

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

Report of the CWA National Committee on Civil Rights and Equity

Presidents Meeting
June 13, 2022

CWA

CWA National Civil Rights & Equity Committee

District 1

Reginald Pierre-Louis, Delegate
CWA Local 1106

District 2-13

**Nikki Robinson, Virginia State
Coordinator**
CWA Local 2201

District 3

**Fred Smith, Mobility Vice
President***
CWA Local 3902

District 4

Sylvia Chapman, President
CWA Local 4250

District 6

Reginald Small, Secretary
CWA Local 6215

District 7

**Rasean Clayton, Executive Vice
President**
CWA Local 7050

District 9

**Mark Bautista, Executive Vice
President**
CWA Local 9404

AFA-CWA

**Keturah Johnson, Former
President**
AFA-CWA Local 22061

IUE-CWA

Howard Terry, President
IUE-CWA Local 87140

PHEW

**Teesha Foreman, Executive Board
Member-At-Large**
CWA Local 1180

TNG-CWA

**Timotheus Fitzgerald,
Secretary-Treasurer**
TNG-CWA Local 32035

*Denotes Committee Chair

Table of Contents

Human Rights Committees Work to Empower Members

By: Reginald Pierre-Louis, CWA Local 1106 4

Celebrating Past and Present CWA Human Rights Champions

By: Reginald Small, CWA Local 6215 6

Unity in Diversity

By: Howard Terry, IUE-CWA Local 87140 7

Mobilizing and Educating Members to Build Power

By: Mark Bautista, CWA Local 9404 8

Protecting Human Rights

By: Sylvia Chapman, CWA Local 4250 9

Fighting Systemic Racism and Creating an Anti-Racist Union

By: Rasean Clayton, CWA Local 7050 11

A Little Rebellion

By: Timotheus Fitzgerald, TNG-CWA Local 32035 12

Building An Anti-Racist Union

By: Teesha Foreman, CWA Local 1180 14

Wake Up, The Change Is Now!

By: Nikki Robinson, CWA Local 2201 16

Civil Rights & Equity Involvement

By: Frederick Smith, CWA Local 3902 18

Fighting the Good Fight

By: Keturah Johnson, AFA-CWA Local 22061 19

The National Committee on Civil Rights and Equity met April 19-21, 2022, in Washington, D.C. During this meeting, we were challenged to follow through with our commitment “to breathe” life into the National Committee on Civil Rights and Equity Report accepted by the 2021 CWA Convention delegates.

We understood the assignment and boldly accepted the challenging work it would entail. This Report to the Presidents Meeting will detail all of the individual and collaborative work facilitated by the National Committee on Civil Rights and Equity Members to deeply strengthen our Union by engaging our Districts, Sectors, Locals, Activists, members, and communities.

“Where there is injustice...you will find... JUST US”

~2022 CWA National Women’s Committee and National Committee on Civil Rights and Equity

Human Rights Committees Work to Empower Members

Reginald Pierre-Louis, CWA Local 1106

Since we last convened at the National Convention in October 2021, we have seen a surge of activity in the world and our nation. Global powers are on the brink of war, with the conflict in Ukraine being front and center in our consciousness. We are still dealing with the aftermath of COVID-19. While infection rates, hospitalizations, and deaths are seemingly trending downward, we are now engaged with debates about the legitimacy of vaccine mandates for employment and mask mandates on airplanes and mass transit systems. And now, we are dealing with rising inflation across the country while the political climate remains very partisan and toxic, hampering our leadership’s ability to make positive changes. Within this backdrop, CWA continues its advocacy for the rights of working people while also championing human rights campaigns through the actions of the National Women’s and Civil Rights & Equity committees.

The work of the National Women’s and Civil Rights & Equity Committees in District 1 has been steadfast in the past several months. This is in spite of the “stop and go” reality we have had to endure during the past two years of COVID-19. Since the convention, we have had several phonebanks to focus on elections, which are crucial to maintaining a pro-labor majority in legislative bodies and executive branches. For instance, we had over 75 members from New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut participate in actions that helped re-elect New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy. We also have several initiatives in states, such as New York and Connecticut, involving Broadband, ensuring that the work is done by union labor and provided to many underserved communities. We also held a phone bank in New York in March, promoting our “Build Broadband Better with CWA” initiative, where members throughout downstate and upstate reached out to legislators and voters to encourage them to support the initiative as well.

Later that month, we also had a “Build Broadband Better” town hall in which over 100 District 1 members participated. The state budget, which was recently voted on and finalized on April 9, included provisions that ensure strong labor standards are attached, thanks to the hard work of our members advocating for them. In Connecticut, our union has been fighting alongside partners in labor for years to have legislation passed eliminating “captive audience meetings” by employers. In April, the State Senate in Connecticut gave bipartisan approval to legislation that would make such meetings illegal throughout the state. This bill is now moving to the Connecticut House of Representatives, where if passed, it would make Connecticut the second state in the nation to ban captive audience meetings. We also participated in phone banking to support the PRO Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which is still being discussed in Congress as we speak. Our District joined alongside our brothers and sisters across the country, helping increase our number of participants to over 100 people in getting the message across that legislation like this is urgent and way overdue.

