

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

# Report of the CWA National Women's Committee

Presidents Meeting  
June 13, 2022

# CWA

## CWA National Women's Committee

District 1

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CWA Local 1101

District 2-13

**Ann Vogler, President**

CWA Local 2006

District 3

**Yolanda Pearson, Executive Vice President**

CWA Local 3204

District 4

**Kimberly Liska, Secretary-Treasurer**

CWA Local 4302

District 6

**Jo Angela Herrera, Vice President**

CWA Local 6143

District 7

**Karen Pearce, Executive Board Member**

CWA Local 7704

District 9

**Tonia Dumas, Chief Steward**

CWA Local 9400

AFA-CWA

**Kimberly Johnson, President**

AFA-CWA Local 29026

IUE-CWA

**LaTonya Wilcox, Grievance Chair**

IUE-CWA Local 81381

NABET-CWA

**Erin Mardon, Vice President**

NABET-CWA Local 51021

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**Marlene Jiminez, Vice President**

CWA Local 7777

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The CWA National Women’s Committee met April 19-21, 2022, in Washington, DC. During this meeting, we were challenged to follow through with our commitment “to breathe” life into our National Women’s Committee 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 2022 Presidents Meeting will detail some of the individual and collaborative work facilitated by CWA’s National Women’s Committee 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

## **A Transformative Confirmation**

*Erin Mardon, NABET-CWA, 51021*

“What is [[Law]] supposed to do, seen as a whole? It is supposed to...allow all people, all people, to live together in a society where they have so many different views, so many different needs, [but] to live together in a way that is more harmonious, that is better, so that they can work productively together.”<sup>1</sup>

Justice Stephen Breyer spoke these words the day he was nominated to the United States Supreme Court, on May 6, 1994. While Justice Breyer was talking about the purpose of the law, labor union organizers hoped to achieve the same goals. While the primary focus is on collective bargaining, wages, benefits, and improving working conditions for members, in later years, labor unions began to become involved at a state and federal level to lobby for legislation that would benefit those members.

Justice Breyer’s resignation from the Supreme Court brought about a historic change for black women in America. President Joe Biden set out to fulfill his campaign promise to nominate the first black woman to the United States Supreme Court. Of the 115 justices to serve on the nation’s highest court, only five have been women. Three are currently serving; Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Amy Coney Barrett. President Biden’s pick to join their ranks, Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, would be the first black woman nominated to the court and the first former public defender.

Judge Jackson has also issued several pro-labor rulings. While serving on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, Judge Jackson ruled that President Trump’s union-busting executive order to attack workers’ rights and deny more than 2 million federal workers their legal right to representation violated federal law. She ruled that the Trump administration’s May 25th anti-union executive order on official time violated the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/ketanjibrownjacksonussconfirmationhearingstatement.htm>

First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the separation of powers as established in law. The ruling was a win for labor unions that collectively represent more than one million government workers.

Members across the country participated in a day of action supporting Judge Jackson's nomination to the Supreme Court. CWA endorsed Jackson's nomination, calling her "a qualified, fair-minded jurist with a proven track record of defending the rights of working people over corporations and powerful special interests." CWA members also participated in phone and text banks by calling and texting their Senators, demanding they confirm Judge Jackson's nomination to the Supreme Court.

While Judge Jackson's confirmation was a huge step, we must still go a long way before seeing a legal system that reflects our diverse membership and society. More women are now working in the judicial system than ever before, though men still outnumber them. The first woman was appointed to the federal bench nearly 140 years after the federal court system was established. Women make up a third of the federal district and circuit courts, and just 6,056 female state judges are women, just 34% out of 17,778.<sup>2</sup>

One Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's most significant opinions of her tenure on the Supreme Court opened the doors of the last all-male public university to qualified women. In the majority opinion she wrote in that ruling, Ginsburg described it as "presumptively invalid ... a law or official policy that denies to women, simply because they are women, equal opportunity to aspire, achieve, participate in, and contribute to society, based upon what they can do."<sup>3</sup> CWA must continue to actively support women in the judiciary field to ensure fair gender representation, strengthen the judiciary, and demand improvements in law and labor for all our members. When Judge Jackson replaces Justice Breyer, the diversity of the Supreme Court will look a lot more like the United States. And while Judge Jackson's confirmation may be historical and transformative, it should not be the last.

## CWA Responds To Implicit Bias

*JoAngela Herrera, CWA Local 6143*

District 6 has been very active since the 2021 Convention addressing the impact of implicit bias with numerous trainings and webinars presented by activists who work to create change in our Locals. We take pride in improving our membership's continued growth in the area of implicit bias. Many talented District 6 staff, local leaders and activists have

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<sup>2</sup> National Association of Women Judges  
<https://www.nawj.org/statistics/2022-us-state-court-women-judges>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/annual-observances/womens-history-month>

presented trainings and webinars on Women's and Black History Month, participated in numerous political calls to action, and attended AFL-CIO Constituency Group Conventions.

Local 6143 in San Antonio, Tex., has a base of 1,600 members, including an active Women's Committee that I am proud to oversee. We have been volunteering with the San Antonio Food Bank for the past couple of years. The food bank provides numerous programs that solve the immediate problems of hunger in our community. We love to give back to our community by giving our time and energy to improving the daily lives of our citizens thereby giving Local 6143 a strong reputation in the community. Another effort that Local 6143 engages in is the Haven for Hope community center in downtown San Antonio. As a committee, we have volunteered in the kitchen to help prepare meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for residents that live on the premises. A Haven for Hope is a transitional program that helps distressed families and the homeless learn a better way of living. The services they provide help adults with life management to get them on the right path to a good job with income so they can then secure stable housing. Our women's committee purchased and decorated mini Christmas trees for the Granada Nursing Home, participated in blood drives at various AT&T job sites, and donated to area hospitals for trauma victims, cancer patients, newborn babies, moms, etc. All these actions reflect the values of the members of Local 6143's dedication to being a CWA STRONG Local. We hope to lead by example for other D6 Locals by our actions.

