

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

Report of the CWA National Civil Rights & Equity Committee

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CWA National Civil Rights & Equity Committee

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Table of Contents

Where are they now? Highlighting the Disparity in the Search for Missing Women of Color.

By Sylvia Chapman, CWA Local 4250, and Reginald Small, CWA Local 6215

4

Broadband For ALL

By Lee Larkins, IUE 87456, and Vonda Wilkins, CWA

6

Surveillance Technology and Human Rights

By Nikki Robinson, CWA local 2201

8

Redistricting and the Effects on Labor

By Reginald Pierre-Louis, CWA 1106, and Mark Bautista, CWA 9404

11

Health Disparities in the African American Community

By Kimberly Johnson, AFA-CWA Local 29011, and Errol Minor, CWA Local 3902

13

Garnering the Power of Our Collective to Prevent Gun Violence

By Tim Fitzgerald, TNG-CWA Local 32035, and Teesha Foreman, PHEW-CWA Local 1180

15

Summary and Recommendations

18

Where are they now? Highlighting the Disparity in the Search for

Missing Women of Color.

Sylvia Chapman, CWA Local 4250, and Reginald Small, CWA Local 6215

Data from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) show that over a half a million people in this country were reported missing in 2021. Of the estimated 521,705 missing people, 38% are people of color.¹ The 2020 census shows that approximately 13% of the population (41,104,200) is Black.²

Despite making up a smaller share of the overall U.S. population, women of color account for a more significant share of missing women. Cases involving people of color get a tiny percentage of national media coverage.

In Wyoming, for instance, 710 Indigenous people were reported missing between 2011 and September 2020. Of that startling number, 57% were women or girls. Sadly, only 30 percent of Indigenous homicide victims in Wyoming receive newspaper coverage, compared to 51 percent of white homicide victims.³ Gabby Petito's (March 19, 1999- C. late August 2021) death illustrates this problem. Her disappearance received widespread media attention, which continued after her body was found in Wyoming. Meanwhile the murders of dozens of Indigenous people in Wyoming went unreported.

There is a definite disparity in reporting missing women of color compared to missing white women in the media. This disparity affects the treatment or urgency to find missing women of color and the potential to find them alive. In an article by Dr. Jason Campbell published on August 23, 2022, he stated, "One of the most glaring examples of this disparity is the way media often depict missing white women as opposed to missing Black women. White women are often described as 'angels' or 'daughters' while Black women are referred to as 'prostitutes,' 'drug addicts' or merely 'runaways' who aren't truly missing. This difference in language perpetuates the idea that white women are more worthy of sympathy and help than Black women."⁴

¹ Black and Missing in America, <https://www.blackandmissinginc.com/statistics/>

² Black and Missing in America, <https://www.blackandmissinginc.com/statistics/>

³ Missing and Murdered Indigenous People, Statewide Report, Wyoming, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IGNNwqfkEAazq7xyNPjm6DJcOReN9SrC/view>

⁴ Unequal Justice: Why Missing Women of Color Are Not Treated with Urgency, <https://www.drjcofthedc.com/blog/unequal-justice-why-missing-women-of-color-are-not-treated-with-urgency>

The late journalist Gwen Ifill (September 29, 1955-November 14, 2016) coined a term to describe this disparity as “missing white woman syndrome.” Media commentators still use this term to describe missing person cases involving white, young, attractive, and upper-middle-class women relative to the attention given to missing women who are not white and of lower socio-economic class. This disparity affects how the media covers the search for missing women of color and how their cases are handled by law enforcement. All victims, regardless of race, ethnicity, economic status, or sexual orientation, deserve the same media coverage and prioritization by law enforcement. The rate at which women are victimized is an unacceptable tragedy. Whether people are willing to admit it or not, our society continues to actively support violence against women in many ways, such as rape culture, domestic violence, and sex trafficking. Yet when media coverage of cases like Gabby Petito’s inundate social media and news feeds, it overshadows non-white women victims. This is not to say Gabby Petito and all missing and murdered white women do not deserve recognition, but the care with which their cases are handled should not come at the expense of others, nor should it be given higher priority. We cannot continue to ignore those who are marginalized by society.