The District also participated in the National Day of Action Training on March 22-23, 2022. We were able to bring CWA’s Building an Anti-Racist Union and Forming Human Rights Committees training to ten members from across several locals representing multiple sectors and states. Members were presented with different scenarios they might encounter in their personal lives or workplaces, discussed how they would deal with injustices surrounding racism, shared real-world experiences, and discussed appropriate resolutions to addressing racism within CWA. The training material also included information regarding labor and its role in promoting a respectful and diverse workplace culture. The participants were engaged in the training and brought unique perspectives to the conversation. Most importantly, they were willing to work on issues that may have made them uncomfortable. In keeping with our CWA STRONG initiative set forth at the 2017 National Convention, facilitators explained our goal is to continue this training and important work throughout every local area. We look forward to forming more committees and eventually getting back to in-person meetings.

Workers' rights and human rights are inextricably linked in the work we are called to perform as union leaders. With that being said, our Human Rights Committees are a beacon for our members in helping to inform them about issues that adversely affect our communities. We bring light to these issues and help unite ourselves and our partners in labor, legislature, clergy, and affiliate groups to find common ground and provide solutions. The growth of our Civil Rights & Equity and Women’s Committees throughout our locals and districts empowers the membership. Working people have led the struggle for decency and respect on the job for generations. These attributes have been at the core of our strength, something everyone aspires to obtain in and outside their communities and the workplace. When we have thriving, vibrant committees, it helps breathe life into our locals, districts, and our union. The building up of our Human Rights Committee should be a priority alongside the advocacy we provide for our members. We are experiencing some difficult times, which we, as unionists, often do. Still, we are more equipped than most to

face the challenges, analyze them, speak truth to power and our people, and then do what needs to be done to overcome any obstacles on the path to justice and equality.

Celebrating Past and Present CWA Human Rights Champions

Reginald Small, CWA Local 6215

Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us; Let us march on until victory is won.
~ James Weldon Johnson

District 6 takes Human Rights and education very seriously and has invested time and resources into educating members about social justice issues. Our core belief is that education is the key that opens the door to the very hearts of man. Inspired by the song traditionally thought of as the Negro National Anthem, the Civil Rights and Equity Committee celebrated Black History month with a Zoom program to reach viewers across the nation. Having reached other locals and committees with the rollout of Building an Anti-Racist Union earlier in the year, a need was identified to educate members about African Americans' history, plight, and accomplishments since the emancipation proclamation and the true integration of the union.

On February 28, 2022, after strategic planning, the Committee on Civil Rights and Equity rolled out our 1st Annual Black History Program. The program featured historic video footage, past and present trailblazers, and past and present accomplishments of African Americans. A call for support and invitations were sent to the National Civil Rights & Equity Committee, the National Women's Committee, all District 6 locals, collaborative partners, consistency groups, and local politicians. The program featured two guest speakers, the Honorable Terri Hodge, a past CWA member who later became a State Representative for Texas, and CWA retiree, Mr. Ed Gray, a historic activist and radio personality who provided historical insight on Civil Rights.

The feedback and positive response from the program prompted us to immediately begin planning a celebration of Valiant Women for Women's History Month. We featured education about the suffrage movement, civil rights movement, gender equality, and trans-women. The speaker list was created with intention, so the decision was made to use all CWA members and leaders for the program. The program highlighted District 4 Vice President Linda Hinton, and included a tribute to women from District 6 Vice President Claude Cummings with introductions by Assistant to the Vice President Sylvia Ramos. We wanted our guests to know that Human Rights is a union issue and that CWA is strong enough to face those challenges.

We are committed to building Human Rights Committees to bring further education, activism opportunities, and awareness to our members and activists. We recently held a 2-day District Emerging Leaders of Diversity training in Houston, Texas. This training brought more education, awareness, and skills to activists that will help them maintain active Human Rights Committees. The relationships built during the session will help

support our leaders for years to come. With the success of the training, we are sure this will become an annual convening in the District. During this turbulent time with Civil Rights and Civil Liberties under attack, CWA must continue to provide spaces for dialogue, training, and the staff to support our locals as we continue to do this work. Human Rights work must continue and soak into the very fibers of every Local Union in every District until our work is done.

Unity in Diversity

Howard Terry, IUE-CWA Local 87140

Webster's dictionary defines a labor union as "an organization of workers formed for the purpose of advancing its members' interests." Personally, this rather simple definition doesn't even scratch the surface in describing the diverse and complex makeup of today's union membership, nor does it begin to address the challenges associated with building an inclusive culture within the union. It is important to note that today's union consists of a mixture of people in which many factors such as race, religion, culture, gender, and a host of other adjectives define us as people and the values each of us holds dear.

