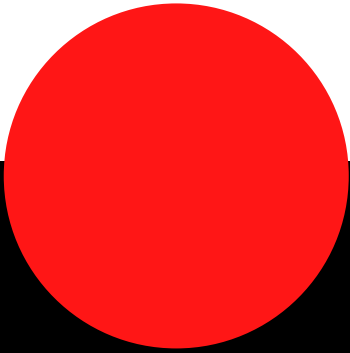


LEGISLATIVE-POLITICAL  
OVERVIEW 2023-2024



**UNITING  
TO BUILD  
OUR  
POWER**



# COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA (CWA)

CWA represents workers in private and public sector employment in 1,200 chartered CWA local unions. CWA members work in communications and information industries, the news media, the airlines, broadcast and cable television, public service, higher education and health care, manufacturing, in high tech and more.

**Major Employers:** Among CWA major employers are AT&T; Verizon; General Electric; the New York Times and Wall Street Journal; United Airlines and American Airlines; NBC and ABC television networks; the Canadian Broadcasting Co.; the University of California, and the state of New Jersey.

**History:** Founded in 1938, CWA got its start representing telephone workers as the National Federation of Telephone Workers. It was renamed the Communications Workers of America in 1947. Today, CWA represents workers in all areas of communications, customer contact, high technology, and manufacturing professions in both the private and public sectors, including health care, public service, education, customer service, airlines, and many other fields.

A number of unions have affiliated with CWA because of its democratic tradition and membership involvement: the Association of Flight Attendants (2003), the International Union of Electronic Workers (2000), the Newspaper Guild (1997), the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (1994), and the International Typographical Union (1987).

**Legislative/Political Action:** CWA's legislative and political program supports the election of worker-friendly officials and the passage of laws to support workers, their families, and good jobs. CWA has been in the forefront of

legislative initiatives to strengthen workers' organizing and bargaining rights, make health care affordable and available to all, protect Americans' retirement security, and provide good jobs in a global marketplace of fair trade.

Key to CWA's legislative efforts and successes are the more than 1,000 Legislative Political Action Team activists who have been trained in effective grassroots political action. They take CWA's political and legislative program to their states and communities, and build coalitions to fight for passage of worker and family friendly legislation.

**Alliances:** CWA is leading efforts to build a movement of organizations committed to winning progressive change for all Americans based on economic and racial equality. CWA works with labor and worker groups like Jobs with Justice, Center for Popular Democracy, People's Action, the Committee for Better Banks, the AFL-CIO and Change to Win; as well as civil rights and consumer groups like Sierra Club, NAACP, Alliance for Justice and Common Cause.

**Global Partners:** CWA maintains close relations with counterpart unions in Latin America, the United Kingdom, Europe, Africa, and Asia, both individually and through trade union federations. CWA is taking a leading role in working with international unions on global issues and organizing worldwide actions to monitor global development and investment in telecommunications and other industries.

**In the Community:** CWA members have made community based organizing and mobilization an important part of their union work. CWA's charity of choice is the Pediatric AIDS foundation and CWA is among the largest contributors, raising millions for pediatric HIV/AIDS research and education.

# LEADERSHIP



**CLAUDE CUMMINGS JR.**  
CWA President

Claude Cummings Jr. was elected President of the Communications Workers of America by delegates to the union's 79th convention on July 10, 2023. A Houston, Tex., native, he previously served as vice president of CWA District 6, representing over 45,000 members in five states. Cummings began his union career at Southwestern Bell Telephone Company (now AT&T) maintaining systems for NASA among other corporate customers in 1973 and held various leadership roles, including president of CWA Local 6222 representing over 8,000 members. He was the first Black man elected to all these positions.



**AMEENAH SALAAM**  
CWA Secretary-Treasurer

Ameenah Salaam was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Communications Workers of America by delegates of the 79th CWA convention on July 10, 2023. A Wilmington, Delaware native, Salaam began her union career at Diamond State Telephone in 1991, served as a CWA Local 13100 steward and vice president, and joined the CWA national staff in 1997. As an assistant to outgoing CWA President Chris Shelton, she played key roles in organizing, bargaining, mobilization campaigns, and advancing CWA's mission with strategic planning and fiscal responsibility.