District 6 hosted two wonderful events for Black History Month and Women's History month: "Local 6215's Annual Black History Program" on February 24, 2022, and "Celebrating Valiant Women" on March 30, 2022. Along with my brother on the National CR&E Committee, Reginald Small, and D6 staff members, we held virtual presentations which included active participant participation on that month's topic. Open and honest discussions were held in a "safe place" where ideas could be exchanged and planned for future actions in our CWA District. A major theme in both meetings was the impact of implicit bias and how it affects our union membership. Suggestions arose on how to continue to combat implicit bias against African Americans and women in our culture here in the United States.

Another group effort to combat implicit bias was a "National Day of Action," a two-day training event across all CWA District, Sectors, and Divisions. During these two days, participants learned to recognize implicit bias in themselves and society. Day two involved instructions on building an anti-racist union at CWA and how to create a new Women's or Civil Rights & Equity Committee at a CWA Local. Participants took back to their Locals the tools they needed to begin motivating their membership into action. As these actions take root, I will update you in my 2023 CWA Convention report regarding what progress District 6 has made.

District 6 has also combated implicit bias through our political actions led by Administrative Director Derrick Osobase. Along with other staff and activists, Derrick hosted numerous phone and text banking events to either elect new politicians who reflect

union values or vote out politicians who do not reflect the values of the CWA triangle. Additionally, District 6 hosted events on current social-economic topics of concern, such as phone banking to call senators and members of Congress to encourage them to vote for the ProAct and other bills in the U.S. House and Senate floors.

One last way District 6 has fought implicit bias is by members attending AFL-CIO Constituency Group Conventions. These conventions were held virtually or in-person depending on the constituency group's taking necessary COVID protocols. District 6 members attended the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) in the Spring of 2022. Other official constituency groups will hold conventions next year, including Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) and the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA). Sponsoring activists to attend these conventions strengthens our fight against implicit bias because members continue to grow in their knowledge by sharing with members of other organizations. The shared experiences communicate common threads and all participants become aware of each other's struggles in the fight against oppression. The CWA Human Rights Department continues to sponsor participants from all Districts and Sectors.

CWA continues to fight implicit bias by all the actions we take in District 6 Locals across the union by attending training and webinars to grow in knowledge and share discussions, by taking political action, and by attending constituency group conventions to learn what is on the minds of our fellow unionists. We will stay strong in the fight against implicit bias by continuing to participate in all of these actions.

## Diversity And Our Union

*Ann Vogler, CWA Local 2006*

In the early days, voting started by allowing only white men aged 21 and older who owned land to be eligible to vote. This only made up about 10 to 16 percent of the nation's population.<sup>4</sup> White men also dominate among candidates who run and are elected into office. We consider ourselves the "land of the free," but we not only had to fight for the right to vote as women and people of color but the right to hold office. Although most office holders are still white male candidates, we have seen progress with a slight shift in the diversity of those candidates throughout the years. The fight for diversity also continues within our union, and this report will describe the actions District 2-13 has taken to impact change positively.

West Virginia made history in 2020 when Rosemary Ketchum won a seat on the Wheeling City Council. Ketchum is now the first "out" transgender person elected in West Virginia. Mayor Annise Parker, President and CEO of Victory Fund, said, "Rosemary has shattered a lavender ceiling in West Virginia," noting members in the transgender community are

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<sup>4</sup><https://www.infoplease.com/history/us/us-voting-rights>

severely under-represented in elected office.<sup>5</sup> Ketchum helped bridge the gap to equality and diversity within our political system because she specializes in issues of racial justice and LGBTQ+ rights.

In November of 2021, members of Local 2006 stood with Ketchum and other politicians in support of the Freedom to Vote Act. Rallies also occurred in Charleston, W.Va., Local 2001, and the greater Huntington/Parkersburg areas, Local 2009. There is a highly successful push across the country to restrict access to voting, primarily targeting voters of color. The bill would protect our elections from voter suppression. The bill provides essential reforms needed to protect our democratic system.<sup>6</sup> It is historic legislation to strengthen American democracy and promote racial justice. The bill creates protections for individuals subjected to long lines on Election Day, most often Black and Latino voters, by requiring states to ensure that lines last no longer than 30 minutes and restricting states from prohibiting donations of food or water to voters waiting in line.

In February of 2022, members of CWA Local 2006 traveled to Charleston, W.Va., to meet with other labor unions and protest Senate Bill 2. This bill would cut the length of unemployment benefits from 26 weeks to as little as 12 weeks in the state. This bill would take a safety net away from workers - especially those who worked for eight months and then were laid off for the other four months due to severe weather in the Northeastern United States. On March 13, 2022, the House rejected the bill that would have affected the economic status of West Virginians. Also, in March, members of Locals 2006 and Local 2009 attended a press conference at the Capitol building in support of a pay raise for the Trooper Association/ Local 2019.