It is often said within any successful organization that we need to celebrate our diversity. This often-used catchphrase has inspired me to report what we have been doing to celebrate our diversity and my role in supporting this initiative. I came across a quote from the CWA website that sums up the union's philosophy behind celebrating diversity. That quote reads, "Although we may differ from our co-workers, through understanding, we can foster a spirit of cooperation. This diversity characterizes our workplaces. The diverse composition of today's workforce and the cultural clashes it can produce require us to pay attention to our differences, not only so that we can work together successfully, but so that we learn to value and take advantage of our differences."

The preceding quote is why I take great honor and pride in being a part of CWA's National Civil Rights and Equity Committee, IUE-CWA's diversity program, and a proud member of the IUE-CWA diversity steering committee. As a member of the steering committee, my purpose is to guide Diversity Ambassadors from locals throughout IUE-CWA on how to promote a sense of inclusion where all members, across the diversity of the membership, feel they belong and are committed to the union and willing to engage in it.

On April 4-5, 2022, the IUE-CWA Diversity Steering Committee conducted a 2-day training through the Diversity Program for 50 Diversity Ambassadors in Atlanta, Georgia. The training material focused on diversity, inclusion, internal organizing, public speaking, and conflict resolution. The goal of the training was to prepare Diversity Ambassadors to serve as a resource and problem-solver for their locals, and assist the president in bridging the gap between and across varying demographics in the locals. This increases the local's strength and unity while helping recognize and celebrate the local's diversity. In addition, the Diversity Ambassador promotes the celebration of diversity and inclusion by leading

the Diversity Committee of the local and personally involving members from all diverse groups in the critical work that we do. As one of the Diversity Steering Committee members, it is my role to be a resource to Diversity Ambassadors when there are issues surrounding race, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc., and they need assistance formulating a plan to improve conditions.

The past few years have been extremely difficult from a societal perspective due to events that glamorize division amongst the masses. To mitigate similar effects of divisiveness in our union, we must take note of this societal dilemma. We must also continue with CWA's initiative to celebrate diversity by addressing the "elephant in the room," so to speak, by having conversations with members focusing on learning how to value and take advantage of our differences. As president and diversity ambassador of Local 87140, my goal is to ramp up support for CWA's diversity initiative by incorporating a series of brief, informal diversity topics at our steward training classes and membership meetings.

Mobilizing and Educating Members to Build Power

Mark Bautista, CWA Local 9404

It is an honor to serve as the CWA District 9 Civil Rights and Equity Representative on the National Committee. In this role, I have worked with locals to organize members in the fight against voter suppression, advance voting rights, and encourage participation in phonebanks to support the confirmation of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson as the first Black female Supreme Court Justice. I am also actively educating members on recognizing implicit bias and forming human rights committees through our Building an Anti-Racist Union training.

In the 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act of 1965, severely weakening federal oversight to protect against discriminatory voting practices. The decision severely impacted people of color, low-income citizens, people with disabilities, the elderly, and members of the LGBTQ+ community the most by redrawing voting lines, changing the photo identification process, and moving or closing many polling places. According to the Brennan Center, state legislatures enacted more restrictive voting laws in 2021 than in any other year since 2011, passing 34 laws in 19 states (Brennan Center, 2021).¹ In response to the influx of restrictive voting legislation, Congress introduced the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to restore protections to the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Protecting the voting rights of working people in multiple states is of utmost importance, and the task had to be met with urgency. In January, a training was held to organize a phone bank and inform members that Senator Krysten Sinema (D-Ariz.) and Senator Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) refused to support the Voting Rights Advancement Act and planned to vote

¹ Brennan Center
<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-december-2021>

against the bill. Members phone banked constituents in Arizona and West Virginia, encouraging them to leave messages for their political leadership to convince the senators to change their votes and support working people in their home states and across the country. The fight for voting rights continues as the committee and I remain steadfast in our commitment to promote a pro-worker, pro-democracy platform for us all.

CWA has a reputation for taking a serious stand in the fight for social and economic justice. In March, this became an issue in the land's highest court. We took part in our CWA phone bank calling Wisconsin voters and asking them to encourage their state leaders to support the confirmation of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court. Judge Jackson's placement on the Supreme Court is a vital piece to the American puzzle to protect workers' rights and ensure the court is more representative of the make-up of our everyday society. She became the first Black woman to be confirmed to the land's highest court in 232 years and 116 appointments. Judge Jackson brings the much-needed diversity that is lacking throughout our justice system. She is committed to economic justice, environmental justice, voting rights, women's rights, and human rights issues that impact the lives of working people. As we celebrate another first in our country, we must also acknowledge that we need to put our efforts and work into these decisions being the norm. True diversity and equality start with firsts but evolve with inclusion as the standard.

The National Human Rights Committee has also worked to educate members with our Building an Anti-Racist Union training series. The training series is designed to give members the space to participate in critical conversations about racism while also understanding how racism affects our ability to build power for working people. On March 23-24, we hosted a National Day of Action where we trained over 100 members, from 54 different locals, in seven virtual classes across the U.S. In District 9, we recruited 18 participants from three sectors to attend the four-hour, two-day training. There was open participation throughout the sessions, as members were both vulnerable and highly engaged on both days. The training highlighted individual experiences and helped members recognize how implicit biases shape our lives, thoughts, and actions.