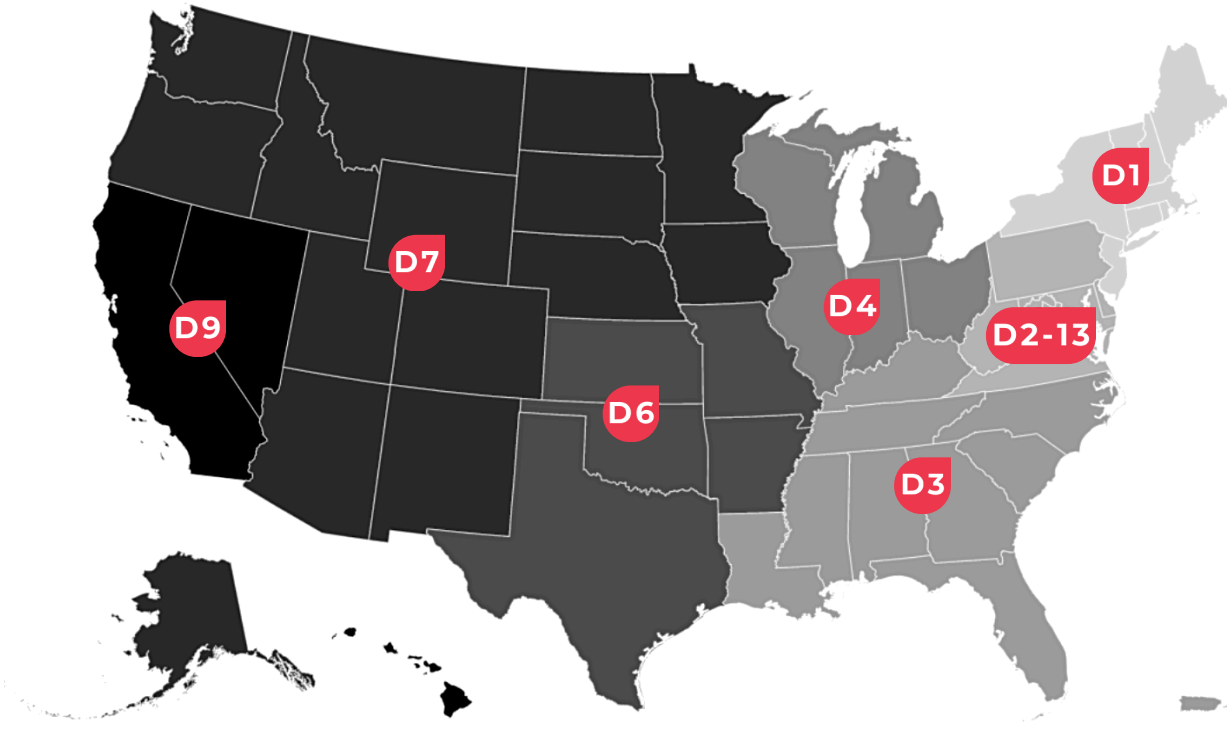


## **Sectors and Industries Vice Presidents**

Lisa Bolton, Telecommunications & Technologies  
Margaret Cook, Public, Health Care and Education Workers  
Charles Braico, National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians  
Jon Schleuss, The NewsGuild  
Carl Kennebrew, IUE-CWA Industrial Division  
Sara Nelson, Association of Flight Attendants  
Carmel Smyth, CWA – SCA Canada

## **At-Large Executive Board Members**

Keith Gibbs, Local 9412  
Gloria Middleton, Local 1180  
Vera Mikell, Local 2205  
Erika White, Local 4319



# DISTRICT VICE-PRESIDENTS

## **District 1**

### **Dennis Trainor, VP**

80 Pine Street, 37th Floor  
New York, NY 10005  
(212) 344-2515

## **District 2-13**

### **Mike Davis, VP**

230 S. Broad Street, Floor 19  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
(215) 546-5574

## **District 3**

### **Richard Honeycutt, VP**

4100 Perimeter Park S.  
Atlanta, GA 30341

## **District 4**

### **Linda Hinton, VP**

20525 Center Ridge Road,  
Room 700  
Cleveland, OH 44116  
(440) 333-6363

## **District 6**

### **Derrick Osobase, VP**

The Parkway, Building One  
4801 Southwest Parkway,  
Suite 145  
Austin, TX 78735  
(512) 330-0871