We must continue to fight for equality for all. And although there has been progress, there is more work to be done within our union. On March 22, 2022, CWA provided a National Day of Action in the form of a two-day training. Nikki Robinson, Local 2201 CWA National Civil Rights and Equity Committee and Ann Vogler, Local 2006, joined forces to collaborate and provide training for District 2-13 members on Racial Injustice. The training was about understanding Racism and Building an Anti-Racist Union. The training was designed to provide CWA members with knowledge and skills to build an anti-racist union, identify union values, and form stronger committees. It was well received by the membership and additional training sessions are planned to be rolled out to other locals within our district this year and next year. To become a more diverse union, we have first to understand anti-racism is the practice of actively identifying and opposing racism. We need to educate ourselves to help change policies, behaviors, and beliefs. The resources are there, and it is important to provide education to our locals.

Human Rights are the basis for life, liberty, and personal security. The path to full voting rights for all American citizens has been long and often challenging. We are building a movement to increase our political power. The examples above show that we must first

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<sup>5</sup> <https://victoryfund.org/news/rosemary-ketchum-becomes-first-out-trans-person-elected-in-west-virginia/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/breaking-down-freedom-vote-act>



educate ourselves and our membership to make change within our locals and our government. We must ORGANIZE and stand IN UNITY for issues important to working families while fighting for change and positively impacting our membership's health, social and economic status. Through effective community and political action, we increase CWA's power to make a positive change for racial and social justice.

## Equal Rights Amendment - The Time Is Now

*Karen Pearce, CWA Local 7704*

Women have been fighting for equal protection under the law for a century. Having protections in the workplace creates a culture where predatory behavior is not tolerated, and everyone can feel safe, respected, and paid equitably. There has been extraordinary progress in the movement toward full equality. While Alice Paul began it all in 1923, and Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1972, by 1982, only thirty-five states had ratified the amendment; three votes shy of the necessary thirty-eight. But in 2017, Nevada ratified the ERA, the first state in 40 years to do so. Then the state of Illinois ratified it in 2018, and the state of Virginia ratified it on January 27th, 2020. On March 17, 2021, the United States House of Representatives voted for the second time to dissolve the time limit written in the amendment's introduction. While it has not been taken up in the Senate yet, there is hope it will pass both houses of Congress this current session after its 2021 bipartisan and bicameral introduction!

Some of the earliest organizing efforts in the United States were young women working at industrial mills. From that point forward, the labor movement has played a leading role in advancing women's rights. "An injury to one is an injury to all" has long been a labor slogan. If an isolated group can be paid less or treated unequally in the workforce, it affects all labor.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, women played an active role in various community-based social protests in Great Britain. However, as industrialization progressed, the emergence of a distinct sexual division of labor and the gradual separation of work and home redefined gender roles and relationships. The women of Great Britain who protested the miners' strike so that their husbands could work in the 1980s proved that women are effective labor organizers and that labor includes both women and men.

In early February 2022, the CWA National Women's Committee members produced over 140 signed postcards urging U.S. Senators to sign onto Senate Joint Resolution 1 (SJR1) to eliminate the deadline for the ratification of the ERA prohibiting discrimination based on sex. On February 15th, 2022, the CWA Local 7704 Women's Committee retired members group lobbied at the Utah State Capitol to deliver postcards to lawmakers to ratify the ERA in Utah—one of the remaining states yet to ratify it.

Women's Committee members expanded the campaign by sending postcards to U.S. Senators to support the publication of the ERA. In March 2022 the postcard campaign continued until all available postcards were depleted. This time the target of the postcard campaign was for the National Archivist, David Ferreira, to certify and publish the ERA. To date, it is still unpublished, and as of mid-April, Ferreira is retiring from his position. District 7 Women's Committees will participate in the ongoing campaign to publish the ERA along with the National Women's Committee as soon as the ERA Coalition advises on the next target or action. This demonstrates the passion, dedication, and values of CWA women.

On March 31st, 2022, Utah Women's Committee members attended Ordinary Equality presented by the Women's Literary Club. According to a report from the European think-tank International IDEA, the United States was added to the list of "backsliding" democracies for the first time.<sup>7</sup> A decline in civil liberties, checks on government, questioning the legitimacy of the 2020 election, and the continuous efforts to suppress participation in elections are just some of the indications of serious problems with the fundamentals of democracy in the U.S.

CWA has a grassroots coalition of women, CWA Women for Political Power, who can quickly mobilize and understand that change requires both standing up and speaking out. Assisting in the ERA movement is a natural fit. Furthermore, the COVID pandemic opened our eyes to the ramifications of inequity for everyone. CWA members worked from their homes while others worked in offices and outdoors and experienced the difficulties which arose with homeschooling, daycare closures, and mandatory overtime hours that demanded a flexible and accommodating work-life balance.

In March of 2022, the CWA National Women's and CR&E Committees participated in the training class, Building an Anti-Racist Union. This was in preparation for training District 7 members in that same subject. In April 2022, CWA activists phone-banked for the confirmation of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson as Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States. This historical confirmation is the result of the movement to advance women. The confirmation of Justice Brown Jackson is a historic victory for both the women's movement and the fight for racial equity - the ideology that defines democracy.

