



The Employee Free Choice Act

from Ernie Grecco, President of the Baltimore Council, AFL-CIO

The Employee Free Choice Act (S. 1925, H. R. 3619), sponsored by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Rep. George Miller (D-CA), ensures that when a majority of employees in a workplace decides to form a union, employees can do so without the debilitating obstacles employers now use to block workers' free choice.

This legislation presents an exciting opportunity to strengthen the rights of workers to choose a union freely, and we must obtain firm commitments from our elected officials at all levels to take a clear stand in support of this bill.

To date, the only Maryland Democrat in the House of Representatives that has not signed on as a co-sponsor is C. A. "Dutch" Ruppberger. We urge you to write Representative Ruppberger and urge him to support EFCA. Also, we suggest that you thank Senators Sarbanes and Mikulski, Representatives Cardin, Cummings, Wynn and Hoyer for their support of this legislation.

Get involved by contacting your U.S. Senators or U.S. Representatives and urge them to co-sponsor the Employee Free Choice Act. This legislation will help restore to workers in Maryland and across the country the fundamental freedom to form unions.

Today, U.S. workers are routinely denied the fundamental human right to form unions to

improve their lives. Over the past six decades, anti-worker legislation, employer manipulation and ineffective enforcement of labor laws have eroded workers' legal protections. Most efforts of workers to form unions are met with fierce employer opposition, often including brutal and illegal tactics. The freedom to form unions and bargain collectively is a fundamental human and constitutional right; however, no less an authority than Human Rights Watch finds this vital freedom for working people is massively suppressed in the United States.

In fact, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the right to form and join trade unions, a right that was recognized by the U.S. Government 13 years earlier in the National Labor Relations Act.

The consequences of suppressing workers' freedom to form unions are severe. Union jobs pay 27 percent more than nonunion jobs -- \$760 per week versus \$599 per week in 2003, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Workers losing the freedom to form unions is an important reason wages are lower than in 1973, as shown by the U.S. Department of Labor -- despite the fact worker productivity has risen by two-thirds since then. Middle-class jobs and lifestyles are under attack due to the widespread denial of workers' freedom to form unions.

As workers lose the freedom to form unions, society's safety net weakens, race and

gender pay gaps widen and income inequality increases. Associating the U.S. Department of Labor, African American workers make 35 percent more with a union and Latino workers earn wages that are 51 percent higher with a union. The union wage advantage is 33 percent for women workers.

Collective bargaining also makes a huge difference in workers' access to decent pensions and health insurance coverage. Union workers are 53 percent more likely than nonunion workers to get health insurance benefits through their jobs and are nearly five times more likely to have guaranteed, defined-benefit pension plan coverage. Unions and collective bargaining are vital to preventing large, profitable low-wage employers such as Wal-Mart from shifting the costs for health care of their employees to more responsible employers and the public.

Suppressing the freedom to form unions also harms political participation and weakens a vital counterweight against unbridled corporate power. Perhaps most serious of all, workers are denied a voice in their workplace to shape the terms and conditions of employment and are forced instead to submit to arbitrary, unchecked employer authority.

Protecting workers' freedom to form unions is the union movement's highest legislative priority. We cannot rest until the Employee Free Choice Act becomes law.

The CWA/Principal Financial Group American Dream Vacation

We are pleased to announce this very exciting and worthwhile joint promotion to benefit charity — the CWA/Principal Financial Group *American Dream Vacation* Giveaway. One of our lucky members will win a trip to Hawaii while two runners-up will be able to choose other vacation packages to destinations such as Florida, Las Vegas or New York City.

Entering to win is easy:

1. Contribute to your favorite 501© (3) charity.
2. Get a written acknowledgement of the amount of your donation from

the charity.

3. Send a copy of the acknowledgement along with an official entry form to Principal Financial Group, P.O. Box 4968, Des Moines, IA 503064968.

For each \$10 donated to the charity, the member will receive one entry in the drawing. Members may enter as many times as they wish, although they only need to complete one entry form.

While members can donate to their favorite charity, CWA's charity of choice is the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

Four Day Trial for FTTP

A four day workweek trial has been bargained for people working on the FTTP project in Maryland. The agreement is in accordance with the Letter of Understanding on page 135 of the 2000 contract. (The 2003's are coming out now)

The tour will be voluntary, you can choose to work a five day week if you wish. The four day week will be Mon-Thurs.

If you would like a copy of the agreement to go along with what you have in the contract call the office and we'll get one out to you.