We, as CWA leaders, members, and advocates, must work to elect politicians, regardless of party, who will have the interests and concerns of all citizens as their priority. One example is a hearing held on March 3, 2022, by the House Oversight and Reform Committee to address “The Neglected Epidemic of Missing BIPOC (Black Indigenous and People of Color) Women and Girls. Jamie Raskin, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, held the hearing to examine the disproportionate rates by which BIPOC women and girls go missing. The disparate treatment their cases receive by law enforcement and media and potential solutions to address this crisis were discussed.⁵

During the hearing, the need for federal and state governments to step up to address the gaps in care, protection, and data collection for this problem, along with the need for Congress to act to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Frederick Douglas Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2021 and pass the Protect Black Women and Girls Act was reiterated.

“It is not possible to be in favor of justice for some people and not be in favor of justice for all people.”- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

⁵ <https://www.congress.gov/event/117th-congress/house-event/LC68043/text?s=1&r=>

Broadband For All

Lee Larkins, IUE 87465, Vonda Wilkins, CWA 7019

“Rich people have access to high-speed Internet; many poor people still don’t” - Eleanor Bell.

The advancement of modern technology has created the need for high-speed internet now more than ever. Our new way of interacting with the world requires digital devices at our fingertips instantaneously. We need to have the proper broadband speeds for all workers and students. The digital divide has been a subject matter for years among advocates and legislators; however, the lack of broadband for all gained immediate awareness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is a call to action; we will discuss the impact digital redlining has had on access to reliable internet in low-income communities; compile the lack of internet by demographic data; and illustrate our strategic plan to bring awareness to this issue and increase affordable broadband in our communities.

Millions of people across rural and low-income communities need more reliable, affordable internet services. People who need consistent and robust internet access are left behind scholastically and economically. Research has shown that union families are among those who have suffered the ramifications of digital redlining. Union households being forced to work and attend school from home with inadequate internet speeds has exposed the redlining epidemic that is occurring today. Broadband technologies are not all created equally and telecommunications companies use it to their advantage while CWA members are first to suffer the impacts of layoffs. A Pew Research report found that 29% of Black and 35% of Latinx households do not have a wired broadband connection. For low-income households earning less than \$30,000 per year, 43% lack home broadband, compared to 8% earning over \$75,000 yearly.⁶ Telecommunication companies provide broadband services to millions of residential and small business customers profiting over \$20 billion in revenues yearly.

After Congress passed President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into Law, CWA’s Broadband Brigade hit the ground running, introducing model bills within state legislatures to set standards so that the funds are used to create good jobs and build reliable internet service. We understand that this once-in-a-generation investment in our nation’s infrastructure, with \$65 billion allocated for dependable broadband services, is also the opportunity to bring back union jobs. CWA activists will continue applying pressure on our telecommunications employers to invest in next-generation networks built and supported by our members. We will also educate our allies about our priorities. From 2021-22, the Brigade team held CWA’s Build Broadband Better campaign presentations with groups including the AFL-CIO State Federations and Central Labor Council Leaders, Democratic Governors Association, Democratic Attorney Generals, and Democratic Legislative Campaign Committees.

Increasing affordable, accessible, and reliable Broadband is a top priority for CWA, along with ensuring the work is done by union workers. This will be accomplished by passing state bills

⁶ Pew Research Center, “Mobile Technology and Home Broadband 2021,” 6/3/2021.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/06/03/mobile-technology-and-home-broadband-2021/>

around the infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Law and by engaging with state broadband commissions. CWA will work with members to build a team that will carry the labor in building relationships with key elected officials, research model bills, and facilitate action days. We will identify coalition partners in communities like Chicanos Por La Causa that share CWA's common goals, such as making consumers aware of the approximate 14 billion dollars allotted in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

We will also work to close the gap in addressing disparate treatment around broadband access. It's pivotal that districts have the necessary education and tools to pass along to members and communities on contacting their state constituents to push the essential need for the internet, just like the need for water and electricity.