During the annual face-to-face meeting for National Human Rights Committee members, myself, District 7 Civil Rights & Equity Representative Rasean Clayton, and PHEW Representative Marlene Jimenez, collaborated to plan workshops at the District 7 Convention to be held in the fall of 2022. Over the last one hundred years since the onset of the ERA, significant movement has been made by working women who got their start in the industrial mills, organized, and fought for fairness in the workplace. The women of CWA continue to fight for fairness by educating our members at the local level via women's committees' actions and forming new women's committees.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-backsliding-democracy-list-idea-thinktank-global-democracies/>

# From Community Service to Political Leadership - CWA Leads The Way

*Kimberly Liska, CWA Local 4302*

Albert Einstein once said, “Only a life lived in service of others is worth living.” CWA understands that the success of an organization is a sum of its parts, and this is seen no better than in its commitment to working on all sides of the CWA triangle. Representation is at our base, giving us the ability to address the job issues, ensure workplace safety, and to negotiate fair wages and benefits. Everyone knows there is power in numbers and organizing, both internally and externally, which is essential to combat declining membership. But, to hold this all together, we must use political actions and build alliances with community organizations that share our goals and values to make real change. Our responsibility is to protect workers’ rights while creating a culture that values social and economic justice. The CWA Women’s Committees, leaders, and union activists have put these ideas into action. They set the standard on what it means to be socially conscious and activate a politically engaged union.

Humanitarian service projects are at the heart of CWA’s local Women’s Committees throughout our union. In the last six months, CWA members in District 4 have helped organize food and sock drives and built numerous “little free libraries” and many “blessing boxes” which are stocked with food and personal care items. We have volunteered at Labor Shares/Union Cares events and partnered with Feed the Streets to feed the homeless. Additionally, we have donated to foundations that aid victims of violent crimes, human trafficking, rape victims, LGBTQIA+ issues, and Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) abuse. We have attended rallies with the Poor People’s Campaign and other groups of workers at the grassroots level attempting to organize a union for the first time. Currently, a District 4 peanut butter and jelly drive is underway to donate to families with children in schools who struggle to provide food during the summer months. The importance of this work goes further than just the obvious goodwill that they provide, but increases CWA’s visibility in the community allowing us to network, collaborate, and build partnerships that together can break through existing difficult barriers.

CWA’s political activists have recognized that the climate is ripe for change and have taken that opportunity to educate members on important pending legislation that would aid working families. Members across the District took part in monthly text and phone banks supporting the Build Back Better Act and the Freedom to Vote Act. “The Build Back Better Act would bring the United States closer to meeting international human rights standards and begin to repair a badly broken social safety net.”<sup>8</sup> The bill would dedicate funding over ten years to critical social programs that would advance human rights, such as the right to an adequate standard of living, housing, sanitation, and water. The bill also protects the rights of children, aging people, people with disabilities, and workers. This bill could be the

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/12/20/us-failure-pass-build-back-better-act-imperils-rights>

pivotal breakthrough we need to improve CWA members' lives and those in our communities. The Freedom to Vote Act is the most consequential voting rights bill passed in fifty years. This "bill addresses the biggest problems facing our democracy, from efforts to restrict access to the ballot, campaign finance laws, voter roll purges, to extreme partisan gerrymandering."<sup>9</sup>

Gerrymandered voting districts often produce extreme and polarizing politicians that further result in policies and laws that don't reflect the will of the people. Despite widespread support for women's health issues and access to free and fair elections, legislators in states like Ohio consistently act contrary to this support. This was egregiously clear after passing the Human Rights Protection Act (heartbeat bill), attempting to overturn a woman's right to choose, which is protected in the SCOTUS decision *Roe v. Wade*. Currently, we are in the redistricting process, which will be distorted by flagrant gerrymandering. Even though Ohioans in 2015, with a 71% majority, approved a constitutional amendment to combat the issue of gerrymandering, progress has stalled.<sup>10</sup> The Ohio Supreme Court has rejected four redistricting maps submitted by the Ohio Redistricting Commission. Passing the Freedom to Vote Act would establish minimum standards for early and mail-in voting, modernize voter registration, end extreme partisan gerrymandering for congressional districts, and "create a path for campaigns for Congress to be funded through contributions from everyday Americans," thus restoring the ability for the voters to elect politicians.<sup>11</sup>

CWA and other union leaders know that holding elected officials accountable is imperative but often difficult. As a response, CWA has partnered with the AFL-CIO in the Women in Power program to identify potential women candidates to run for public office. Currently, District 4 women serve their communities on Executive Boards of State AFL-CIOs, National Executive Board of CLUW, National APRI Executive Boards, Democratic Executive Boards, Credit Union Boards, Workers' Rights Board of Jobs With Justice, Board of State Bureau Workers Compensation, city councils, township boards, and as County Commissioner. CWA leaders have recognized that to see change, you must be the change and that leading by example is the best way to carry this out.

Community service builds valuable leadership skills and allows us to expand our network organically by partnering on shared causes. These leadership skills and coalitions often give our members the needed foundation to lead their communities, resulting in a change from the inside out. Supporting legislation and politicians dedicated to preserving, protecting, and expanding our democracy is paramount for creating a progressive culture to achieve the social and economic justice that we are looking for as a union and country. Building and reinforcing the current structures and committees within CWA will make it clear that we

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/breaking-down-freedom-vote-act>

<sup>10</sup> <https://wp.api.aclu.org/news/voting-rights/ohios-new-state-legislative-maps-are-unconstitutional-heres-w>  
[hy](#)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/breaking-down-freedom-vote-act>

are committed to creating a just and equal society while protecting the interests of our membership and our communities.

## Human Trafficking In America

*Kimberly Johnson, CWA Local 29011*

Myth: Human Trafficking does not occur in the United States. It only happens in other countries.

Fact: Human trafficking exists in every country, including the United States. It exists nationwide, in cities, suburbs, rural towns, places familiar to you, and even in our communities.

