

Can Labor Unions Expect More of the Same the 2nd Time Around

When Donald Trump ascended to the presidency in January 2017, it was expected that his administration would bring with it a sharp shift in policy, especially when it came to labor and working-class issues. While Trump promised to be a president who would fight for “forgotten Americans” and bolster job growth, his approach to labor unions proved to be anything but a boon for organized workers. His policies, appointments, and rhetoric presented a challenging future for unions, especially when dealing with issues advocating for workers’ rights and higher wages.

If you recall the early days of the Trump presidency, the writing was on the wall for organized labor. One of the administration’s first actions was to appoint pro-business leaders to key positions within the Department of Labor and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). These individuals, many with little regard for union interests, were quick to reverse Obama-era policies that had favored labor protections. The most glaring example was the NLRB’s rollback of regulations that had made it easier for workers to form unions. Trump’s appointees on the board moved swiftly to erode workers’ ability to organize, limiting the scope of collective bargaining and making it more difficult for unions to protect workers from unfair practices.

The administration’s stance on “right-to-work” laws, a policy that undermines union power by allowing workers to benefit from union contracts without joining or paying dues, further undermined unions’ bargaining power. Trump expressed support for these laws, which were already gaining traction in Republican-controlled states, such as Michigan and Wisconsin. Right-to-work laws create a situation where unions must negotiate on behalf of all workers, but with fewer resources to do so, leading to weaker bargaining positions and often lower wages for all.

Perhaps the most telling indicator of the Trump administration’s approach to unions was its relationship with the labor movement. While Trump attempted to appeal to blue-collar voters and even made gestures to unionized workers, such as his support for certain trade tariffs, his policies ultimately favored big business over labor. His tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy led to record profits for companies, but did little to improve conditions for workers. The administration’s attempts to deregulate industries and limit the power of agencies like the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) exposed workers to greater risks on the job, all while diminishing the role of unions in advocating for safer working conditions.

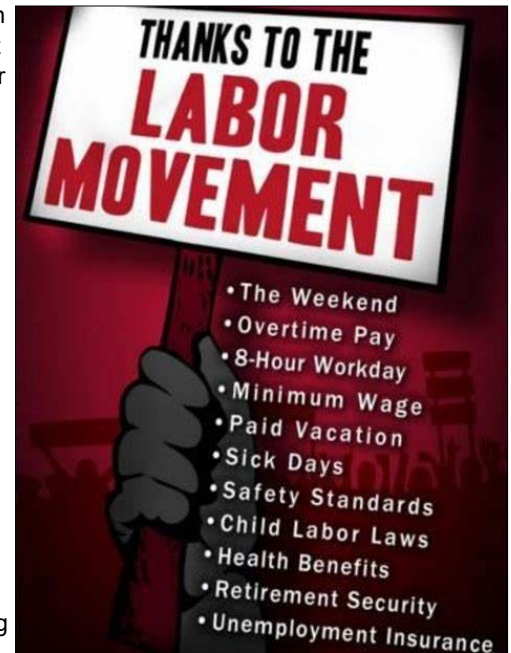
In addition, Trump’s trade policies, while aimed at bringing jobs back to America, also had unintended consequences for labor unions. The trade war with China and other nations disrupted supply chains, leading to job uncertainty and layoffs in sectors like manufacturing. Unions in those industries, which had once fought for fair wages and benefits, found themselves in a constant battle to maintain job security amid shifting economic conditions. This uncertainty contributed to a broader erosion of worker confidence, making it harder for unions to effectively organize and maintain influence.

The Trump administration also proved to be a direct adversary of public sector unions. The Supreme Court case *Janus v. AF-SCME*—which was decided in 2018, was a major blow to organized labor, ruling that public employees could not be forced to pay union dues, even if they benefited from union-negotiated contracts. This decision, bolstered by the Trump-appointed conservative majority on the Court, severely weakened the financial foundation of public sector unions, which were already facing significant challenges in the face of austerity politics at the state and local level.

That said, labor unions adapted and found ways to fight back. It was a mistake to ignore the potential for labor unions to adapt and thrive even in a hostile political environment. The rise of grassroots organizing, particularly among younger workers, is a testament to the fact that unions are not a relic of the past. In industries like fast food, retail, and tech, workers are increasingly finding solidarity through informal organizing and social media campaigns. The fact that Amazon workers in Bessemer, Alabama, attempted to unionize during Trump’s presidency is indicative of a larger trend, one that shows that workers, despite the challenges, continue to seek representation and better conditions.

The first Trump administration’s impact on labor unions was largely negative, with a concerted effort to diminish their power through policies, appointments, and legislation. However, the resilience of the labor movement, especially in the face of adversity, suggests that unions will continue to evolve. CWA, along with many other unions made significant strides during the Biden administration and helped re-grow the labor movement.

Whether we see another anti-worker term like the last Trump presidency, or one that is actually geared to help working Americans, one thing is certain, workers will continue to fight for their rights, regardless of who is in the White House.