E-mail Addresses

President: Denise A. Burns
dburns@cwa-2107.org
EVP: Ray Pomeroy
rpomeroy@cwa-2107.org
Sec-Treas: Donna Blanchard
dblanchard@cwa-2107.org
Northern VP: Al Schuitema
aschuitema@cwa-2107.org
Southern VP: James Padgett
jpadgett@cwa-2107.org
Cingular VP: Vacant
Editor: Ray Pomeroy
newsletter@cwa-2107.org

General Mailbox
cwa2107@starpower.net



LOCAL 2107 NEWS
Published Monthly By
**Communications Workers
Of America
Local 2107**

Affiliated with the AFL-CIO

Officers:

President-Denise Burns
Secretary/Treasurer-Donna Blanchard
Executive Vice President-Ray Pomeroy
Vice President South-James H. Padgett
Vice President North-Al Schuitema
Cingular Vice President-Vacant
Editor-Ray Pomeroy
Assistant Editor-Ellen Johnson

(ISSN 0890-8532) Periodical Postage
Paid at Annapolis, MD. 21401
Office Located at:
2441 Holly Ave
Annapolis MD 21401-3116
Phone: 410-224-0166
Fax: 410-224-0165

Postmaster, send changes to:
Local 2107 NEWS
2441 Holly Ave.
Annapolis, MD. 21401-3116



President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

What happened to the American Dream? It has been downsized and outsourced. As a union officer it is my job to tell you what we are up against. Let me give you some statistics to digest.

In the late 1950's Union's were at their strongest in the U.S. at a peak of 35%. At the end of 2003, the percentage is down to 12.9. Unionized, private-sector workers are down to 8.2 percent, while the public-sector is running at 37.3%. Among the major private industries, transportation and utilities have the highest union membership rate at 26.2%.

What does this mean? It means that we have to look out for our Union and ourselves. Unions have long fought the battle for society and made it better. Wages, child labor laws, the 40 hour work week, overtime, benefits, pensions, safety and on and on. We bring the standard of living up.

Our work in the Verizon core company is changing. It is clear where the company is going. We have several tasks ahead of us. First, we need to be vigilant in watching who is doing our work. All work that is given to contractors needs to be reported. With FTTP here and with a reduced workforce, who do you think the company is going to give the work to? We already know that they have sent EA work to India. It is very easy for the company to route calls wherever they want them to go. This means all call centers are in jeopardy.

We already have some moves happening in the CSSC and RSC's. The company's intent is to have mega centers. Our Annapolis CSSC consultants are moving to Calverton and the Calverton SRC consultants are moving to Annapolis. They also intend to move the LaPlata SRC consultants to Annapolis. You may say, that doesn't affect me so why should I be concerned? Technicians beware, with FTTP do you know where you will be told to report tomorrow?

What happens to one of us happens to all of us, eventually. Maybe technician's jobs won't end up overseas but with new technology they will certainly be downsized. Every one needs to participate in protecting our jobs, our Union and our welfare. We need to be proactive in the workplace to keep our jobs here. We need to promote unionism, not just for us but for the country. We need to talk to the people at Verizon Wireless to help them understand that joining together with us will help all of us in the future. We need to pay strict attention to which politicians will protect our jobs here at home as well as our rights to have a union..

*First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out--
because I was not a communist;
Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out--
because I was not a socialist;
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out--
because I was not a trade unionist;
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out--
because I was not a Jew;
Then they came for me--
and there was no one left to speak out for me.*

Pastor Martin Niemöller

Let's not wait until we turn around and see that no one is standing behind us and supporting our issues. If each one of us takes responsibility to do our small part it will benefit all of us.

"Employers and employees alike have learned that in union there is strength, that a coordination of individual effort means an elimination of waste, a bettering of living conditions, and is, in fact, the father of prosperity"

Governor Franklin D Roosevelt

In April, Eddie Miller from Annapolis found contractors doing fiber work in Montgomery County, where he is currently loaned and Gary Sheirburn and Jason McLaughlin found a contractor doing fiber work in Southern MD. That work isn't supposed to be contracted out at all according to the Broadband agreement. If they're using contractors for work that is guaranteed ours then it is likely the company will be using more and more contractors for our other work. We can't afford to lose any work (work=jobs) so we need to hear about **any** contractors we find doing it.

Report them to the local office or your steward along with any details you can get.

Protect Yourself from Identity Theft Part II

If you think your ID has been stolen:

TDD: (800) 972-0322

Immediately contact the fraud departments of any one of the three major credit bureaus to place a fraud alert on your credit file and Social Security Number. The fraud alert requests creditors to contact you before opening any new accounts or making any changes to your existing accounts. As soon as the credit bureau confirms your fraud alert, the other two credit bureaus will be automatically notified to place fraud alerts, and all three credit reports will be sent to you free of charge.

Equifax - www.equifax.com

To report fraud, call: (800) 525-6285 and write:

P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374-0241
Hearing impaired call (800) 255-0056 and ask the operator to call the Auto Disclosure Line at (800) 685-1111 to request a copy of your report.

Experian (formerly TRW) - www.experian.com

To report fraud, call: (888)-EXPERIAN (397-3742) and write:
P.O. Box 9530, Allen TX 75013

Trans Union - www.transunion.com
To report fraud, call: 1-800-680-7289 and write:

Fraud Victim Assistance Division, P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92634
TDD: (877) 553-7803

Social Security Administration (fraud line):
(800) 269-0271

File a police report. Get a copy of the report to submit to your creditors and others that may require proof of the crime.