Human trafficking is not just the smuggling of people; it occurs when there is force, coercion, or fraud to exploit a person into slave labor or sexual exploitation. Human trafficking can happen to people of all ages, races, genders, and religious backgrounds. The United States is ranked as one of the worst countries for human trafficking. With an estimated 199,000 cases per year, Nevada, Mississippi, and Florida are the states with the highest rates of human trafficking.<sup>12</sup> One in five human trafficking victims are children exploited through child pornography or child labor.

Human trafficking is rooted in socioeconomic issues, racism, political instability, poverty, gender inequality, mental health, and addictions. Traffickers prey on marginalized individuals due to racism, those vulnerable due to homelessness, women who have been abused, immigrants who have just arrived in the United States, the unemployed, and those suffering from addictions. Traffickers are skilled in detecting these vulnerabilities and manipulating people in desperation to their advantage.

In 2015 AFA-CWA started our fight against human trafficking with the program “100,000 Eyes in the Sky.” Entertainment events, super-sized sports events, and large conventions provide traffickers with an easy way to profit heavily during those types of events. For these events, both men and women are transported cross country and overseas as sex workers. AFA-CWA implemented training for flight attendants to try to identify victims of trafficking and report it to authorities.

Since then, AFA-CWA has partnered with the Department of Homeland Security and the “Blue Initiative” to end human trafficking. January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and on January 11th, 2022, AFA-CWA took a stand against human trafficking by recommitting ourselves to end trafficking on our planes. As Flight Attendants and aviation's first responders, we are uniquely positioned to identify human traffickers and assist their victims. All over the world, people wore blue articles of clothing in observance of the fourth annual #WearBlueDay to encourage greater public awareness about the scourge of human trafficking.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/human-trafficking-statistics-by-state>

Through our Master Executive Council (MEC) newsletters representing several carriers, we shared the information for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Partner Panel: Combating Human Trafficking in Aviation Webinar. This information reached over 25,000 Flight Attendants. Flight Attendants had the opportunity to attend the voluntary training and participate in discussions with the panel. The training covered topics such as: What is Human Trafficking?, Indicators of Human Trafficking Activity, Reporting Suspected Human Trafficking, and Indicator Challenge. The training was also available for Flight Attendants through our AFA-CWA Online Learning Academy. Hundreds of AFA-CWA members have been trained!

The “Blue Initiative” also offers a “General Public Indicators Training Course” and a “First Responder Training Course” to recognize the signs of trafficking, assist victims of human trafficking, and learn how to report cases to local or federal law enforcement.

Human trafficking is a billion-dollar business! As CWA members, we can lobby to have stricter penalties for those convicted of human trafficking and more workplace support for those who are survivors of trafficking. We can be the ones to make a difference in our workspaces and our communities. “100,000 Eyes” are not just needed in the sky, those eyes are needed right here on the ground at our borders, schools, shelters, factories, rural areas, cities, and communities.

The many members of AFA-CWA will continue to support the Blue Initiative and the fight against human trafficking through our ad campaigns throughout our locals and by supporting the #WearBlueDay in January 2023.

FACT: If we ACT, we can put an end to human trafficking!

## Social Justice, Voter Rights For Felons

*Yolanda Pearson, CWA Local 3204*

*“Anything that works against you can also work for you once you understand the Principle of Reverse.” ~ Maya Angelou*

While being an activist for social justice and educating my sisters and brothers on numerous issues, many discussions arose on social justice. Being an activist is a day-to-day job and also a learning experience. One job is fighting for various legislative bills that should help not only the rich but everyone. Social justice is a fight for all. And much like the Maya Angelou quote above says, knowledge about your voting rights can turn around the current stream of voting restrictions that are becoming laws in many states across our land, including Georgia.

One of my strong concerns in the area of voting rights is the rights of felons. In researching voting rights, I found that many convicted felons have no education about their rights once they are released from prison. During interviews with politicians in my home state of

Georgia running for elected public office, including senators, judges, mayors, etc., I asked them, “what would you do while in the office with respect to educating felons on their right to vote?” Many stated, “By educating them.” Yet no one said what that education would look like! However, some of these same politicians will fight to get redistricting to include prisons when the Census is being counted to benefit their political party. Yet a simple question cannot be answered with a plan already mapped out.

Many felons believe they will never have the right to vote once they are convicted as a felon. This is incorrect information, as some states automatically restore voting rights to individuals after they exit jail or prison. Completion of sentencing is defined as a person who has completed prison time and is no longer on parole or probation. We have to take a stronger stance on educating and ensuring those eligible to vote are educated on how to register, the date of the election, and where the polls are located. Education for felons should start in prison and be included with the release documents they are given upon completing their parole or probation.

As an advocate, my focus is also on making sure that education is put in place for those once labeled as felons, so they know their rights upon completion of parole or probation. For instance, we could provide them with directions on where to register or tell them how to clean their records, so if they would like to vote, there will be no issue when going to the polls.

So the question remains, are they receiving justice by not being educated? As activists for democracy, we are part of the problem if we do not stand up for those who are not knowledgeable of their voting rights and do nothing to fix the problem. It is time now to move forward by taking the lead on addressing this issue and educating felons on their right to vote. We must gather our fellow activists and stand on the steps of the Capitol to get the attention of those that can make the change.