## **District 7**

### **Susie McAllister, VP**

8085 East Prentice Ave.  
Greenwood Village, CO 80111  
(303) 770-2822

## **District 9**

### **Frank Arce, VP**

2804 Gateway Oaks Drive,  
Suite 150  
Sacramento, CA 95833  
(916) 921-4500

## **For additional information on any issue, please feel free to contact a member of our legislative staff:**

Dan Mauer, Government Affairs Director: [dmauer@cwa-union.org](mailto:dmauer@cwa-union.org); (202) 434-1316

Stephen Schembs, AFA Legislative Director: [sschembs@cwa-union.org](mailto:sschembs@cwa-union.org); (202) 434-0568

Curtis Hierro, National Political Field Director: [chierro@cwa-union.org](mailto:chierro@cwa-union.org); (407) 334-4934

Elena Lopez, Senior Legislative Specialist: [elopez@cwa-union.org](mailto:elopez@cwa-union.org); (202) 434-1341

Tysianna Marino, Legislative Advisor: [tmario@cwa-union.org](mailto:tmario@cwa-union.org); (202) 434-1244

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# A Tax Code for Working Families

Our tax code shouldn't be rigged to benefit multinational corporations and the wealthy at the expense of hard-working people. However, for decades, tax policy has done just that. In fact, our current tax code incentivizes companies to move quality jobs abroad and rewards companies with tax breaks for union busting expenses, but provides no such breaks for the hard-working people that make these companies successful. Instead of addressing this problem, in 2017 a Republican majority passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) which was signed into law by President Trump.

Since 2017, this bill has raked in billions of dollars for corporations and their executives, incentivized companies to move tens of thousands of more jobs overseas, and made union dues a non-deductible expense. Even though unions are proven to help combat the skyrocketing economic inequality facing the United States by raising workers' wages, closing wage gaps, promoting safe workplaces, and increasing workers' voice in our democracy, our tax code does not support the working families who have made the choice to join a union. Instead, it rewards union busting companies at the expense of union members. Congress can help unrig the tax code against working families and strengthen unions by passing the following bills:

## **No Tax Breaks for Outsourcing Act (H.R. 884/S. 357)**

The No Tax Breaks for Outsourcing Act would repeal the deductions in the Trump tax bill that created a 10.5% maximum corporate tax rate for offshore income, compared to the 21% corporate tax rate imposed on domestic income. Repealing this deduction would eliminate the tax incentive to move factories

call centers overseas by ensuring that companies would not be able to slash their tax bills by moving those jobs overseas. In addition, the bill would enact a series of other changes that would block corporate efforts to dodge taxes by shifting funds to tax havens and by deducting enormous levels of interest on debt owed to foreign subsidiaries.

## **No Tax Breaks for Union Busting (H.R. 5428/S. 737)**

The No Tax Breaks for Union Busting Act would classify corporations' union busting expenditures as political speech under the tax code. Current tax law allows companies to deduct money spent on anti-union campaigns from their taxes as a normal business expense. In effect, the tax code rewards companies for opposing workers' union rights. The Economic Policy Institute found that employers collectively spend \$433 million per year on "union avoidance" consultants. The result is that American taxpayers are subsidizing employer intimidation and bullying tactics of union busting. The No Tax Breaks for Union Busting Act would ban any money spent toward busting unions from being tax deductible business expenses

## **Tax Fairness for Workers (S. 738/H.R. 4963)**

The Tax Fairness for Workers Act would restore the deduction for union dues and make it an above-the-line tax deduction. Prior to the enactment of the Trump tax bill, the tax code allowed workers to deduct unreimbursed business expenses, such as union dues, business travel costs, uniform expenses, and professional or training classes. This bill would allow workers to claim the tax credit without itemizing their taxes and make it available to more workers. Since only around 11 percent of tax filers itemize deductions, more workers in various sectors and earning various wages would benefit from this legislation.



# Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act

Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act  
The huge surge in economic inequality over recent decades is directly related to workers' lack of a strong voice on the job. Declining union membership rates have weakened worker bargaining power and contributed to sluggish wage growth and rising inequality.