One example is District 7's Workers United Against Racism at Lumen (WUARL) Committee that will continue exposing the digital divide telecommunication companies have caused by providing data like the redlining reports gathered to date, in addition to applying pressure to Lumen's CEO Kate Johnson about the necessary need in all communities receiving Broadband for All. WUARL will interview technicians and union households to identify areas lacking reliable internet and publicly share its findings.

CWA has made awareness around providing "Broadband for all" to help low-income and rural areas a priority. This is too important, and we must continue this momentum because we are a community of resilient hard working union members who believe in equality for all. Together, we can ensure that our communities have access to innovative technologies. To make this a reality, we need everyone in all districts to initiate the action of contacting their legislative constituents and demanding reliable "Broadband for all." We must also remind all telecommunication companies about the \$65 billion dollar Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, H.R. 3684, which includes more jobs. That work must be returned to union workers laid off due to corporate greed. Taking part in phone banking and text banking campaigns to expand awareness in our communities about the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is another urgent action that will aid in closing the gap of the digital divide. Our message is simple - the expansion of broadband is essential, as is using skilled union workers to ensure the job is done the right way.

Surveillance Technology and Human Rights

Nikki Robinson, CWA 2201-VA

“Arguing that you don't care about the right to privacy because you have nothing to hide is no different from saying you don't care about free speech because you have nothing to say.”
— Edward Snowden, a former NSA contractor (also known as a whistleblower)

In other words, the right to privacy, like the right to free speech, is fundamental for all Americans. I reference the word privacy, but with surveillance technology, it's no longer guaranteed. CWA, supports privacy and human rights and will continue to combat the increased inequalities this type of technology has caused all over the United States.

Historically biased policing patterns have contributed to higher rates of interrogation and arrest, and communities of color are often overrepresented in law enforcement databases compared to the overall U.S. population. NAACP reports that Black and Latino individuals are five times more likely than white individuals to be stopped by police officers in the United States, and Black and Latino individuals comprise 56% of the U.S. incarcerated population. So, biased data is already built into the system, and using AI technology to compare images to mugshots will exacerbate existing patterns of racial inequity in policing. To add insult to injury, it is a known fact that there are technical inaccuracies that lead facial recognition algorithms developed in the United States to be significantly more likely to return false positives or negatives for Black, Asian, and Native American individuals compared to white individuals. An analysis was performed to find that more errors especially affect light-skinned men and darker-skinned women. When disparate accuracy rates in facial recognition technology intersect with the effects of bias in certain policing practices, people of color are at a greater risk of misidentification for a crime that they have no affiliation with. **So how is this not a violation of Human Rights?**

Surveillance technology has a dark side. It's everywhere and as the technology becomes more readily available, it's difficult to prevent your data from being collected or your face from being saved in unknown databases. This threatens civil liberties and increases the risk of blackmail, coercion, and discrimination. Other hazards that this type of technology can bring are:

- The “watcher can easily abuse restrictions and there is no control over public cameras.”
- The effectiveness has yet to be proven.
- Government and private companies can conduct surveillance if it can be justified as a national security issue.
- In digital technology such as social media, the information is stored and shared with private companies, who then, in turn, share it with police authorities.

So how is this not a violation of Human Rights? We can go back to the time of Martin Luther King Jr. with the 1963 March on Washington. King had long been watched by law enforcement, including the FBI, in the months and years before the speech. Surveillance of King in the 1960s was focused primarily on whether he and his movement were being infiltrated by communists,

according to historians.⁷ But for King to be labeled the most dangerous man alive was already a biased notion based on the “watcher.” During this period, surveillance by government and private companies had a long history of collecting data from civilians but the trade-offs do not affect all individuals equally because a violation by me can have a different outcome from you (read between the lines). This data collection has inappropriately affected communities of color under both past and current circumstances and political regimes. If big companies like IBM had previous agreements with law enforcement and now have chosen to disassociate themselves based on the backlash of human rights and privacy concerns, which should tell you plenty. **So how is this not a violation of Human Rights?**