The class also focused on the locals by offering assistance in forming an effective Civil Rights and Equity Committee. Our initial class was encouraging, and I am proud to say that everyone was very open to sharing and staying engaged in the discussions. We are confident that this will continue as the feedback received from everyone was positive and encouraging. We are currently working on follow-up plans with members and locals who were trained and scheduling additional training classes for the rest of the year. We supply all of the tools for your Committee Chairperson to activate your members, including a sample committee meeting agenda, a document that explains the roles and responsibilities of the committee members, and a human rights toolkit with tips on how to recruit members. I encourage each local in District 9 to contact their Staff Representative for more information.

Activism has been a very natural occurrence in District 9. Our vision moving forward is to

continue organizing members, building Civil Rights & Equity Committees in every local, and expanding each local's participation with the committee through education, communication, community, and coalition building. I will be contacting each local to solidify their commitment. It is our right as well as our obligation to better our workplace as well as our communities. We do that by standing up for equality and fighting for justice. This is a call to action for every member to stand up and do their part in this fight, not only for our union but for all working people.

Protecting Human Rights

Sylvia Chapman, CWA Local 4250

"The rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened."

~John F. Kennedy

CWA recognizes workers' rights are human rights and supports legislation such as the Protect the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act), the Build Back Better Act, and the For the People Act to ensure members are protected.

Over the last 40 years, wages for working people have stagnated, yet salaries for CEOs continue to rise.² While union members have tried to negotiate higher pay, substandard laws that barely protect workers' rights to organize and negotiate for better wages play a significant role in rising inequality, continuing to put workers in a bind. The PRO Act, introduced by Representative Robert C. Scott (D-Va.), introduced meaningful, enforceable penalties for companies and executives that violate workers' rights. This historic legislation will reverse decades of legislation created simply to take away the power of unions. It closes loopholes that corporations use to exploit workers, strengthening workers' access to fair union elections and requiring corporations to respect the results.

The Build Back Better Act, introduced in 2020, will create millions of good-paying union jobs while making historic investments in healthcare, childcare, housing, education, clean energy, etc. This bill also helps working families by providing high-quality universal preschool for all three and four-year-olds, lowering prescription drug costs, and providing paid family and medical leave. The bill will also expand healthcare for the elderly and disabled through Medicaid. These issues directly affect CWA members, their families, and their communities.

The For the People Act of 2021 addresses voter access, election integrity and security, campaign finance, and ethics for the three branches of government. The bill expands voter registration such as automatic and same-day registration and vote-by-mail, and early voting. It also limits removing voters from the voter rolls.

2

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90671745/for-many-workers-raises-today-dont-make-up-for-years-of-wage-stagnation>

CWA hosted several phone banks for the Build Back Better bill and the PRO Act with an average of 25 volunteers who generated about 1,200 calls. There was also a member-to-member text bank for the For the People Act with approximately 30 volunteers who sent an average of 300 text messages. Activists participated in text and phone banks on all three bills because they are essential to fixing our political system, supporting working families, and shifting power back into the hands of working people.

Racial strife in the U.S. plagues our daily lives and communities, and employers do not hesitate to use race tactics to divide workers. As a longtime advocate of racial equity, CWA is taking a stand against racial injustice by educating its members in a series of virtual trainings designed to engage members in dialogue on race. Our Building An Anti-Racist Union training teaches members about implicit bias, helps define and recognize racism and anti-racism, and explains how racism divides and conquers workers. The training is facilitated by members of the National Human Rights Committees. On March 23-24, as the District 4 Representative on the National Civil Rights & Equity Committee, I co-facilitated the training for 15 activists. Participants learned how to develop and grow their skills as human rights activists in our union and communities by understanding the role, responsibility, and function of a Human Rights Committee. In our most engaging module, members examined case studies highlighting union values and discussed organizing actions to build power for working people.

The modules are facilitated in open group discussions and breakout rooms to give participants multiple ways to digest and retain the information. This training is a great opportunity to have necessary and enlightening discussions about race in a safe space. Please contact your District Staff Human Rights Coordinator if you are interested in scheduling a class in your district, sector, or division.

Eliminating racism among our members helps strengthen our union and our communities by removing the focus from our differences and instead focusing on the issues and beliefs that unite us. There should only be one common goal: obtaining the best possible life for ourselves and our families.

Fighting Systemic Racism and Creating an Anti-Racist Union

Rasean Clayton, CWA Local 7050

Partisan politicians have spent the year intentionally putting up barriers to voting in an attempt to drown out the voices of millions of American voters for the next decade. This year, 19 states have enacted 33 laws restricting access to the ballot, including Arizona. The House has passed sweeping legislation to protect our freedom to vote, but we need to pass the legislation in the Senate. The Freedom to Vote Act (John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act) offers the solutions we need to strengthen our democracy. The members of District 7 have responded by coming together to demand Congress and our senators act.