Between 1979 and 2022, annual earnings for the top 1% and top 0.1% skyrocketed by 171.7% and 344.4%, respectively, while earnings for the bottom 90% grew just 32.9%. Unions can help counteract this runaway inequality because unions support a more equitable society and economy. Research by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) found that:

- Unionized workers earn on average 13.5% more in wages than nonunionized peers.
- Unions reduce racial and ethnic pay gaps. Black workers earn on average 14.6% more in wages than non-unionized peers, and Hispanic workers earn a 17.6% boost in pay.
- Hourly wages for women represented by unions are 9.5% higher on average than for non-unionized women with comparable characteristics.

Moreover, the harm to workers caused by the lack of an organized voice on the job is not limited simply to compensation. Workers who form unions have stronger protections against discrimination and retaliation, access to sick days and family medical leave, enhanced job security, better health and retirement benefits, and more effective ways of combating practices that jeopardize their health and safety on the job.

Unfortunately, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) does not currently include protections strong enough to ensure that workers can effectively exercise their right to

organize, bargain collectively, and have a strong voice on the job. The NLRA's penalties are ineffective and insufficient, amounting to little more than a vague threat of a slap on the wrist to employers who violate the NLRA. Workers are routinely illegally disciplined or even fired for exercising their rights, with little to no consequence for the bad actors. As a result, many workers are deterred from fighting to exercise their rights in the first place.

The **Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act of 2023 (H.R. 20/ S. 567)** is a landmark worker empowerment bill that restores the right of workers to freely and fairly form a union and bargain together for changes in the workplace. The PRO Act:

- Strengthens remedies for workers who face illegal retaliation, including swift temporary reinstatement for workers who are illegally suspended or fired, real financial penalties, and the clarification of their ability to have their day in court;
- Clarifies coverage of the NLRA to prevent the misclassification of workers as independent contractors;
- Protects the integrity of union elections against coercive mandatory captive audience meetings;
- Ensures that the NLRB's orders are enforced in a timely manner;
- Ensures that workers and employers are able to reach fair deals for a first contract by establishing mediation and arbitration procedures;
- Protects workers' right to strike for basic workplace improvements; and
- Safeguards the rights of all workers to engage in employment-related class-action litigation.

The PRO Act will strengthen workers' ability to come together and demand a fair share of the wealth they create—boosting wages, securing better healthcare, and rooting out discrimination.

Now is the time to pass the PRO Act. For too long, employers have been allowed to violate workers' rights with impunity because the law includes no substantive penalties for doing so. The PRO Act is important legislation that would ensure that workers' right to a voice on the job will be protected and strengthen the middle class.

# Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (PSFNA)

For years, the workplace rights of nurses, teachers, public safety officers, and other workers performing vital services to benefit the public have been under attack. Anti-worker politicians and their corporate donors have rigged the system to gut collective bargaining rights and attack health and safety requirements, staffing levels, and more. These attacks harm the quality of public services that state and local governments provide.

Public service workers fought on the front lines of the pandemic to protect communities, often putting the needs of their communities ahead of their own. Despite the vital roles that our public sector workers fill every day, there is no federal law that guarantees them the freedom to organize or engage in collective bargaining. Research shows that union members employed by a state or local government generally earn 17% and 35% more, respectively, than their non-union counterparts. It's time to level the playing field by establishing federal protections to guarantee public sector workers the right to join together and collectively bargain.

The **Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (H.R. 8426/S. 4363)** guarantees public sector employees in every state the freedom to stand together and negotiate for fair wages and working conditions. It sets a minimum nationwide standard for collective bargaining rights that all states must provide to public sector workers. Specifically, it would ensure that dedicated public service employees, who work every day to improve their communities, have the right to:

- Join together in a union selected by a majority of employees;
- Collectively bargain over wages, hours and terms and conditions of employment;
- Access dispute resolution mechanisms;
- Utilize voluntary payroll deduction for union dues;
- Engage in concerted activities related to collective bargaining and mutual aid.
- Have their union be free from requirements to hold rigged recertification elections; and
- File suit in court to enforce their labor rights.

The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act will guarantee public service workers the right to a seat at the table and give workers the power to protect and improve vital services. In order to create an economy that works for all of us, not just the wealthy few, it is important that all workers have the freedom to join a union. Members of Congress can help push back against these corporate efforts to destroy public sector workers' rights by supporting the PSFNA.