I promise to continue to educate my fellow union members on the disenfranchisement of felons so that I can update members on the actions that District 3 members have taken to educate members on this issue. Thousands of voters can help us win elections, vote to elect politicians who will fight for working-class people, and represent our union values. Unfortunately, the people who could do this voting are not aware that they can vote. CWA members can make a difference in changing the status quo for felons. I leave you with the quote below by A. Philip Randolph:

*“Equality is the heart and essence of democracy, freedom, and justice, equality of opportunity in the industry, in labor unions, schools and colleges, government, politics, and before the law. There must be no dual standards injustice, no dual rights, privileges, duties, or responsibilities of citizenship. No dual forms of freedom.”*

~ A. Philip Randolph

# The Impact Of Community Service At The Bargaining Table

*Tonia Dumas, CWA Local 9400*

*“The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, government relief for the destitute, and, above all, new wage levels that meant not mere survival but a tolerable life.” ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.*

After the 2021 CWA Convention, District 9 began putting ideas into action with respect to collective bargaining by making our presence known in the community. This reflects our union values, but it is also a strength we bring to the bargaining table each time we engage in collective bargaining. Our outward concern and actions for our community reflect the three sides of the CWA triangle: movement building, organizing, and representation. We do not just agree on any contract and then walk away from the bargaining table. We arrive at the bargaining table with confidence because we know we deserve a fair contract. Our members then go out into the community and help others see the benefit of having a good job with a good union contract and being good neighbors. Those around us who are watching say to themselves, “Look what they have!”

These activities encourage non-union workers to want to be in a union. Recently many workers are forming unions at worksites that were considered impossible locations to organize a union, but they did it and now have collectively bargained contracts. As we all know, thanks to the media, we have seen the “Goliath vs. David” examples of new collective bargaining. In the example of the Staten Island, N.Y., Amazon warehouse effort and the numerous Starbucks Coffee shops in various states around our country, workers are standing up to their employers and demanding better working conditions, fair pay, better healthcare, and more!

The collective bargaining movement is spreading as workers realize that they do not have to just take what the company dictates to them, and management cannot be challenged. U.S. workers are waking up to realize that they are legally allowed to collectively bargain for a fair contract. These inspiring new union shops reflect CWA values to our current members and future union members, which District 9 is leading by example.

District 9 supports communities through partnering and fundraising with other pro-labor organizations. Local 9400, along with our ally, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU-NCC), and other organizations, paired up to help improve the lives of people that live and work in Paramount, Calif. We worked with a local organization to unload trucks and then bag over 300 turkeys to pass out before Thanksgiving. We also worked alongside another group to offer COVID testing and vaccination information so that community members would know where the testing and vaccination centers are located. We have partnered with a local women's shelter donating clothes and food once a month, and on the second Sunday of each month, we cook and serve dinner for the ladies of the shelter. Another example is partnering with the Cypress Mandela Training Center, where students



are offered free training to prepare them for positions in well-paying jobs. Classes are offered for 16 weeks to these students, and one class is pre-apprentice construction which also offers life skills and employment assistance.

With regard to involvement with CBTU-NCC, we hosted our 2nd Annual CBTU Scholarship & Gala Dinner. At the Gala Dinner, we presented awards to individuals in the northern California area who have contributed to the labor movement. We held a fundraiser for scholarships of \$500.00 or \$1,000.00 to give to our youth to empower them to seek further education. Lastly, we walked to support the Oakland Teachers' 1-day strike for unfair labor practices. The Oakland school district wanted to close schools, relocate to other areas, and heavily impact our black and brown communities. We are very proud of our efforts at Local 9400, and we believe that others are noticing our efforts. With this, we hope to be inspiring others to join a union. These actions are by just one Local; however, many other District 9 Locals are doing similar actions, and when you put them all together, you get noticed – especially by your bosses!

One last action that needs mentioning here is the training classes hosted by myself and my union sibling, Mark Bautista of Local 9404, entitled, Building an Anti-Racist Union. Before we gathered the numerous District 9 participants for the class, Mark and I were able to attend and receive training from the CWA Human Rights Department and all of our fellow National Women's and Civil Rights and Equity Committee members. The three-day train-the-trainer included recognizing implicit bias and skills in forming a human rights committee. This was a great training experience, and we learned how to train our members on how to recognize racism and its effects on our ability to build power. The two-day National Day of Action on March 23rd and 24th was well received by the District 9 members who participated. Constructive conversations also occurred regarding racism and how we can make changes in our workplaces, locals, and communities.

In conclusion, all of the actions noted in this report make us all CWA STRONG! And we take this strength with us to the bargaining table each time we sit at the table. The community knows who we are and why we do the actions we take. The company also knows what actions we take outside of the workplace, which gives us an edge at the bargaining table. When you put together the actions of District 9 and combine them with what other CWA Locals across the country are doing, you get noticed as good-souled and hardworking people who deserve a fair contract! I will end with a quote below by a strong woman, Hillary Clinton, who ran against one of the most horrific offenders of the Labor Movement in the 2016 presidential election, *"We need to support new organizing strategies for employees who too often have never had the benefit of collective bargaining, and we have to resist the assault on workers' rights."*

# The Impact of The Women's Movement at IUE-CWA Locals

*LaTonya Wilcox, CWA Local 81381*

As we are in the post-pandemic phase of movement-building, it is important to transition the discussion into action. Women's committees at IUE-CWA Locals demonstrate the call for action in our collective communities. This report aims to follow up on actions taken since reporting at the National Convention. The current CWA Civil Rights and Equity and Women's Committees adopted the motto "*Where there is injustice...you will find...JUST US.*" The motto demonstrates our commitment to not only identifying the problem but also moving to action and providing results! A quote from Manwar Khan says, "Speak up for the silent; you may be surprised to discover how badly they need you."