During the Senate Recess on November 13, we mobilized a massive voting rights rally in

Phoenix featuring amazing movement speakers like Barbara Arnwine from the Transformative Justice Coalition, Reverend Katie Sexton-Wood of Arizona Faith Network, Judge Deborah Begay, Pastor Aubrey Barnwell, Jennifer Chau of Asian American and Pacific Islander Victory Alliance, Victoria Grijalva Ochoa from One Arizona, Fred Yamashita from the AFL-CIO, and Joanna Sweatt, United States Marine Corps Veteran. All speakers shared the same message on the importance of voting rights and casting our ballots. We continued to follow up with weekly phone banks throughout December. From December 16, 2021, to January 13, 2022, 33 volunteers made 11,931 dials with 472 respondents and 256 patches to Senator Kristen Sinema's (D-Ariz.) office.

Also, during that same period, 54 volunteers made 14,509 dials with 538 respondents and 304 patches to Senator Manchin's (D-W.Va.) office. We kicked off 2022 with a two-day Voters Rights Training and phonebank. We focused on the Freedom to Vote Act (John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act), keeping dark money out of politics, banning partisan gerrymandering, and protecting our elections from partisan sabotage. Our phone banks targeted union members with high voting scores in Senator Joe Manchin's (D-W.Va.) and Senator Kristen Sinema's (D-Ariz.) respective states. Both senators were problematic and resisted allowing the bill to pass the Senate by majority vote.

In February 2022, National Human Rights Committee members participated in a train-the-trainer on Building an Anti-Racist Union and Forming Human Rights Committees as part of our dedication to combatting racism. After completing the train-the-trainer, we gained the necessary skills to not only identify racism but also to teach members how to have uncomfortable conversations with members about racism. We held a two-day training in our respective Districts/Sectors/Divisions, where we presented the training series which included exercises on implicit bias, union values, cases studies, and modules on forming a human rights committee to District 7 human rights committee members. After completion of the training, participants not only want to build active women's and civil rights and equity committees, they pledge to ensure that District 7 leads the way in developing LGBTQ+ committees both locally and at the district level.

A Little Rebellion

Timotheus Fitzgerald, TNG-CWA Local 32035

Henry V famously stated that "all things be ready if our minds be so." So, for our committee to tackle the great obstacles facing us, we must first prepare our minds. One of our primary tools of preparation is education. We believe that our mission becomes much more attainable with educated members. One such training opportunity came on January 25-27, 2022. The Human Rights Department provided training exclusively for members of the Civil Rights & Equity (CRE) Committee and the Women's Committee on Building An Anti-Racist Union. This three-day fact-based class provided hard-hitting data that challenged the participants intellectually and emotionally. This approach aims to equip the committee members with data and resources to empower us to intelligently convey what

we've learned to our Districts/Sectors. In doing so, we can better develop the committees within the locals in our Districts/Sectors. This process is a very efficient method of getting the desired training to our entire CWA body.

The privilege to utilize my newly acquired skill-set quickly presented itself. Shortly after the training, the Human Rights Department announced a National Day of Training to be held on March 23-24, 2022. I had to quickly get the word out to the locals of The NewsGuild (TNG). While I was hoping for more, I was thrilled to have six members favorably respond. Armed with the tools provided during my training class, I persevered. I had to tweak the presentation due to the small group. For example, instead of having breakout rooms, I assigned each participant a case study, and they came back and reported their findings. While group discussions did not occur during breakout rooms, the group discussions occurred after individual reporting.

The training was highly engaging, and thanks to the safe space discussed in the Group Agreements, participants opened up and shared valuable insight into challenges they see in their locals. Through follow-up, I found out that critical training elements were the sharing of highly personal stories and the thoughtful discussions that occurred. The positive feedback motivates me to do more training! The participants were eager to take the information back to their locals. In fact, just two days later, one of the participants gave a recap at their Board meeting that initiated a conversation about revitalizing their Diversity Committee. That's precisely the level of engagement we strive for after the training! We are currently planning to hold additional training sessions. With this extensive investment in training, CWA endeavors to leverage that training with its allies, empowering communities and building grassroots initiatives. Thus, CWA will continue to train activists and take countless actions supporting human rights and equity to the next level.

It was also an honor to attend the Martin Luther King, Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference presented by the AFL-CIO on January 16-17. This year's theme was Honoring Our Past and Protecting Our Future. While the 2-day conference was loaded with speakers, I was particularly interested in the Voting Rights discussions. There is so much more work to do to address voter rights. On January 6, 2021, our nation came very close to losing its democracy forever. We cannot allow the BIG LIE to deny us of our "inalienable rights." CWA has always been in the vanguard for political activism. We must do everything we can to empower our communities, families, and coworkers by educating them. We have to ensure that they understand the importance and relevance of participating in the census and do all we can to get the vote out. In addition to phone banking, we must actively assist in getting seniors to the polls and help them with mailing in their ballots.