# Democracy Reform

The growing threat to our democracy came to a head on January 6th, 2021 when a group of extremists attacked the Capitol in an effort to overturn the results of the 2020 Presidential Election. The violence of this incident serves as a reminder of the fragility of democracy and the importance of taking necessary steps to implement stronger safeguards to protect it.

The rise of money in politics and widespread voter suppression by state and local governments has made it increasingly difficult for America's working families to have their voices heard. Many feel as though Washington is rigged against the interests of ordinary working Americans. However, CWA is committed to advocating for the passage of legislation that empowers workers and reduces the influence of Wall Street in our democratic system. To ensure that all eligible voters have the opportunity and access to participate in a fair and equal democratic process, Congress must pass comprehensive democracy reform legislation.

Many of the failures within our voting and election systems can be addressed through the passage of two major voting rights and election reform bills: the **Freedom to Vote Act** and the **John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act**. The Freedom to Vote Act is a transformational democracy reform package that will restore political power to America's working families and ensure that voters can safely and freely cast their ballots. The bill eliminates the influence of dark money in our political system, expands access to the ballot box, and puts an end to partisan gerrymandering. The provisions in the Freedom to Vote Act would:

- Expand opportunities to vote by requiring all 50 states to offer early voting periods and mail-in ballots;
- Make it easier for working families to cast their ballots by making Election Day a legal public holiday;

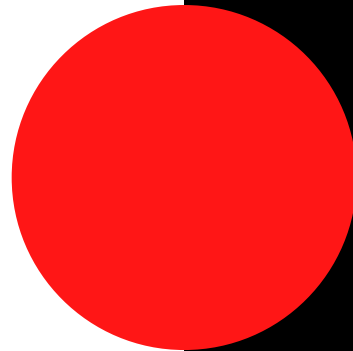
- Reduce voter suppression by banning the spread of false and misleading information;
- Protect voters by increasing existing penalties for voter intimidation; and
- Create a political system where voters to pick their elected officials by banning partisan gerrymandering

In addition to the Freedom to Vote Act, equally as important is the passage of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to ensure that every eligible voter can participate in the electoral process. The Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Shelby County v. Holder* gutted the Voting Rights Act. It did this by ruling that the preclearance standards in Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act were unconstitutional because the formula to determine which states and localities were subject to preclearance was outdated. This was and continues to be an incredibly dangerous ruling as this formula established a nationwide process for reviewing voting changes in jurisdictions that have historically discriminated against communities of color. This decision left many open to the same harmful practices that warranted its existence.

Since this ruling, states have introduced hundreds of bills and enacted laws that create steep barriers to the ballot box for millions of Americans. State and local officials have imposed restrictive voting requirements, altered district boundaries, and shifted polling locations, directly harming working families who already face time constraints in exercising their right to vote. The passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would help address the systemic issues, restore the power of the Voting Rights Act, and protect millions of Americans from having their voting rights violated by:

- Establishing updated nationwide preclearance standards for state and local government to make changes to their voting laws
- Creating a new coverage formula for detecting repeated instances of voting rights violations in the previous 25 years

- Ensuring that public officials announce all voting changes at least 180 days before an election
- The passage of the Freedom to Vote Act and John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would level the playing field and bring us closer to a fully functioning democracy that cannot be bought by the highest bidder, that gives hardworking voters the options they need to have the opportunity to safely cast their vote, and that allows voters to choose their elected officials instead of the other way around.



# Protecting the Rights of Workers on Strike

When employees engage in strike actions, they do so as a last resort to address grievances such as unfair labor practices, inadequate wages, or unsafe working conditions. However, the decision to strike can come with significant financial repercussions, as workers face the loss of their regular income for the duration of the strike, and often face coercion from their employers through threats, such as to terminate their healthcare coverage. This impacts workers' ability to receive any medical treatment they, or their families, may need, and their ability to provide adequate food, shelter, and safety for their families. We can support striking workers by ensuring that when they are forced to strike, they can do so with dignity and security.

## Unemployment Insurance Protections

Unemployment insurance serves as a crucial safety net for workers across the country when they face a loss of gainful employment, and workers shouldn't lose out on these needed benefits simply because of how they lost their income. Unfortunately, in many states, workers on strike are categorically ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. This policy wrongly discriminates against workers on strike, and helps enable bad actor companies to starve workers back to work, even in the unjust conditions that forced a strike to begin with.