A key element to moving from identifying the problem and moving to action is alignment. The Oxford dictionary defines alignment as being in a position of agreement or alliance. Alignment with being educated and alignments with building coalitions with labor allies provide opportunities for change agents. For example, agents in policy writing, agents in information/education, and agents in human support/action can yield results for change.

Local 81381 thought it important to reaffirm connections and engagement with our local AFL-CIO in New York State. In an effort to increase membership and reactivate paper members to action, we began working with the local Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). Our Local will systematically reach out to our current or past members, politicians, local labor organizations, and community partners via correspondences and planned meet and greets. I am also on the ballot for my local legislative district for the Democratic Committee in my county in New York state, looking to be a part of the political process. We also have plans to join and support labor and community partners to sponsor one representative from their organization to participate in actions with us. We look forward to expanding these actions to other locals within IUE-CWA.

Members of Local 81381 proposed to amend and increase support for the Ukrainian Builder's Union. We also voted to increase financial support for Starbucks Workers to assist with transportation to worksites in the City of Rochester, N.Y. This amendment was significant for workers since management closed the coffee houses and transferred employees to a suburban area with a much higher commute to work.

As a Grievance Co-Chairs, it is my responsibility to motivate and provide support to stewards regarding the local's bargaining agreements while encouraging involvement in local committees. This involvement includes community partners, especially those committed to addressing social issues like racism and workplace bullying. This all translates to not being silent about any injustice we witness. Lastly, we recently attended a seminar with local labor members sponsored by a law firm in Buffalo, N.Y., providing current updates on legal cases impacting labor in New York State.

The members of our Local hope that our actions will inspire others to become human rights activists. Lead by example! In his speech at the Audubon Ballroom, Malcolm X said, "...if you give people a thorough understanding of what confronts them and the basic causes that produce it, they'll create their own program, and when the people create a program, you get action."<sup>13</sup>

On March 8-10, 2022, the National CWA National Women's Committee members participated in a train-the-trainer for CWA's Building an Anti-Racist Union training series. We then worked together in presenting this training in our Districts and Sectors for the "National Day of Training" on March 24th and 25th. This interactive training was well received by our siblings. The participants learned engagement skills in the breakout rooms, and their feedback to the trainers was insightful. Those trained were very excited about the potential of making fellow members aware of how our implicit bias impacts our choices out in the world.

In celebration of International Women's History Month, the National Women's Committee worked on the "I am Woman... I Make History" video sent to over four thousand members on the CWA Human Rights Department's email list. We also applaud the statement by CWA in celebration of the appointment of soon-to-be Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.

Since 2015, our Local has been involved with the IUE-CWA Diversity Ambassador program. I was a part of the first class of Ambassadors and am currently serving as a part of the Steering Committee. The Diversity Ambassadors Program brings together IUE-CWA union siblings from across the county from diverse areas of labor, socio-economic, genders, and identifications to celebrate what we contribute and provide training and strategies to move our work environment and communities into fairness and inclusion. We understand that although we may not agree on everything, be respectful. April 4-5, 2022, was the first time since the pandemic began that Ambassadors were able to meet for a training class and reconnect face to face. In our training, we address issues by beginning with identifying who we are, the foundation of our bias, and how these biases can impact our worldview and engagement with others. We are excited to have the opportunity to continue this work and receive new directives in building an anti-racist and inclusive union at IUE-CWA and CWA at large.

The women of IUE-CWA are making an impactful voice at our Locals, at our jobs, and in our communities. We take what we learn at our training and our education and then share it with the members of our Locals and communities while leading by action. Our union members are growing into better people and better activists. Women at IUE-CWA prove that any woman can work next to a man and do the same job equally. We will continue to support each other, male and female, and grow together, side by side until the workplace is fairly and equally represented.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/at-the-audubon/>

## The Power of Collective Action

*Elizabeth Mercado, CWA Local 1101*

*“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, and equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.” ~ Eleanor Roosevelt*

When we as Union workers diligently work to advance our union, from organizing and negotiating for better working conditions, wages, and quality of life to equal work opportunities, we become Union Strong!

Since its inception, CWA has addressed workers’ rights and human rights and has made it an important part of our work. Union members across the country have joined the fight for human rights to ensure equality and equity. Our journey is one that never ends. We continue to build upon the legacy that trade unions and union workers established over a century ago. We continue to educate and inform our members in pursuing the legacy of being an anti-bias, anti-racist, and anti-sexist union that CWA is known to be.

On March 23 and 24th, 2022, the National Women’s and Civil Rights and Equity Committees held National Days of Action. Implicit Bias and Building an Anti-Racist Union training classes were held across CWA’s footprint nationwide. What an exciting opportunity this was to bring awareness to our union brothers and sisters and solidify CWA’s goals of being an anti-racist union.

With the support of District 1’s Vice President Dennis Trainor, Assistant to the Vice President, Gladys Finnigan, and Tonya Hodges, District 1’s Human Rights Coordinator, a class of participants was organized for the National Days of Action training. Discussions were held on recognizing Implicit Bias, understanding what we need to do to become an anti-racist union, and how to form human rights committees. Implicit and racial bias, also known as unconscious bias, shows up in our workplaces, communities, and everyday lives. There are many examples of Implicit bias, with race, gender, and sexuality being primary categories.

While tackling the topic of racism, we looked at how prejudice, power, and oppression are racism and how the 4 I’s of oppression (ideological, interpersonal, institutional, and internalized) are defined. Ideological is the idea that one group is better than the other. Interpersonal oppression is how that idea shows up in how we treat each other, interact with each other, or attempt to control one another. Institutional, also referred to as systemic racism, is how the idea that one group is better gets embedded into our systems.