There is currently no check-and-balance system in place to prevent abuse from occurring. Individuals do not know what data is being collected, where it’s stored, or how it’s being used. Facial recognition is a form of surveillance technology and has become one of the most critical and commonly used technology posing special risks of disparate impact for marginalized communities. Examples would include Robert Williams, 42, of Detroit in 2019, who was wrongfully arrested due to an erroneous match by facial recognition technology. Or we can discuss Michael Oliver, who was 26 in 2019 from Ferndale, Michigan, and was a victim of flawed facial technology. In Oliver’s case, police took a still image from a video of the incident and ran it through a software program. Oliver, who has an oval-shaped face and several tattoos, shared few physical characteristics with the person in the photo. But at pre-trial, when Oliver viewed the evidence, he stated, "He looked nothing like me." "He didn't even have tattoos." The judge agreed, and the case was promptly dismissed. (Stokes, 2020).⁸ So how is this not a violation of Human Rights?

CWA is fighting back, and District 2-13 has identified actions including sending letters to our Senators opposing legislation that supports security cameras and surveillance. Supporting the Human Rights Act (HRA) by petition will also help get our voices heard. An additional action would include providing literature and speaking to local union offices to ensure members are aware of the harm that can escalate if we don’t advocate now and stop lawmakers from taking away further human rights.

There are currently fifteen states that have specific laws around security cameras, but counties and cities have their own. And at this point, there’s little legislation to protect individuals because the technology is advancing too fast for regulators to keep up. We will continue to fight and do our part handling at local and state levels – get out the vote and help get legislation passed that supports our views through the General Assembly. Partnering with the ACLU, an organization that works in courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and the laws of the United States guarantee everyone in this country would also help. The goals are to expand the right to *privacy*, increase the control

⁷ Would the government have spied on MLK Jr. today? <https://www.cnn.com/2013/08/27/politics/fbi-surveillance-mlk/index.html>

⁸ Wrongful Arrest Exposes Racial Bias in Facial Recognition Technology, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/detroit-facial-recognition-surveillance-camera-racial-bias-crime/>

individuals have over their personal information, and ensure that civil liberties are enhanced. CWA must continue to care about your right to privacy even when you have nothing to hide.

Redistricting and the Effects on Labor

Mark Bautista, CWA 9404, Reginald Pierre-Louis, CWA 1106

The U.S. Constitution says that voting districts must be redrawn every 10 years to account for changes in population – a process known as redistricting. Partisanship in the redistricting process has led to “gerrymandering” – shaping districts in order to boost the voting power of one party. The last round of midterm elections in 2022 was projected to be a referendum on the Biden administration, with Republicans making huge gains in both the House and Senate. The results were quite sobering for the Republicans because although they gained a slight majority in the House, they did not regain control of the Senate. Given the modest gains made in the House, was redistricting or gerrymandering an effective tool for either party in the last midterm elections, and what effect can it potentially have for labor in the future?

If the question is whether Republicans were bolstered by gerrymandering in the 2022 midterms, the answer is yes. In many states, the district maps are drawn up and approved by the state legislature. Florida, for instance, took this a step further by approving maps not drawn up by the legislature but by Governor Ron DeSantis. DeSantis' new maps helped to ensure his party would have at least 18 of 28 seats in the state.⁹ His plan worked to perfection as Republicans won 20 seats in the election, including a shakeup in one race where two incumbents who were previously in separate districts had to now face off against each other in a newly formed district. This race pitted Democratic Representative Al Lawson, who had served since 2017, against Republican Representative Neal Dunn. In this election, the Republicans got the desired result, with Dunn winning, as Lawson's previously predominantly African American district was now carved up to include a more Republican-leaning base. The Supreme Court recently allowed Alabama to move forward with a redistricting plan, even though a lower court had deemed the plan illegal as it had unfairly stacked Black voters into districts and even spread some voters into districts with predominantly White voters. This narrative can be seen repeated across the South and Midwest regions of the United States. An analysis by fivethirtyeight.com, a statistical website, found that only 40 of the 435 House seats were considered highly competitive going into the 2022 midterms. Of those, they determined that 187 would lean Democrat and 208 lean Republican. This represented a change of 6 seats from previous maps. Republicans had most certainly taken full advantage of gerrymandering in the latest round of midterms, but that is not to say that Democrats don't engage in the practice themselves. In states like Illinois, California, and New York, Democrats were very aggressive in influencing maps. In New York, the courts stepped in and deemed some of the maps illegal and had them redrawn. This led to some stunning results, with the loss by Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, the House Democratic Campaign Chair, chief amongst those. New York also saw the introduction to the national spotlight of George Santos, whose victory that night has now led to revelations of inconsistencies and inaccuracies in his campaign.

