

CWA LOCAL 2107

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Bargaining

From the National

Verizon workers from five states and Washington D.C. rallied alongside consumer advocates and community organizations in front of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) today to urge regulators to put conditions on the proposed anti-competitive deal between Verizon subsidiary Verizon Wireless and Big Cable.

CWA representatives and Verizon workers also met with FCC officials to explain why the FCC needs to impose conditions on the deal to ensure it is in the public interest. CWA members also delivered petitions and handwritten letters of concern to FCC officials from more than 130,000 workers and consumers. In addition,

they distributed copies of a new report, "Slamming the Door on Our High Speed Future." which details how the proposed deal will destroy jobs and widen the digital divide. The Verizon Wireless-Big Cable proposal—which in its current form would allow the companies to cross-market each other's products, thereby eliminating competition—would kill or prevent the creation of thousands of jobs, widen the digital divide between cities and wealthy suburbs, reduce consumer choice and raise prices. Verizon has cut 14,750 jobs of frontline wire line workers in the eight states and Washington D.C. in its East Cost landline footprint since

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Union Solidarity

By Shannon Opfer

Have you heard about the At&t employee who requested representation and was denied, then fired? Hundreds of installers and repair techs walked off the job in solidarity with their union brother. American Airlines is blatantly defying the law by refusing to allow the union access to their employee roster so they can have a fair election.

Across the country unions are being painted as the enemy of the people, which baffles me. Unions are the only ones looking out for the people. There would be no 40 hour work week, no paid holidays, no child labor laws, no safety regulations, no nothing without unions. Things have gotten to the point where its commonly believed we don't need unions anymore. **WE HAVE NEVER NEEDED THEM MORE!**

Corporate greed is out of control. Companies that are going bankrupt have executives with golden parachutes while the general employees have no protection whatsoever. Does anyone really need 7 millions dollars a year? It would be nice, but we all seem to survive on far less. And that's what McAdam made *before*. Now

he is making three times that. But we are being too greedy trying to keep what we and those who have come before us have fought so hard for.

People across the country are giving away the rights unions fought for everyday. Not taking a lunch? Unions had to fight for that. Working overtime for more money? Unions fought for that. Vacation time? Unions. Healthcare? Unions. Pensions? Unions. Trust me, I can do this all day.

The decline of union membership in this country is appalling, and it directly corresponds to the decline of the middle class. In other countries where unions are still flourishing, people are respected for the work they do. If there is a problem, the entire country shuts down. If we could stand together maybe we could really improve the conditions here for the middle class instead of just paying it lip service. Believe me, if we don't stand up for ourselves now no one else will. We can't forget there are so many more of us than them. If we stand together nothing can stop us. Remember, an insult to one is an insult to all!

President's point of view

Dog days of Summer

It's hot! Getting hotter! Summer months are upon us and we need to take time to reflect where we are with the companies that we work for. Do they have your best interest at heart? Tough question! On the Verizon side, we come up on our 1 year anniversary from the start of bargaining. Last year, bargaining started on June 22, 2011. We went on strike for two weeks just to get the company to sit down and talk to us. So I'd have to say no, Verizon does not have our best interest any where near what passes for their heart.

If I have one more member say, "If we had just stayed out one week longer, we would have had a contract", I'm going to scream. That ship has left the port. Hindsight is twenty twenty. So what do we do now? We have lots of ideas, but the numbers of members who are participating are pathetic. The executive board can't do it all. We appreciate those of you who have joined us on our informational pickets every Thursday afternoon, but we could name you all and it wouldn't take up more than two lines. Three people standing on the sidewalk waving doesn't make a difference. Twenty people standing on a sidewalk is bound to get someone's attention. That's how it starts. A majority of people don't know that we still don't have a contract.

Maybe we could get that message out better if there were more of us standing there waving.

Onto our brothers and sisters at At&t Mobility. We would love to start seeing a few of you at meetings. Where are you? In case you are unaware, your contract expires on 2/9/13. I hope you don't have to go through what Verizon and many other unions are struggling with in negotiations right now. Be prepared. Does At&t have your best interest at heart? We'll have to wait and see.

