

CWA Pushes For Call Center Offshoring & Outsourcing Legislation

In the late spring of 2016, nearly 40,000 Verizon workers went on strike over Verizon's refusal to negotiate a fair and equitable contract. Negotiations had been underway for nearly a year and little progress had been made at the bargaining table.

While CWA's frustrations with the company's pay, health care and retiree proposals were foremost in calling a strike, another key factor of the 47 day walk-out centered around the off-shoring of call center jobs to locations like India, Latin America and the Philippines.

As offshoring of U.S. call center jobs skyrockets, families and communities bear the burden, while corporate profits soar. CWA President Chris Shelton explains, "In many communities, the loss of a

network of vendors. However, we have seen that when CWA mobilizes, we can protect existing jobs and bring work back into our call centers. When we went on strike last year at Verizon, we were able to prevent closure of many call centers and were able to negotiate 1,300 jobs be returned from overseas vendors. At AT&T, CWA members fought back against greedy corporate demands and as a result, recently gained additional call center positions through bargaining in the Southwest.

We need to let Congress know that keeping American workers employed and our communities strong should be their top priority. CWA Local 2108 is asking every member to visit www.savecallcenterjobs.org to sign a petition and let your elected officials know you support an end to call center offshoring.



call center means the loss of a pillar of the local economy. Lost jobs mean lower tax revenues to fund important public services. And when companies offshore U.S. jobs, it puts more pressure on workers at home to accept lower wages and benefits and poorer working conditions."

The concern that these jobs are being outsourced, or sent overseas for cheaper labor, has led to CWA's "Better Deal" campaign, and proposed bipartisan legislation, "The U.S. Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act," H.R. 1300 in the House of Representatives and S.515 in the Senate.

The act would:

- Require the secretary of labor to maintain a publicly available list of all employers relocating call centers overseas and require disclosure of their physical locations, with penalties for not doing so.
- Employers that move call centers offshore will be ineligible for federal grants and guaranteed loans. Employers that keep call centers in the U.S. will receive preference in federal contract awards.
- Employees overseas will be required to disclose their location when asked and transfer customers who request it to a U.S. based call center.

AT&T has eliminated 12,000 call center jobs since 2011, sending many to overseas vendors and Verizon continues to use a global

Verizon to Hire 260 New Techs

On August 18, 2017 Verizon notified CWA that they intend to hire an additional 260 Services Technicians in the Potomac footprint. Approximately 220 of these positions will be in the Andre Sanders and Terry Minor organizations.

Based on the information provided, Local 2108 will be getting new Services Technicians at the Trade Zone, Kirby Road, Mission, Tech Road, Wilkins Avenue and Gaither Road Garages. Verizon also indicated that they intend to hire these new technicians at the 18 month wage step rate unless their experience and/or training qualifies them for a higher wage credit. This would mean that existing technicians in those garages who are currently below the 18 month wage step, their wage rate would automatically be advanced to the 18 month rate on the progression scale. If any technician benefits from this contractual provision, their next 6 month wage progression will be from the date of this increase.

Verizon also indicated that they intend to hire an additional 40 "Term" Outside Plant Technicians, in addition to the 40 that were hired earlier this year, for the project of clearing the backlog of "double wood" transfers.

CWA Local 2108 members who have family or friends looking for jobs should encourage them to check in regularly at www.verizon.com/careers to apply for these new positions as they become available.

Pension Band Increases at Verizon

Per the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding between CWA and Verizon, on September 15, 2017 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.



My July, 2017 Letter from the President article dealt with integrity on the job, and gave examples of supervisors directing technicians and consultants to perform their work in unethical ways. To recap, I pointed out times that supervisors had told our members to use inappropriate processes which improved the supervisors' results, but put our members' jobs in jeopardy because they violated the Business Code of Conduct (BCOC). I gave examples of technicians' supervisors closing customer trouble reports and having the troubles cleared on Non-Productive Work (NPW) time, so they didn't register as "Repeats". I told the story of two newly-hired members who were terminated in the CSSC because they followed the sleazy process to place their customers' orders that the supervisor told them to follow. I lamented the fact that many of our members don't realize when the direction given to them by the boss is wrong, and could therefore result in their termination, as it is a BCOC violation.