I am eternally grateful to be a part of such a dynamic union that diligently works to protect the interests of the working class. The Civil Rights & Equity Committee is an artery of the CWA entity. Thomas Jefferson once said, "A little rebellion now and again is a good thing." That being said, the mission of the Civil Rights & Equity Committee is to fight or rebel against injustices and to usher in waves of change. The committee members actively seek

to find wrongs to right. So, where you find injustice, you'll find the CWA Civil Rights & Equity Committee.

Building An Anti-Racist Union

Teesha Foreman, CWA Local 1180

"In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist; we must be anti-racist." ~ Angela Davis

On May 29, 2020, CWA's Executive Board released a statement on the need to dismantle the racism that plagues our communities. "The CWA Executive Board is committed to moving beyond an endless string of reaction statements and demonstrating our continued commitment to justice for Black people through our organizing, representation, political, and movement building work. We commit to creating dedicated spaces for open dialogue on race for our members and leaders to determine outcomes and clear steps the union must take to fight racism in the union, within the industries we represent, and the community-at-large. This work is necessary because these incidents did not happen in isolation. They happened in the context of 400 years of structural and systematic anti-Black racism. The only pathway to a just society for all is deep, structural change. Justice for Black people is inextricably linked to justice for all working people – including White people. We must join together – every one of us to dismantle this system of oppression. We must move to action."

Showing others that you are an ally, care about their well-being, and are committed to diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism is one way to take action. CWA's Building An Anti-Racist Union training is designed to provide CWA members with the knowledge and skills to build an anti-racist union and form Human Rights Committees. The first key component in this training is Implicit Bias: Understanding and Interrupting the Unconscious, which allows us to learn and understand how biases shape our lives and that we all have them. They occur automatically as the brain judges based on past experiences, education, and background. Understanding and addressing biases we may possess is important so that we can be aware of how we treat and interact with others, consciously and subconsciously.

Implicit biases simultaneously give advantages to certain groups while disadvantaging others. A great example of this is when the police pull over Black and brown men, and the police officer's biases kick in. They recall all the negative connotations about Black men, such as big, black, angry, violent, gangsters, etc. The officer already has these racial biases in their mind, and they immediately enter the situation needing to exert their power and authority. They do not let the Black men speak, and if they do, the officer responds with violence and force. This type of interaction and engagement with police officers has become a common occurrence for Black men. However, when the same situation occurs with white men, police officers do not see them as threats, so they are treated differently. Because of their bias, they fear for their lives with Black men; therefore, they feel that their actions are

justified. I have seen multiple videos of white men pulled over by police, and the white men have cursed, yelled, spit and hit officers, and still, they were not abused, made to feel less than, or had a gun pointed at their face while demanding things of them and treated like Black men. They were able to walk away from the situation because of their privilege. Black men are not afforded this privilege, costing them their lives.

These biases significantly affect recruitment decisions, employee development, and staff retention. This is also why the Executive Board's decision to make CWA more inclusive and diverse, specifically in higher positions, is key to building an anti-racist union.

Acknowledging and being aware of your implicit biases is an important step in ensuring the well-being of everyone, especially in the work we do as union activists. Learning about the Four I's of Oppression – ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized – allows participants to reflect on their personal experiences and understand how these four aspects of racism are interlaced.

During the April 5–6, 2022, National Day of Training we facilitated CWA's "Building An Anti-Racist Union" training for approximately seventeen PHEW members. We began with a welcome, introductions, and an understanding of what participants expected to learn from the training. Most members agreed they wanted to understand the difference between being racist and anti-racist and how they could take what they learned from the training and apply it to their personal lives, their job, the union, and their community. It was interesting to see participants' reactions and responses to the Implicit Bias video and the question and answer activity sheet. One member stated she appreciated the explanation of pronouns. Previously, she said, "whatever, I'm not doing that. Why is it necessary? It doesn't affect me." But after the training, she understood what identifying oneself with pronouns really meant and even admitted she realized she unconsciously had biases.

Most of the members were engaged in the virtual training; however, facilitating this training in person will make a more significant impact. The training was most successful when the participants were in breakout rooms. The discussions and the shared experiences were ongoing, and in some instances, more time was requested to better understand what their classmates were trying to express. They came back and reported that they assumed because an individual in their group looked different, they would not be able to relate, and they acknowledged how wrong they were.

The training put some in ready, set go mode: ready for more and ready to take action. Another highlight of the training was the three case studies on the March on Washington, the Memphis Sanitation Strike, and the Delano Grape Strike. One participant said she wasn't familiar with the Delano Grape Worker fight but mentioned how similar it is to the plight of the farm workers today. "Life should be better today. Unfortunately, the oppressed are still being oppressed by their oppressors." Another member stated this training gave her the push to do what she was already contemplating doing, which was to start a Human Rights Committee in her local, while other members were excited to become more active in their current Human Rights Committees.

We start and continue to build power by understanding our union values, empowering activists, educating our members, and continuous mobilization. These actions are the stepping stones to building an anti-racist union, forming Human Rights Committees, and building member power across CWA. We understand it won't happen overnight; however, we can begin creating change with the tools learned in our training class and the dedication to working together. Participants are eager to assist with putting forth action plans on forming and building an Anti-Racist Union and Human Rights Committees, so let's get to work. We need to reach so many more workers, and we are looking to train more trainers to get this training across to as many locals as possible.