Internalized oppression refers to how we have been shaped or impacted by the previous forms of oppression. The training was well received and effective. The participants understood that we as people and a union have a personal responsibility to become anti-racist and identify and dismantle racism at its core.

We look at how policy-making perpetuates the flow of power in a preferred direction in the political arena. CWA District 1 is a big proponent of endorsing legislation and candidates who also support and defend workers' rights and social justice issues from the PRO Act, which restores workers' rights to freely form a union and collectively bargain in the workplace, to tax reform proposals. We have also supported the Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act. CWA has engaged in negotiations with employers on workers safety protections, leave and pay policies during the COVID-19 pandemic.. Also, in New York, CWA is spearheading the effort to pass Senate Bill 5117, the New York Broadband Resiliency, Public Safety, and Quality Act, to ensure that rural and low-income communities have the essential communication services they need. This led to CWA's historic victories, including \$1.6 billion in state and federal funding for broadband buildout.

If you aren't taking action, you are being acted upon. How do we as a union take back power?

We organize, mobilize, lobby, and educate current and new members. CWA leadership and members work together against implicit bias, racism, and sexism. We form alliances with our local politicians who support basic human and worker rights. We connect with unions nationwide as we are all the foundation of what this country is made of. We continue to support our members of all races, genders, and economic statuses.

If you want to create equity in the workplace, you start by educating your co-workers. Continue to educate, mobilize, and organize workers nationwide to stand up for their rights. Organize unions where there are none and mobilize workers to give a voice to those fighting to be heard. Lastly, form Human Rights and/or Women's committees at CWA Locals to continue bringing awareness to the oppression surrounding us. This way, we stand in solidarity in the fight against social oppression.

## Why CWA Continues To Support The Human Rights Movement

*Marlene Jimenez, CWA Local 7777*

This year, Local 7777 celebrated Black History & Women's History months to educate members on the importance of the Civil Rights movement and to confront the endurance of systemic political injustices that continue to this day. Since the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923, the United States has continued to experience systemic discrimination, gender inequality in the workplace, and voting restrictions. Fights by union members against unequal pay, workplace harassment, and discrimination also continue.

At the 2017 convention, delegates adopted the "Workers' Rights are Human Rights" slogan and the Fight Forward Resolution. The resolution created the "Fight Forward Program" to grow and strengthen local human rights committees. The convention delegates adopted the resolution for increased focus on establishing functioning Human Rights Committees and Women's committees. Since that convention in 2017, our locals have begun to act on the resolution, thereby making their Locals accountable by having functional Civil Rights & Equity and Woman's Committees. We members of the National Women's Committee are here to help build and share the resources needed for these committees to thrive. For example, the CWA District 7 headquarters appointed committee members to meet monthly with Locals to help them with resources and start new committees around the numerous states within District 7. In our last virtual meeting, we had three participants, and one of them is interested in forming an LGBTQ+ committee which we are very excited to begin. We ask our members for actions that we can all participate in and be proud of.

Local 7777 held a combined Black History and Women's History Month Brunch on March 26, 2022. Our goal was to bring the community and our members together to celebrate, educate, and motivate our members. The brunch raised funds for the Civil Rights and Women's Committees by having captivating guest speakers and lively round table discussions regarding Black and Women's history. Those guest speakers included Margaret Cook, the Vice President of the Public, Health, and Education Workers Sector (PHEW), Susie McAllister, the District 7 Vice President, and Enida Shuku, a District 7 organizer, just to name a few. These are strong women in leadership positions in our district and in our union. Our goal was to show that women can be strong leaders in the workplace and our union while still being mothers who raise children often by themselves. We can do it but not by ourselves; we need each other for support to accomplish great things within the human rights movement collectively.

In November of 2022, I was appointed to the National Women's Committee for PHEW. It is an honor for me to be on this committee. One of my first tasks was to participate in the Building an Anti-Racist Union training. After our training as trainers, we held a training class on this topic for public sector workers. We are helping to build and establish functioning Civil Rights & Equity and Women's Committees in PHEW Locals. These training efforts are our way of reflecting the three sides of the CWA triangle. The Building an Anti-Racist Union training class had 15 participants. We observed a lot of interaction and engagement from the participants. We were excited to hear that several locals already had active Civil Rights and Women's Committees! The participants indicated they wanted to take their knowledge back to the local and educate their members on what they learned about anti-racism and implicit bias. This is the goal of the training and creating new or reinvigorating Civil Rights and Equity and Women's committees. We also followed up with the participants by sending them various resources, including the CWA Human Rights Tool Kit, Human Rights Manual, and the Human Rights Pledge Form.

We encourage all local Presidents to actively create and support Civil Rights Equity & Women's Committees and not just on paper. And to our fellow union siblings, please contact

your National Representative so they can help with resources and then educate members on current civil rights and equity and women's issues that are impacting PHEW members as well as our communities.

Our continued thanks to District Vice Presidents, Sector Presidents, and Local Presidents for their support of Human Rights movements in our union and communities. All CWA Locals need to have a functioning women's committee and civil rights & equity committee. These committees are essential in educating our members on current human rights issues that still exist today. The women of Local 7777, PHEW women, and activists in District 7 promise to continue educating our membership by providing training on anti-racism, and implicit bias, and creating new women's and civil rights committees while also strengthening the existing ones. We are CWA STRONG!