Vice President LaTasha Carpenter and I have received numerous questions from our members in the CSSC. They are confused about when it is appropriate to give a customer a LEC credit (a monthly credit for up to 12 months, to decrease the bill), or a Post Billing Adjustment (PBA, i.e. writing off all or some of the installation charges). These members want to follow the rules and not violate the BCOC, but are confused by the mixed messages they receive from their supervisors about what is appropriate. LaTasha, the CSSC Chief Steward, Stewards and I held a meeting with the CSSC Manager and Director to achieve clarity on what sales and adjustment processes are acceptable and which are not. We asked the Director and Manager to clearly explain what is right and what is wrong to our members, to make the rules crystal clear. While the director sent an email to the office with a copy of the BCOC book attached, adding the advice to Stop, Think and Ask Questions, I'm concerned that advice may not go far enough. I'd like to share the five most important points I took from the meeting:

- Customers should always know every item being added to their account, and should agree that it be added, no matter how little it costs. Don't lock a customer into a contract, even to save them money, unless they agree to it.
- Every order should end with a full recap of all the changes being made, or the "Life on FIOS" app should be used, which itemizes the entire order for the customer to view and agree to.
- Customers shouldn't be given credits (LEC or PBAs) unless they ASK for them. A Consultant shouldn't initiate the conversation and offer credits or adjustments.
- The records should always be accurate. If you need to enter a contact number or email address in order to go to the next computer screen and the customer doesn't have one, DON'T CREATE A FICTITIOUS ONE in order to proceed. Get a supervisor to help you get to the next screen. If the information is not accurate, don't enter it!
- If you don't feel that you've had sufficient time to read and comprehend the BCOC, let your supervisor know, and time will be allocated for you to read it.

Read the Code of Conduct book. Ensure that all records you create accurately reflect what you and your customer agreed to. Ask questions if in doubt. Our customers deserve no less than that, and the job you save could be your own!

In Solidarity,

Marilyn



Don't Leave the Money on the Table

As a benefit negotiated in our 2012 contract, a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) card valued at **\$850** was issued to all full-time bargained-for employees who were on payroll on January 1, 2013. Part-time workers who were on payroll at the same time and worked at least 17 hours per week were issued an HRA card with a **\$425** value.

When our 2016 contract was negotiated, Verizon insisted that the cards were too expensive to maintain, and negotiated that the HRA cards needed to be used in full by **December 31, 2017**, or any unclaimed balance would be **forfeited**.

Verizon provided CWA with a list of all who still have money available on their HRA cards as of August 1st. In Local 2108 alone, over 625 members and retirees still have HRA cards with money available on them, ranging from \$.13 to the full \$850.00. Verizon mailed letters to the homes of all who still have money on their HRA cards, explaining that balances that remain unclaimed after December 31, 2017 will be forfeited.

These HRA cards can be used to pay eligible expenses, including medical co-payments and co-insurance, prescription co-pays, dental co-pays and vision expenses. Payments for services that were not covered by insurance or exceed coverage limits are eligible. Items such as additional contact lenses, including fluid and cleaners are also reimbursable.



Please note that if you also elected a **Health Care Spending Account (HCSA)** this year (one that you contribute to weekly from your paycheck), **you must first exhaust that 2017 HCSA balance before you can use your HRA card for reimbursement**.

To view a detailed list of eligible HCSA or HRA expenses, log on to BenefitsConnection through About You or at Verizon.com/BenefitsConnection. From the home page, go to Library<Tools & Resources< List of eligible Health Care Spending Account expenses. To view or manage your HCSA or HRA, from the home page go to VISIT Spending Accounts, and select ACCOUNTS. If you have receipts or an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) for eligible out-of-pocket expenses you have already paid, go to Common Requests, Enter New Claims to upload your itemized receipt or EOB. You can also download the form, complete it and fax it with receipts to 855.785.3471.

While you have until March 31, 2018 to submit claims for reimbursement, **HRA claims with a date of service after December 31, 2017 will be denied**. All claims filed for reimbursement require you to submit documentation (i.e., an itemized receipt or EOB) validating that the expense is an eligible health care expense, so keep all receipts!

If you lost the HRA debit card which was issued in 2013, a new card can be requested by calling the Verizon Benefits Center at 855.489.2367. Questions can be directed to the Verizon Benefits Center on 855.489.2367, to Ines Millard, our Health Care Benefits Coordinator on 888.571.7218, or to the Local office on 301.595.2108.

We fought hard to win this benefit. Don't give the money back to Verizon! Research eligible expenses and use those HRA dollars by December 31. Don't leave money on the table!

SPECIAL NOTE TO RETIREES: If you were an active employee January 1, 2013 and were issued the HRA card, but have since retired, you are still eligible to use the balance on your card, too, as long as the expenses are incurred by December 31, 2017.

CWA Local 2108 Officer Nominations and Election

Nominations will be conducted at the **October 11, 2017** 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 27, 2017**, and will be picked up from the Post Office and counted on **Friday, November 17, 2017**, 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 use the Local's facilities for the purpose of mailing out campaign literature should contact Christopher Smith at the Local on 301.595.2108. As membership list labels are no longer printed, any candidate who wishes to mail campaign literature should forward their envelopes or flyers to the Local. Within four business days the names and addresses of all members in good standing will be imprinted on the material. None of this may be done on union-paid time. Expenses for campaign literature and postage will be borne by the candidate.