⁹ <https://thefulcrum.us/partisan-gerrymandering-2657934968>

These results indicate the need for labor unions, CWA, and our allies, to be involved and informed, as there are dire consequences for ignoring the trickle-down effects of this political gamesmanship.¹⁰

The effects of the Republican majority in the House, because of gerrymandering, have already begun to reap benefits for those who deem the Labor movement problematic. One committee in particular, the House of Education and Labor Committee, can make things difficult for CWA and our union allies. There are expectations that the committee will be aggressive in its oversight through endless hearings and deliberations. The focus is believed to include conflict of interest issues at the NLRB and passing pro-employer legislation. We must continue to fight to ensure that the House does not place restrictions on funding and resources for regulatory agencies. This will only further harm the working class. Labor will be affected negatively without question, but CWA has been one of the most effective Labor unions regarding outreach and engagement in national and local politics. Our national and local LPAT & Human Rights committees have spearheaded countless labor-centric agendas nationwide. CWA and unions have been fighting back to include protections for the right to organize, the fight to increase the national minimum wage, reproductive rights, human rights, and social justice reform. When gerrymandering is implemented without impunity, it affects our ability to maintain previously motivated voting bases.¹¹ If lines are continually reconstructed, it serves to destabilize organized groups and just makes the process of voting much more difficult. When people get disenfranchised, it leads to frustration and lower voter turnout. While it is understood that redistricting is a Constitutionally mandated action, which takes place every 10 years, it is being taken advantage of in each election cycle. Each party is complicit in their actions which can be disingenuous and self-serving. The will of the people is often suppressed by those in power to manipulate the implementation of their agenda or to keep things status quo. Educating labor members regarding redistricting will allow us to voice our concerns to the decision-makers.¹² The counteraction to the attacks against the labor community is for CWA to continue its leadership role, which includes our Legislative LPAT pathways and the Human Rights committees direct to member education. The fight against Labor will continue. We need you for the survival of the labor movement. Our successes at the bargaining table and in social justice and political arenas require us to be responsible for keeping ourselves informed and engaged so we can advocate for others about the positive benefits of labor. The stability that our movement provides in securing livable wages, safe, healthy working conditions, and benefits for our members and communities at large is at stake. Where there is injustice, you will find us!

¹⁰ <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/11/midterm-house-elections-2022-gerrymandering-new-york/672145/>

¹¹ <https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/3731659-democrat-blame-game-erupts-over-new-york-midterm-losses/>

¹² <https://capitalbnews.org/midterm-elections-gerrymandering-redistricting/>

Health Disparities in the African American Community

Kimberly Johnson, United-AFA 29011, and Errol Minor, CWA 3902

Professor Reddy, Health Disparity Educator at Arizona State University, said, “There seems to be something specific about the African-American experience here in the United States that seems to have a toxic effect on the health of African Americans”¹³

African Americans are sicker and die earlier than other racial groups. Health and healthcare disparities continue to plague the African American community.

Research has shown that heart disease, diabetes, stroke, prostate cancer, and breast cancer are the leading causes of death in the African American community.

Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness in African Americans and half of those with Glaucoma don't know they have it. Glaucoma appears earlier in life for African Americans, about 10 years earlier than other ethnic populations,¹⁴ and progresses faster.

African Americans have a higher deficiency of vitamin D than other ethnic groups, which can lead to adverse pregnancy and birth outcomes, acute respiratory tract infections, asthma, multiple sclerosis, and osteomalacia.¹⁵

Diabetes and hypertension are two leading contributors to kidney failure, and Black Americans experience kidney failure at three times the rate of whites.¹⁶ The early diagnosis of these diseases are critical for managing kidney disease and Black Americans often aren't diagnosed until the later stages of the disease or during kidney failure.