"Each one, reach one. Each one, teach one. Until all are taught." ~ Mark Victor Hansen

Wake up, The Change Is Now!

Nikki Robinson, CWA Local 2201

Our union is diverse, so the work we do promotes the interests and needs of all workers, including racial and gender equity, healthcare, and working conditions, just to name a few. The National Civil Rights & Equity Committee aims to bring awareness of social and economic justice issues worldwide to educate and engage CWA members. Involvement can occur in many forms: through training, attending monthly membership meetings, reading CWA newsletters (local and national), and joining or creating a local Human Rights Committee. We have witnessed radical and historical events in just the last six months. From voter turnout on November 2 to the confirmation of the first Black woman to be appointed Supreme Court Justice, Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, we still have so much more work to do.

In November 2021, the gubernatorial and House of Delegate elections took place in Virginia, and local and municipal office races were held in Pennsylvania. While Covid-19 changed the way we voted, voter turnout still resulted in a record turnout for an off-cycle election. The lead-up to the polls resulted in over 20 phone banking opportunities and ten Saturday Labor Walks, with an average of 50 faithful and dedicated members in their respective areas taking on the charge and reaching out to union members. This work aimed to get the word out to members by educating them on the different candidates and how, if elected, they would help benefit working-class people. The race generated the most campaign funds in the last two decades, with \$149 million raised for the races for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General. Unfortunately, the results did not swing the way we preferred for labor-friendly candidates. Next election cycle, we must work ten times harder to get a legislature elected that helps working people.

Verdicts were reached in both the George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery cases this past February. A federal jury convicted the three former Minneapolis police officers of violating George Floyd's civil rights by failing to intervene or provide medical aid while their senior officer, Derek Chauvin, knelt on the back of George Floyd's neck for nearly 9 minutes and

29 seconds. A federal jury found the three men charged with killing Ahmaud Arbery guilty on all counts of interfering with the victim's civil rights in connection to the deadly shooting of the jogger. These events are just a snapshot of what has been in the mainstream view, there are so many others that aren't getting the same recognition, but the results are the same-- senseless crimes.

While many of us denounce racism and even actively support movements toward equality, these intentions may not be enough to fight a psychological reaction: implicit bias. Implicit bias is the unconscious stereotyping and forming of attitudes toward people or ideas that can influence our actions. Individuals may fully support equality, but their cognition could unknowingly persuade them to react differently. The two court cases mentioned earlier are examples of implicit bias. A person may even express explicit disapproval of a particular attitude or belief while still harboring unconscious biases. Such biases do not necessarily align with our sense of self and personal identity. In many cases, people can hold positive or negative associations regarding their race, gender, religion, sexuality, or other personal characteristics.

It is important to remember that implicit biases operate almost entirely unconsciously. While explicit biases and prejudices are intentional and controllable, implicit biases are less so. We all have biases; we just have to learn how to acknowledge them, be aware of them, and know how to respond to them. A test created by Anthony Greenwald, a leading scholar in implicit bias, measures people's initial reactions to different phrases and pictures to measure the reality of their prejudice. The tests compare race, appearance, and gender with stereotypes and favorability. This was one of the tests performed during our two-day training event on Wednesday, March 23, and Thursday, March 24, 2022. It was held via Zoom with Verizon, AT&T, and American Airlines members. The training focused on recognizing implicit bias, incorporating our union values into the fight against racism, strategies for building an anti-racist union, and best practices for forming and maintaining women's and human rights committees in our CWA Locals. The conversations that were held were so awakening that members were eager to get back to their locals and share what they learned with other members. In the works, there are more training classes to be conducted. Over 150 members attended the National Day of Training!

District 2-13 plans to get more involved in educating voters, helping to get voting rights restored, and engaging members during election season with phone banking, door knocking, text banks, and just word of mouth. We have teamed up with the AFL-CIO and joined campaigns to phone bank and do door knocking, and we are looking to add voter registration classes. This will allow voter registration drives to be held locally for members and citizens in the community. There are many ways to get members involved. Working with your local Civil Rights & Equity Committee will help us build worker power. More training sessions such as the Building an Anti-Racist Union, working more with organizations on voters' rights, and mobilizing with other Districts will make us stronger. There is strength in numbers. It's time to wake up; the change is now.

Civil Rights & Equity Involvement

Frederick Smith, CWA Local 3902

Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization."

~ Mahatma Gandhi

District 3 has a long history of segregation in our states, and in some cases, between the local members. To educate our membership, and provide spaces to have deeper discussions on race, the Human Rights Committee in the district worked hard to encourage participation in multi-cultural events throughout the district and sharing of these experiences.

In November 2021, Alabama locals from all over the state supported union members from the United Mine Workers of America, who have been on strike since April 2021. For over a year, workers have sacrificed their pride, as they have accepted food and clothes from a pantry and jobs with low-paying wages just to barely make ends meet. We participated in efforts to show unity and solidarity with other union organizations and demand fair treatment and a fair contract for workers who deserve higher wages and better healthcare.