Across the country unions are struggling to survive. We fight for the rights of the working class, and yet we are cast as the villains in the media. Car companies losing money? Unions. Students not doing as well in school? Unions. Airlines failing and charging more? Unions. Why no one ever looks at the ridiculous salaries the upper echelon of these companies is receiving is beyond me. We all know the deal. We need to get out there and spread the message we're the ones trying to ensure a better future.

So with that in mind, stay cool. Good luck to all of us, we're going to need it. Let's hope good news is around the corner.

In Solidarity,
Daryl Winter

No Cost Benefits

We are pleased to announce that at NO COST to you CWA 2107 has obtained an increased Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefit in the amount of \$4,000 for members. This benefit is being provided to each active member or retiree. In addition, you are eligible to participate in the Health Services Discount Plan. This plan provides you and your family with substantial discounts on the following services, Eye Care, Chiropractic Care, Prescription Drugs and Hearing Aids all at NO COST. An optional Dental Discount is also available with an activation fee. These benefits are being provided through the cooperation of CWA 2107 and American Income Life Insurance Company. American Income Life a 100% Union Company is rated A+ "Superior" by A.M. Best Company, its second highest rating for overall financial strength (as of 6/03). American Income has been doing business for more than fifty years serving Union members and their families in the spirit of **BE UNION - BUY UNION - BUILD UNION**. The company and their programs are presented to help our members and families. This benefit is in addition to your current benefits and does not replace any benefit currently in affect. You and your family may qualify for additional insurance benefits at this time. Please take a few minutes and listen to the AIL representative who will be calling on you. A notification of these benefits will be arriving via mail in the near future. All interested members should return the reply card. As always, there is no obligation.
PLEASE DIRECT ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE TO Jessica Ingerick, Public Relations Representative of American Income Life at (315) 719-2946.

Bargaining

By Scott Pruett

We first need to keep in mind we are all in this together. It is not just the executive board, but all the members. **WE ARE THE UNION.**

I want to extend my thanks to the bargaining committee for taking a year out of their lives to try and secure a equitable and fair contract. These people have given up time with their families, the comfort of their homes and probably the lining of their stomachs to try and get us a contract. Unfortunately they can't do it by themselves.

Its going to take all of us to do whatever it takes to get this done. We need to let the company know everyday, we are not going to let them divide us. We are not going to stand for their retrogressive demands. We all have contributed to the success of this company. Its not all about the wireless side of the business. We all need to get more involved so these negotiations can come to an end with a fair contract.

Every Thursday here in Annapolis, we will be walking after work. All we are asking for is an hour of your time. If you can't give us that, call us, let us know what you can do. July 22, 2012, we are trying to get together a trip to go to Smith Mountain Lake to join in a pontoon boat flotilla. If you are interested in joining us, please let us know as soon as possible. We need to know how many boats and transportation vehicles we need to set up.

Time continues to pass, and there is no end in sight. If this thing is going to come to an end, we need to stand up and push back!

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2010, and the proposed deal would cost more jobs as the company loses the incentive to expand its FiOS service to new areas.

“At a time of high unemployment, it’s especially important that the FCC consider the jobs impact of this transaction,” said CWA Telecommunications Policy Director Debbie Goldman. “The deal in its current form would have a devastating impact on communities across the county, as tens of thousands of jobs are lost or not created. Jobs should not be sacrificed so that Verizon and Big Cable can profit from anti-competitive practices.” Employment-related issues have historically been part of the FCC’s public interest review—most recently when the agency reviewed the proposed merger between AT&T and T-Mobile last year.

At the rally, workers stressed the negative jobs impact of then potential deal. “I’ve been sent to work on the FiOS build in the Buffalo suburbs, in Westchester County, Queens, and in the suburbs around my hometown of Albany,” said Adrian Crisp, of CWA Local 1118, where he has been working as a Splicer for 18 years. “The one place I have not been sent is top the City of Albany itself. With this Verizon Wireless-Big Cable deal, we’ll never see FiOS in Albany and other cities. That means there will be less work for me, my wife – who also works at Verizon – and thousands of my co-workers.”