The CDC noted significant disparities in the birthing experience of Black women. They are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white women.

There are about 1,000 police killings annually on average; with African Americans comprising a disproportionate 25 percent to 30 percent of those killings.¹⁷ Police brutality has triggered a rise in poor mental health. The CDC has declared “racism a serious threat to public health that has placed communities of color at a greater risk. Racial trauma can result from direct experiences of racism and physical and verbal attacks. The stress of constantly seeing police brutality on Twitter, TikTok, Facebook, and nightly news and not knowing if sons, daughters, parents, siblings, and friends can even make it home safely without being pulled over are daily assaults on our mental stability. Black people in some communities have higher rates of PTSD (8.7%) than white people (7.4%). 65% of African American youth report traumatic experiences compared to 30% of their peers from other ethnic groups.¹⁸

¹³ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/how-training-doctors-implicit-bias-could-save-lives-black-mothers-n873036> (Dr. Swapna Reddy ASU)

¹⁴ [Glaucoma.org](https://www.glaucoma.org/)

¹⁵ [CooperInstitute.org](https://www.cooperinstitute.org/) (Farrell, PHD)

¹⁶ <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2020/the-racial-inequities-of-kidney-disease> (Lindsey Smith Rodgers)

¹⁷ news.harvard.edu (Williams), Harvard Gazette (Pazzanero)

¹⁸ <https://www.mcleanhospital.org/essential/black-mental-health> (Crawford MD, MPH)

Trauma can be passed down through genes, and it's called "Intergenerational Trauma." Individuals who didn't experience the trauma directly can experience stress and anxiety. How many of us in this room have experienced micro aggressions in our workspaces, in public spaces, in our schools and universities, and in places where we shop daily? These factors have a profound effect on mental health. The stigma surrounding mental illness, historic adversity, and cultural differences have kept minorities from coming forward to seek therapy or medical counseling.

Health disparities in the African American community result from multiple socioeconomic factors, poverty, structural racism, education, racial discrimination in opportunities for housing, nutritional education, safe environments, workplace protections, and limited access to health technologies.

Whether known or unknown to them, physicians and health care providers may have biases that transcend to inferior health care, contributing to higher mortality rates. Black people and other ethnic groups are not receiving the same quality of healthcare that their white counterparts receive and are less likely than white persons to receive the appropriate cardiac care, kidney dialysis, transplants, and the best treatments for stroke and cancer.

Why are minorities not being informed and educated about diseases and health issues that affect their race, age, and gender? Medical professionals have the data and the knowledge to at least share with their patients that they may face a health risk. Serena Williams, a tennis legend, shared her experience with implicit bias during the birth of her child and reminds women of color to speak up and speak out with their medical providers. I, too, like many other women of color, have been a victim of implicit bias in healthcare. Studies have found that Black women in the U.S. are three times more likely than white women to develop uterine fibroids and suffer from complications. When discussing my personal health with my care provider I too was dismissed, asked non-relevant questions based on my race, not offered the latest health technology for my condition, and given unnecessary medications and treatments. After seeking professional care outside the U.S. by a minority physician, I received the proper treatment, but it was too late for a positive outcome.

It's a matter of life and death that changes be made to correct disparities in health care not only for the African American community but for all communities.

CWA Brothers, Sisters, and Siblings, what can we do?

We as a union can support our leaders that put forth legislation like the Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2022 (H.R. 7585), the NIH Clinical Trial Diversity Act of 2022

We can negotiate that our health care plans be with providers that have taken a stand on the disparity in health care and are making changes.

We can, as a union, create health fairs in our locals that inform members about health risks as they relate to the demographics of that local.

We, as a union, can use our newsletters, social media, and informational chats to promote wellness dialogues and programs that provide health information to our members.