Any members needing a duplicate ballot should contact the Local no later than noon on **Thursday, November 9th** 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.

Have You Scheduled Your Floating Holiday

It seems that almost every year CWA Local 2108 has to file grievances for members who didn't schedule their "floating holiday" prior to October 1st of the calendar year. Verizon then denies the ability to schedule after that date, causing our member their floating holiday altogether. It is the Union's position that if an employee has not scheduled their floating holiday by October 1st, it is the company's responsibility to notify the employee to schedule it at that time.

So to avoid dealing with this issue at all, CWA Local 2108 wants to remind all of our members working under the Verizon agreement to schedule their "floating holiday" prior to October 1, 2017. This way the company cannot deny you the ability to schedule your holiday. Just keep in mind that even though they cannot deny you the ability to schedule they can still require you to work on your "floating holiday". You will receive holiday pay treatment just as if you worked any other negotiated holiday.

Personals

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

Stanley Anderson, brother of **Tania White** who died on July 27, 2017.

Welcome to Local 2108

New Members

Tammy Nelson

Imani Quinn
Jazzmin White
Evens Ridore
Dominick Heatley
Olumide Omabanjo
Dimitrius Huntley
Bobby Ashe El
Eric Gitukui

Tony Meeks

Devin Dorsey
Juleesa Jolley
Maxwell Walker
Christopher Grimes

Rob Willis

Romell Carter
Robert Choe
Brett Nashan
Osmar Chavarria
Robert Greene
Reginald Brown



Transferred Members

Micki Wade

Norman Lyons III

Congratulations to Recent Retiree:

Victor Vanison



RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

As we watch the national news, every day we see the strong relationship corporations have developed with the Trump administration. While on the surface it seems as though many issues are dying on the vine, quietly, there have been significant legislative matters signed into law. They include tax breaks for corporations, the weakening of environmental safeguards and chipping away at workplace safety protections.



RMC 2108

As the attack on workers and safety regulations escalates, we can then understand the theme for the 76th CWA Convention, "CWA STRONG / UNION STRONG." CWA President Chris Shelton said "this will be a war to save the labor movement." The Trump regime is out to destroy unions and the RMC is going to be there to fight back! The fight is never over and we must join in the struggle to preserve good jobs for generations to come.

On different note, the 2108 RMC invites you to a special matinee performance of "DREAM GIRLS" on Wednesday, September 27, 2017 at Toby's Dinner Theater located at 5900 Symphony Wood Rd. in Columbia, Md. The doors open at 10:30am. Lunch will be served at 11:00am and the show starts at 12:30pm. To reserve your spot, make your check out to CWA RMC 2108 and mail to Janice Crowe at 2607 Chapel Lake Dr #106, Gambrills, MD 21054. Tickets are \$50.00 per person, Taxes & Gratuities are included.

Our next RMC meeting is on September 13, 2017 at 11:00am. I hope to see you all there!!

Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108

Union Plus Scholarships Available

Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$4.2 million to students of working families who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education. Over 2,800 families have benefited from the programs commitment to higher education. The Union Plus Scholarship Program is offered through the Union Plus Education Foundation.

This is a competitive scholarship. Applicants are evaluated according to academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is recommended. The required essay can account for up to half your total score. Scholarship applicants are judged by a committee of impartial post-secondary educators.

Application Deadline:

A complete application must be received on or before 12:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) on **Wednesday, January 31, 2018**. 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 2018. Students may re-apply each year.

Award date:

The Scholarship Committee will determine recipients of scholarship awards by May 31st each year. During the first two weeks of June award recipients will be individually notified by mail, and all applicants will be sent an email with notification that the award list is posted at UnionPlus.org/Scholarships.

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, 2018.
- The applicant must be accepted into a U.S. accredited college or university, community college or technical or trade school at the time the award is issued. Awards must be used for the fall of 2018 school year.

To apply for the scholarships, go to :

<http://www.unionplus.org/college-education-financing/union-plus-scholarship>

Local 2108 Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2017

4 Labor Day
Local Office Closed



13 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am

Local Office, Beltsville, MD
13 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

OCTOBER 2017

4 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:30am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

4 Finance Committee Meeting - 4:30pm

Local Office, Beltsville, MD

11 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am

Local Office, Beltsville, MD
11 Membership Meeting / CWA 2108 Officer
Nominations - 6:00pm

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 13, 2017, 6:00pm
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, September 13, 2017, 11:00am



10782 Rhode Island Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705

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Matt Klingman - Vice President

LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President

Marilyn Irwin - President

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