“Companies like Verizon, Cox, and Comcast that have enjoyed monopoly arrangements in Virginia and elsewhere for many years have turned their backs on their employees and this impacts the service we provide customers,” said Richard Hatch, president of CWA local 2201 in Richmond, Virginia. “Verizon has cut more than 1,800 wire line jobs of frontline workers in Virginia so far this year. If this deal goes through, and Verizon’s subsidiary Verizon Wireless sells Cox and Comcast service, we’ll see even more job cuts.”

Consumer advocates from leading organizations including the Consumer Federation of America also voiced their concerns about the deal at the rally. “Consumers and Labor have a common interest in ensuring a dynamic and competitive telecom sector,” said Mark Cooper, Director of Research for the Consumer Federation of America, who spoke at the rally. “As it stands, this deal strangles any hope of competition.”

“Expanding broadband and providing high speed internet services to communities is a critical part of our economic recovery and solving our climate crises,” said Maragrete Strand Rangnes, Director of Labor, Workers’ Rights and Trade Programs for the Sierra Club. “Broadband expansion means reduced carbon emissions, millions of fewer cars on the road, energy efficiency and economic development. The proposed deal could block expansion and stifle progress in these areas.”

If the current deal is approved without conditions, Verizon will lose the incentive to follow through with an expansion of its FiOS service—the nation’s largest all-fiber optic commercial network—to customers and communities that do not currently have access to it. More than 7 million customers—30 percent of the area Verizon now covers with landlines—will be left without the FiOS option for high speed internet and TV. Thousands of construction techs, cable splicers, installation techs, and call center and support workers in communities across 12 states and Washington D.C. will lose jobs if Verizon ceases its FiOS build-out as a result of the deal. The jobs impact will be particularly pronounced in cities like Boston, Baltimore, Syracuse, Buffalo, Albany, and other urban areas where Verizon has not yet built out FiOS to make it available to local consumers. There will also be multiplier effects as these workers lose their jobs, creating further job losses in the fiber optic and telecom sectors as well as other industries.

In the face of mounting public concern over the proposed deal, the FCC decided last month to “stop the clock” on its 180-day review of the deal, giving regulators more time to consider the potential impact of the deal on consumers and under-served communities. Elected officials, consumer advocacy organizations, civil rights organizations, smaller cable providers, telecom workers and consumers have formed coalitions in cities across the northeast where Verizon has failed to build its high-speed FiOS network to push regulators to impose conditions on the deal.

Today, Representative Edward J. Markey-- one of the authors of the 1996 Telecommunications Act--and John Conyers, Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, released a letter calling on the FCC and Department of Justice to scrutinize the deal. Earlier this year, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino detailed the economic dangers of the deal for urban areas in comments to the FCC and last month, nine mayors of cities in New York state signed on to a letter to the Department of Justice and the FCC, expressing deep concern that the deal would have a devastating impact on their communities. Also last month, Senator Herb Kohl of Wisconsin added his voice, raising concerns in a letter the Department of Justice and the FCC.

Help Wanted

Have you ever had an interest in becoming a steward? Right now we are scheduling classes. If it is something that you might want to pursue, please contact the hall. The more people we have familiar with the contract and the ins and outs of how it works, the better we all are.

Also if you are interested in politics, or community service or anything else we do, please get involved. Everyone has talents we need to use. Whatever you really enjoy doing, we probably have a committee that could use your talents. The more people involved, the better our local operates.

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We're on the web at
cwa-2107.org

Check out our Facebook Page

Calendar

- 6/22/12 AFL-CIO Night at Camden Yards 7:05pm
6/22/12 One year anniversary of beginning of bargaining
7/4/12 Bargained for holiday for July 4th
7/11/12 Northern Area Meeting 4:30 p.m.
7/20/12 RCMC Crab Feast 11:30 am-2:00 pm

Please check the calendar on the website for any changes or additions.

Sympathies to:

Bryant Myers

Get Well to:

Eddie Miller
Frank Svoboda
Ricky Hamrick
Lynette Snell