Are you “WEARING RED” on
Thursdays?

After 18 months, Zenimax Bargaining Pushes for the Finish Line

As of January 2025 and over 18 months of bargaining, CWA and Zenimax are still negotiating in an effort to reach a historic first agreement.

Zenimax Media, known for developing popular video games such as The Elder Scrolls and Fallout, was acquired by Microsoft in 2021. However, even after this acquisition, employees at Zenimax studios have been working on unionizing efforts, with the playing a key role in advocating for workers' rights within the gaming industry. CWA has been focused on organizing workers in the video game industry, an area historically known for its lack of union representation.

Employees at Zenimax, particularly from studios such as Bethesda Game Studios (responsible for Skyrim and other games), began pushing for union representation in 2021. This culminated in efforts for bargaining with management over better pay, benefits, working conditions, and protections against the crunch time that is often rampant in the gaming industry.

Microsoft, which acquired Zenimax, has generally been more open to unionization than many other large tech firms. In response to organizing efforts, Microsoft stated that they would respect employees' rights to unionize and that they would not interfere with the process. However, like many companies, they have been slow in reaching full agreements, particularly in how negotiations will unfold across multiple divisions and studios under their umbrella.

While recent breakthrough's have narrowed the gap on reaching a first agreement, there are still several significant issues that still need to be addressed.

Where We Are At:

We have a Tentative Agreement on Contracting Out

This language states that contracted work cannot result in lost jobs or lost hours worked. This is a really important get for us, but this Tentative Agreement (TA) on Contracting Out does not address or resolve the outsourcing Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) that we filed against the company a few months ago.

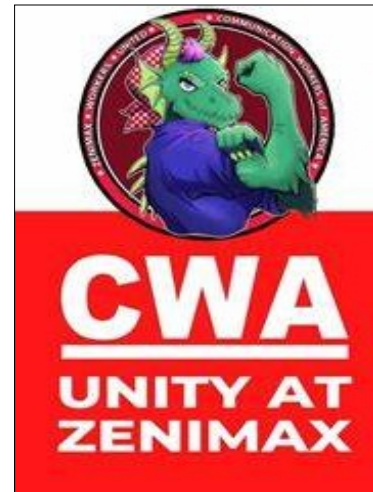
We have a Tentative Agreement on Successorship

This is another proposal that the company initially said they would never agree to, but we got it! This proposal states that the recognition of our union and our contract is a part of the purchasing/selling agreement if there are any future purchasers of ZeniMax. So if we were to be acquired by another company, we would retain our union and our working terms and conditions.

Other Tentative Agreements as previously reported out on:

Disability Accommodations
Professional Development A
Leaves of Absence
Recognition
MOA on Job Descriptions
Health, Dental, Vision, and other Insurance Benefits
Schedules, Hours, and OT
Out of Title Assignment
Professional Development B
Holidays
Paid Time Off (PTO) - Scheduling
Paid Time Off (PTO) - Accrual
Crediting

Contract Application
Dignity & Respect
Qualification Period
Immigrant Workers
Union Security
PAF Contributions
Disciplinary Action
Labor Management Committee
Union Activity
Savings Clause
Business Expenses
Transferring to Another Department
Artificial Intelligence
Grievance Procedure
DevQA Wage Adjustment
Management Rights
No Strike - No Lockout
Responsible Company & Union Relationship



While it is notable that we have been able to make significant progress over the past 18 months, we are now at a crossroad. Temp Employees, Voluntary Separation Plan and Reductions in Force, Wages, Hybrid Workplace Models and Parental Leave still remain on the table.

Working with Zenimax members, CWA will be assisting efforts to ramp up mobilization efforts to reach a successful first agreement. Negotiations will resume on January 15th.

District 2-13 Human Rights - Catholic Charities Toiletry Kits Project

CWA Local 2108, in conjunction with other locals from CWA District 2-13, are currently collecting toiletries to assemble and donate to local charities across the region.

We are collecting masks, hand sanitizer (travel-sized), travel-sized deodorant, travel toothbrushes, mini toothpaste, 2-in-1 shampoo and body wash (travel-sized), Q-tips (small pack) and bars of soap (travel size or individually wrapped).

In order to make this project a success, we are asking members to send in their donations to the local by February 21st so they can be packaged and distributed by March 1, 2025. Please contact the Local on 301-595-2108 if you have any questions.

Verizon Health Care Benefits Coordinators Can Help Answer Your Benefit Questions

Got a question about your Medical, Dental, Vision, Disability or enrollment? CWA appointed Health Care Benefit Coordinators are just a phone call away! The Health Care Benefit Coordinators can handle issues from any active or retired Mid-Atlantic CWA (MD, NY, PA, DE, VA, DC, WV) represented member, regardless of their home state.