In January, we joined the AFL-CIO 2022 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference for a 2-day meeting. The theme of this year's conference was Honoring Our Past and Protecting Our Future. The sessions were very informative and provided insightful information and history surrounding Dr. King and his accomplishments. There was also time to view a panel and share dialogue in separate break-out rooms around issues in our society, such as racism, unemployment, redlining, and voter suppression.

During the month of February 2022, locals participated in the First Annual Black Art Gala with proceeds of this event being donated to local charities that assist low-income residents with attaining rides to and from voting polls. The event was a success and we look forward to attending next year. Our district also participated in the "Bloody Sunday" march in Selma, Alabama, during the first week of March. This event is historic as it commemorates the March 7, 1965, march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge when John Lewis led over 600 peaceful demonstrators across the bridge to demand an end to discrimination in voter registration, particularly for Black southerners.

In May 2020, the CWA Executive Board committed to creating dedicated spaces for open dialogue on race for our members and leadership. As part of that commitment, the National Human Rights Department developed a 2-day training on Building an Anti-Racist Union, to help leaders and activists understand and overcome one of the most significant problems in U.S. history – racism. In the summer of 2021, the training was updated to add a new module on Forming Human Rights Committees and redistributed to the general membership. Thanks to our progressive leadership, we were one of the first districts to offer this training to the Executive Board and staff. From there we rolled it out to local presidents and new officers. On March 23-24, District 3 Human Rights Committee chairs

completed a two-day training titled Building an Anti-Racist Union. The purpose of this training was to give members the opportunity to recognize and realize the ongoing issues of racism within our union and communities and how we can combat them. Our previous work with members of District 3 to organize rallies, other training, and union issues, in general, helped open up the communication highway for many locals to participate.

The District 3 Human Rights Committee felt this training was needed and long overdue. Issues in our society have caused some members to make racist statements on social media. At first sight, your natural reaction is to react, because you believe the comment is genuine and heartfelt. However, by reacting to racist statements with a violent reaction, whether with words or actions, we are no better than those who are spreading racist ideas. As Americans, we should believe that all human beings deserve to be respected as such, regardless of color. So, when the time came to offer anti-racism training, we immediately jumped into action.

The training was a huge success in District 3 and well received! We had over 40 members attend from 13 locals across the District. Education is the key to reaching all our members and without education you are not going anywhere in this world. Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today. In District 3, we are preparing to continue the training as we introduce it to more locals and have those committees train more of their individual members. We are also having talks about bringing it to our District meeting and Leadership school in a face-to-face format. Our District must continue to be open with progress in regard to discussions surrounding race, economic stability, politics, and many issues in our society. We will continue to build relationships with locals across our District and align with allies and other like-minded organizations.

Fighting the Good Fight

Keturah Johnson, AFA-CWA Local 22061

The aviation industry is not made up of just flight attendants and pilots. The industry is comprised of hard-working individuals who check your bags, check you in, load your bags, serve your food, clean the bathrooms, clean the planes, prepare your food, fuel the aircraft, and make sure you are safe. From the time you step out of your car at the airport, aviation workers are with you every step of the way. Yet airport workers are overlooked, underpaid, and forced to rely on poverty wages while the CEOs make money off their backs. We could say this was an issue stemming from the pandemic because airport workers, inside and out, have been disregarded when it comes to good pay, benefits, working rules, conditions, and human rights. Still, these horrible conditions have existed much longer than the pandemic.

The Good Airports Rally that I attended in Chicago, Ill., was an action that is very important to me. Passenger service workers, security officers and janitors from O'Hare airport, union members and non-union members, and community and faith leaders, rallied to bring attention to the Fight For 15 movement and raise awareness about poverty wages and the

lack of union benefits provided by many airports. Despite the airline industry handling 393 million passengers annually and making hundreds of millions of dollars in revenues and taxpayer-funded federal subsidies, most TSA workers earn low wages and take on multiple jobs to pay monthly bills. In an open letter to the CEOs of American, Delta, and United Airlines, workers called on the leaders to sign a "Good Airports Pledge." The pledge acknowledges that airlines have the ability and responsibility to end poverty-wage jobs and inequality, respect workers' right to join a union, and guarantee the set minimum wage, benefits, and paid leave.

Aviation workers clean our planes, prepare our food, fuel our aircraft, and make sure those who need assistance are being taken care of while they go above and beyond; even when they are being set up for failure, they wear their uniforms with pride. The corporate greed that is upheld to cut costs and keep paying CEOs is unacceptable, and they must be held accountable. Workers are being denied human rights, are not being paid a livable wage, eat from food banks, live in their cars, and struggle to make ends meet. AFA- CWA is fighting in solidarity with airport workers all over the United States to ensure that one job should be enough. Workers will not be silent anymore! We deserve to be heard, and we deserve to be compensated for our jobs because workers' rights are human rights.