"If access to health care is considered a human right, who is considered human enough to have that right" -Paul Farm

Garnering the Power of Our Collective to Prevent Gun Violence

Teesha Foreman, PHEW-CWA Local 1180, and Tim Fitzgerald, TNG-CWA Local 32035

In 2020, almost 25,000 people were murdered in the U.S., nearly 80% with firearms. That year saw homicides rise by 30%, the largest single-year increase on record,¹⁹ with almost all new deaths due to firearms.²⁰ What are not counted in these numbers are accidental and suicidal deaths due to guns. When added, an even more alarming statistic is revealed. Guns are now the leading cause of death of children under age 19 (including accidents and suicide). Let's compare these numbers to other countries. The US has nearly six gun homicides per 100,000 (see chart below). That's over seven times higher than other industrialized countries.²¹

While empirical evidence screams of a need for more gun control, why haven't regulations been implemented? Gun control laws have been around since colonial days. It was a criminal act to transfer guns to Native Americans, slaves, and indentured servants.²² There were even laws requiring at least one adult male in every house to carry a gun to church or other public meetings to protect against attacks from Native Americans or the insurrection of slaves.²³ Other laws required immigrants to own guns in order to immigrate or to own land. Some people can't own guns, while others are required to. Confusing?

Labor unions must continue to lobby for gun control. This, however, has proven to be a challenge to fix. As we've noted, gun control laws (in some form) have been around for centuries, yet we still have the world's biggest problem with guns. We must remain vigilant in our lobbying for gun control. While legislative change moves at a snail's pace, we must remain steadfast and appreciate the incremental changes. Last June, President Biden signed the *Bipartisan Safer Communities Act* into law. It was the first new gun regulations law passed by Congress in nearly 30 years.

Gun Violence in the U.S.

Diving into the numbers reveals that the problem is more prevalent in the African American community. Gun violence is the leading cause of death of our Black brothers under the age of 55 and the second leading cause of death for Hispanic males under 35. Annually, nearly 8,000 black lives are claimed by guns or 60% of gun murders – even though blacks make up about 15% of the population! So, if gun violence has a disproportionate effect on one community, are there unique situations in that community? Perhaps there are underlying causes that need to be addressed. The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (EFTSGV) has identified several root causes of gun violence, including income inequality, underfunded public housing, underperforming schools,

¹⁹ New CDC/NCHS Data Confirm Largest One-Year Increase in U.S. Homicide Rate in 2020

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2021/202110.htm

²⁰ <https://econofact.org/gun-violence-in-the-u-s>

²¹ <https://econofact.org/gun-violence-in-the-u-s#:~:text=In%202020%2C%20almost%2025%2C000%20people,and%20unevenly%20distributed%20%E2%80%94%20social%20costs.>

²² A Well-Regulated Right: The Early American Origins of Gun Control, <https://fordhamlawreview.org/issues/a-well-regulated-right-the-early-american-origins-of-gun-control/>

²³ Armed America: The Story of How and Why Guns Became as American as Apple Pie, Book

lack of opportunity and perceptions of hopelessness, and easy access to guns by those most susceptible to gun violence – ALL FOUND IN THE BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES!

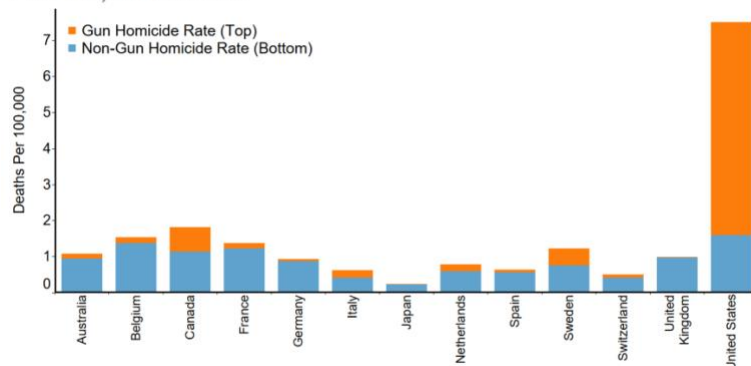
Even before the founding of the United States, America has wrestled with gun violence. From early colonial days, this struggle has plagued its citizens like no other country in the world! While other industrialized countries have figured out how to deal with firearms, Americans continue to allow gun violence to cast its dark shadow, causing anguish and pain to countless families. As solutions continue to dodge this great country’s grasp, once again, labor unions must take the lead in ridding our citizens of this plague. There is no quick-fix solution. Therefore, labor must engage in a multi-front assault on the problem.