Tom Ballek, Retiree HCBC for Medical, Dental and enrollment issues
866-248-4449

Thomas.I.Ballek@verizon.com

Ines Millard, Actives' Medical, Dental, Vision, Disability and Enrollment
888-571-7218

Ines.I.Millard@verizon.com

Jodi Grant, Actives' Medical, Dental, Vision, Disability and Enrollment
888-324-4969

Jodi.I.Grant@core.verizon.com

2025 Union Plus Scholarship Program Accepting Applications

Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$5.6 million to students of working families who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education. Over 4,000 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, 2026.

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, 2025**. 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 2025. 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 week of June 2025 award recipients will be notified by postal mail, and all applicants will be sent email notification.

To apply, go to:

www.unionplus.org/benefits/education/union-plus-scholarships

The CWA Joseph A. Beirne Foundation Scholarship Program

The CWA Joe Beirne Foundation was established in October 1974 by the Communications Workers of America Executive Board to honor the name and memory of the founding President of CWA, who served for more than 30 years. In his capacity as the first CWA President, Joe Beirne took great pride in the roles he played in the fields of education and learning and other areas of social concern.

Sixteen partial college scholarships of \$4,000 each are being offered for the 2025-2026 school year. Winners, selected in a lottery drawing, also will receive second-year scholarships of the same amount contingent upon satisfactory academic accomplishment. Part-time students, less than 12 credits, will receive half of the scholarship monies.

Eligible for the awards are CWA members and their spouses, children and grandchildren, including those of retired or deceased members. Applicants must be high school graduates or at least high school students who will graduate during the year in which they apply. Undergraduate and graduate students returning to schooling may also apply.

Applications are accepted during the months of November through April. **Final deadline for the 2025-2026 school year is April 30, 2025.**

To apply online, go to:

<http://www.cwa-union.org/pages/beirne>



Personals

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

Member, **Jonathan Gray**, who passed away on December 1, 2024.

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

On behalf of the RMC Executive Board, we would like to wish all our members a prosperous and safe new year. Please make plans to join us on the second Wednesday of each month to stay caught up with everything that affects us retirees.

The next RMC 2025 meeting will be on January 8 at 11:00am. Lunch will be available, if you would like to bring a desert, it would be very much appreciated. We hope to see you there.

Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108



Members of the CWA Local 2108 RMC gather for their annual holiday luncheon last month to catch up with old friends and current events that affect retirees.

Thinking About Retirement?

You may want to check out these important workshops presented by **Networth Financial** Group to see if the reality of retirement is on your horizon!!

CWA District 2-13 Retirement Benefits

Tuesday, January 7, 2025 at 6:30 PM

On-line workshop for all CWA locals

Timing Social Security Benefits

Thursday, January 23, 2025 @ 6:30PM

On-line workshop for all CWA locals

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

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



2024 Verizon CPS Award May Be Deferred Into Savings Plan

You have the opportunity to defer the entire amount of your Verizon CPS award (minus appropriate taxes and deductions and any overtime adjustment you may receive) into your Verizon Savings Plan account.

To defer payment of the CPS award, you must be actively contributing to the associate savings plan at the time the award is paid and meet all other eligibility criteria.

If you elect this option, the CPS award will be deferred into the associate savings plan on a before-tax basis, and the applicable company matching contribution of the CPS deferral will be made to your account.

Your paystub will show an increase in the year-to-date "Basic Savings - Before Tax" contributions to include the first 6% of your deferred CPS award, and the remaining portion will be added to the year-to-date "Supplemental Savings - Before Tax" contributions total.

If you choose to defer your award, you will not receive your payment in your paycheck; however, your pay stub will reflect the deferral processing.

If you choose to defer your CPS award, you must make your election between **January 6, 2025 and February 3, 2025**. To make your election on the NetBenefits web site, go to <http://netbenefits.com/Verizon>, then enter your Username and password. Under the Quick Links drop down box for your plan, choose Contribution Amount. Scroll down to Profit Sharing and choose the Profit Sharing Election link.

You may also call the Verizon Savings Plan Service Center at 888-457-9333 from 8:30 a.m. through Midnight Eastern time, Monday - Friday (except when the New York Stock Exchange is closed). Please note that the deferral period ends at **5:00 p.m. ET on February 3, 2025**.

No action is required if you choose NOT to defer your CPS award. The CPS award is a lump sum payment and will be paid to eligible employees on March 14, 2025 in a separate paycheck/direct deposit.



Local 2108 Calendar

JANUARY 2025

1 New Year's Day
Local Office Closed



8 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am

Local Office, Beltsville, MD

8 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm

Local Office, Beltsville, MD

20 Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

FEBRUARY 2025

12 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am

Local Office, Beltsville, MD

12 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm

Local Office, Beltsville, MD

14 Valentine's Day



17 President's Day
Local Office Closed

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, January 8, 2025 - 6:00pm
RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, January 8, 2025 - 11:00am



10782 Rhode Island Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705

Web Address: www.cwacal2108.org

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

LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

Tamera Nelson - Secretary-Treasurer

Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President

Johnny Brown - President

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