees:



Michael Clark
Viola Jackson Hebron



Have You Scheduled Your "Floating Holiday" Yet?

It seems that almost every year CWA Local 2108 hears from members who haven't scheduled their Floating Holiday prior to October 1st of the calendar year and then Verizon denies that employee the ability to schedule after that date, causing them to lose it altogether. It is the Union's position that if an employee has not scheduled it by October 1st, it is the company's responsibility to notify the employee to schedule it at that time.

With that being said, CWA Local 2108 strongly suggests that all of our members working under the Verizon agreement schedule their Floating Holiday prior to October 1, 2020. This way you cannot be denied the ability to schedule your holiday. Keep in mind that you can still be required to work on your Floating Holiday. In that case you will receive holiday pay treatment just as if you worked any other negotiated holiday.

Pension Band Increases at Verizon

Per the 2018 contract extension between CWA and Verizon, on September 15, 2020 all eligible associates in the Mid-Atlantic region will see an increase of 1% across all pension bands.

In addition, if any eligible associate leaves the service of the company under a Special Enhanced Income Security Plan (Special EISP), they will automatically qualify for the next scheduled pension band increase as part of the Special EISP offer.

Are you "WEARING RED" on Thursdays?

September Membership Meeting Cancelled



Due to the increasing number of cases of Coronavirus, a motion was adopted at the July 2020 membership meeting to cancel the August and September membership meetings. Citing similar concerns, the RMC meeting for August was cancelled as well. The September RMC meeting will be conducted via Zoom.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our next regularly scheduled membership meeting on October 14, 2020 at 6pm. Officer nominations will take place at this meeting. Everyone in attendance will be required to wear a facemask and maintain social distancing guidelines.

2021 Union Plus Scholarship Program Accepting Applications Now

Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$4.8 million to students of working families who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education. Over 3,200 families have benefited from our commitment to higher education.

Eligibility

Current and retired members of participating unions, their spouses and their dependent children (as defined by IRS regulations). At least one year of continuous union membership by the applicant, applicant's spouse or parent (if applicant is a dependent). The one year membership minimum must be satisfied by May 31, 2021.

Application Timeline:

Applications are available starting in mid-June, and a complete application must be received on or before 12:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) on **January 31, 2021**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Scholarship Award Amounts:

Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2021. Students may re-apply each year.

Award date:

The Scholarship Committee will determine recipients of scholarship awards by May 31st each year.

To apply, go to:

<https://www.unionplus.org/benefits/money/union-plus-scholarships>

Local 2108 Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2020

7 Labor Day
Local Office Closed



9 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am - Via Zoom
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
9 Membership Meeting - CANCELLED
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

OCTOBER 2020

7 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:30am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
14 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
14 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Officer Nominations
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
31 Halloween



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, September 9, 2020 - 6:00pm - Cancelled
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, September 9, 2020 - 11:00am - Via Zoom



10782 Rhode Island Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705

Web Address: www.cwaincocal2108.org

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

Matt Klingman - Vice President

LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President

Marilyn Irwin - President

Printing Done In-House

Published Monthly

2108News

Communications Workers of America Local 2108

ISSN: 0162-248X

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

10782 Rhode Island Avenue

Beltsville, MD 20705-2513

LOCAL 2108

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

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