The union has a role in preventing gun violence in the community. The good news, in this otherwise gloomy predicament we’re in, is that these are areas that labor unions have always addressed. Change in these areas will not move as slowly as legislation does. CWA is actively working with community groups and must continue to lead labor in getting resolutions. CWA works with groups like the Poor People’s Campaign to fight inequality and eradicate the conditions that create fertile soil for gun violence to flourish. In addition to addressing the underlying issues, we must form coalitions with community violence intervention (CVI) programs. They work directly with people who are at risk of committing gun violence or becoming victims of it. In other words, collaborate with the local stakeholders.

Finally, the union has a unique role in preventing workplace gun violence. Last year when gun violence claimed the lives of 19 children and two teachers, AFA-CWA stood with the nation’s two largest teachers’ unions, demanding change. Labor must insist on negotiating policies and procedures to ensure the safety of its members at work. No one should have to come to work and worry about leaving work alive.

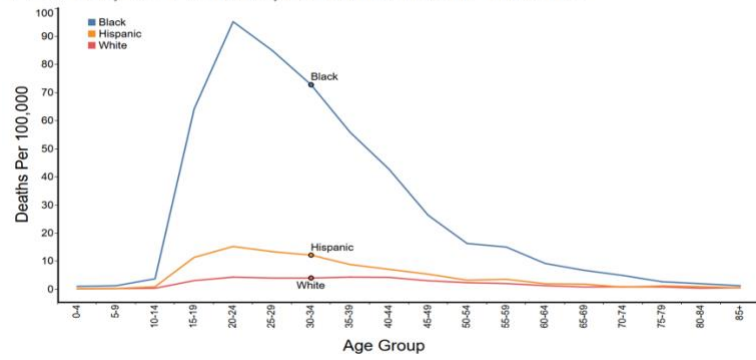
The AFL-CIO tweeted, “Gun violence is a labor issue” with #endgunviolence. CWA has risen to the challenge and will continue to lead labor in addressing gun violence and taking ownership of the responsibility to solve the problem.

GUN AND NON-GUN HOMICIDE RATES BY COUNTRY PER 100,000 PEOPLE



Source: United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation
EconoFact econofact.org
Years of observation: Switzerland (2021); Australia, Spain, Sweden, United States (2020); Canada, Netherlands (2018); Italy, Japan (2017); Belgium, France (2016); Germany, United Kingdom (2015)

U.S. GUN HOMICIDE RATES FOR MALES BY RACE PER 100,000 PEOPLE, BY AGE GROUP IN 2019



Source: Center for Disease Control WISQARS

EconoFact econofact.org

Summary and Recommendations

Despite making up a smaller share of the overall U.S. population, women of color account for a more significant share of missing women. Cases involving people of color get a tiny percentage of national media coverage.

Broadband internet is more important than ever for scholastic and economic success, but digital redlining has reduced access to reliable internet service in low-income communities.

Surveillance technology has a disparate impact for marginalized communities. The increased use of technologies like facial recognition and artificial intelligence by law enforcement will exacerbate existing patterns of racial inequity in policing.

Partisanship in the redistricting process has led to “gerrymandering” – shaping districts in order to boost the voting power of one party, often by isolating racial groups.

Health disparities in the African American community result from multiple socioeconomic factors, poverty, structural racism, education, racial discrimination in opportunities for housing, nutritional education, safe environments, workplace protections, and limited access to health technologies.

Gun violence has a disproportionate effect on the Black community and represents a serious health and safety risk in the workplace.

Therefore, the National Civil Rights and Equity Committee hereby urges CWA Locals:

1. To engage with federal, state, and local lawmakers and regulators to address the disparate treatment of people of color by law enforcement and the impact of gun violence on the Black community.
2. To educate members about the health risks that they face, including how race, age and gender may affect their risk for certain conditions, and negotiate health care plans that include providers that are addressing disparities in health outcomes.
3. To advocate for impartial redistricting procedures.
4. To work with CWA’s Broadband Brigade to identify ways to ensure that public investment in broadband addresses the digital divide and creates good, union jobs.