File your complaint with the FTC. The FTC maintains a database of identity theft cases used by law enforcement agencies for investigations. Filing a complaint also helps us learn more about identity theft and the problems victims are having so that we can better assist you. Contact the FTC Identity Theft Hotline by phone at (877) ID-THEFT (438-4338); TDD: (202) 326-2502 or by mail: Identity Theft Clearinghouse, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580 or online at: www.consumer.gov/idtheft.

Retirees Corner

The April meeting was lively, informative and was well attended. We enjoyed a nice lunch, served by Denise, courtesy of our union.

Helen Gibson, liaison for CWA and the RMC, spoke on some important retirees issues. Helen also gave us some history of the Retirees Members Council (RMC) and its work.

Sue Anderson will be speaking at our May 10th meeting.

Bring a retiree friend on May 10th, 10AM and find out what Sue has to say.

More Colonoscopy Info

Members, who are directed by their physician to have a colonoscopy, can take a *chargeable* sick day. Prior to this change in benefit, a member would have to take a vacation day, an excused paid day, or an excused without pay day on the day of the scheduled procedure. If you have this procedure scheduled and have a problem reporting this time as a chargeable one day of absence, have your supervisor contact Labor Relations.

Bill Sonnik, Benefits Coordinator, adds; "if there is an underlying condition, e.g. irritable bowel syndrome, diverticulitis, polyps or the like, FMLA time may be possible depending on how the cert form is filled out. Encourage your members who have this procedure done to call me at 888-571-7218 and we can chat to see if FMLA may be an option."

Union Night at The Yard

Peter Angelos and the Baltimore Orioles are hosting AFL-CIO Night at Camden Yards on July 9, 2004. The Birds will be playing the Kansas City Royals that night and it is expected that thousands of your union Brothers and Sisters will be there.

Anita Riley, Secretary Treasurer, UFCW Local 27 will sing the National Anthem and another union member will be selected to participate in the first pitch ceremony.

Regular \$15 Upper Reserve tickets will be sold for \$5 a ticket. Our initial purchase must be a minimum of 50 tickets or more and will be first come first serve.

If you are interested or have a group that's interested you need to get your order and your money to the local by May 26.

If you are in another local please contact them for your tickets.

Cingular Health Plan Changes

The Cingular members of CWA have narrowly approved the changes to their National Bargained Health Plan Contract. The results:

Yes—1421

No—1243

NALC Food Drive

The National Association of Letter Carriers is holding their 12th Annual Food Drive on May 8. The following is an excerpt from a letter CWA President, Morton Bahr sent out encouraging our participation; Your participation is as simple as leaving a bag of non-perishable food either at your mailbox or the Post Office in your neighborhood on May 8, 2004. I encourage each of you to support the Letter Carriers in this important effort through your individual participation as well as contacting your members to encourage their participation.

Ashcraft & Gerel Scholarships

ASHCRAFT & GEREL, LLP is sponsoring two scholarships, one for undergraduate students, and another for post-graduate students. Each scholarship is in the amount of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00). Applications must be received by August 20, 2004, and winners will be selected on or about Friday, September 24, 2004.

All applicants must be members in good standing of a Baltimore Area AFL-CIO affiliated union, or someone in the immediate family of a member of the participating union. When your members apply, they will need some official of your local to verify that membership on the application form.

Call 410 539-1122 for an application kit. The receptionist will send them out to you, usually on the same day.

We Can't Wait at Verizon

Verizon members should have received a brochure on "Fighting for Jobs & Bargaining Power" at their work locations. Please fill out the card in the back and return it to your Steward ASAP we need them at the Local by May 14.

Thanks to everyone who turned in their proxies for D2 to take to Richmond.

Scholarships

The Bowl-A-Thon raised \$560.00 for the Roberta Mervine Scholarship Fund. Thanks to all for helping. Donna Blanchard would like to thank the Annapolis garage for their support for the bowl-a-thon.

Congratulations to:

Joey Roberts on the birth of his daughter
Bill Cullember on the birth of his daughter

Sympathies to:

Theresa Day on the death of her mother
Steve Shlagel on the death of his father

Get Well to:

Bob McMunn recovering from eye surgery

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

06-08 Combined Membership Meeting

Other Meetings

05-10 Retiree Meeting
05-25 Executive Board Meeting
06-11 Presidents Meeting

Other

05-12 Blood Drive Riva
05-18 Deadline newsletter
05-25 thru 5-27 Advanced Stewards training

Information

We have discount tickets for Six Flags and Hershey Park

Happy Retirement to:

Kara Erwin

«FirstName» «LastName» «Suffix»
«StreetAddress»
«DeliveryAddress»
«City» «State» «Zip+4»

THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS of AMERICA LOCAL 2107
2441 Holly Ave
Annapolis MD 21401-3116
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Periodical Mail
POSTAGE
PAID
at
Annapolis MD
ISSN 0890-8532