## SNAP Protections

Access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP) is also critical for workers who find themselves on strike, as it provides essential support to help mitigate

the economic challenges they face during this period. When individuals participate in strikes, it jeopardizes their ability to meet basic needs, including access to nutritious food for themselves and their families. No worker should have to choose between feeding their family and fighting for their rights in the workplace. Access to SNAP benefits ensures that striking workers can still afford groceries and maintain adequate nutrition for themselves and their dependents, even when their regular income is disrupted.

CWA supports the following legislation which would bolster the strength of striking workers by ensuring that they don't have to choose between having healthcare or feeding their families at the expense of their workplace rights and dignity on the job. We are proud to support:

- H.R.6063, the **Empowering Striking Workers Act**, which would ensure workers exercising their legal right to collectively bargain, as well as workers indirectly impacted, are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits after 14 days of striking.
- H.R.4845/S.2553, the **Food Secure Strikers Act**, which would repeal the restriction on striking workers from receiving SNAP.

# Protecting Call Center Workers and Consumers

Call centers are a major economic force in the United States, employing almost 3 million Americans. Call centers are often the economic backbone of local economies, providing strong, family-supporting, middle-class jobs with great benefits for workers. The average wage for a call center worker in 2023 was \$19.08 per hour, which compares favorably to other entry-level jobs. In union-represented jobs, wages are higher and more benefits are provided.

Over the years, our union has seen call centers shift operations overseas, downsize, or shut down their U.S. operations. Developments in telecommunications technology and a broken tax code have made it easier for companies to move their call center operations overseas, where the local workforce faces horrific exploitation on the job, including poor safety and health standards, low wages, and violence for union organizing. For example, workers in the Philippines, where many call centers are offshored, are threatened, intimidated, abused, and even killed for organizing. Additionally, companies often move to countries where security measures to protect personal data are far less robust than those in the U.S. There is a strong link between overseas call centers and security problems, which puts American consumers at risk for identity theft, fraudulent transactions, and general mishandling of sensitive information. For example, the FCC levied a \$25 million fine against AT&T for consumer identity theft emerging from company call centers in Mexico, Colombia, and the Philippines, affecting 280,000 Americans.

U.S. taxpayer money should not be awarded to companies that make a practice of sending U.S. jobs overseas. This epidemic has resulted in greater job losses here in the U.S. and the erosion of middle-class communities while risking the data of millions of American consumers. The **United States Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act (H.R. 8301/S. 4300)** takes important steps to address these issues and to protect workers and consumers. Specifically, it would:

- Require call center workers to disclose the physical location of the call center at the beginning of communications with customers and transfer communications to a call center located in the U.S. if a customer requests they do so;
- Create a publicly available list, maintained by the Department of Labor, of employers that have relocated call center work overseas. Employers on the list would be ineligible for federal grants or guaranteed loans. Employers will remain on this list for five years unless they return an equal or greater number of call center jobs to the U.S. or amend the terms of their contract with the entity performing their call center work to require the work be done in the U.S.; and
- Require agencies to give preference to U.S. employers that do not appear on the list when awarding contracts and require that all call center work performed on federal contracts be performed in the U.S.

The United States Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act was reintroduced by Senators Casey (D-PA), Brown (D-OH), Cortez Masto (D-NV), and Representatives Fitzpatrick and Davids (D-KS). This legislation makes strides to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are not rewarding companies that offshore their customer service work and gives consumers the power to decide where to have their calls handled.

# Broadband and Media Policy

High-speed broadband networks are essential infrastructure in the 21st century, enabling economic growth, job creation, and improvements in education, health care, energy conservation, public safety, and more. Increasingly, Americans access news, information, and video entertainment over digital platforms. And the COVID-19 pandemic underlined how important high-speed broadband is to access work, school, and healthcare.

Universal, affordable access to high-capacity Internet is essential to our nation's democracy and economy. Yet, despite considerable progress, significant gaps remain. About 24 million Americans – including 28 percent of people living in rural communities and 7 percent of the total population– lack access to broadband at the FCC's 100 Mbps download/20 Mbps upload benchmark. While broadband access is a problem, so is broadband affordability. Nearly one-quarter of households still do not have home internet – often due to cost – and many only reach the Internet over smartphones, limiting their ability to apply for jobs or do homework online.

Public policy to promote investment in affordable, high-speed wired and wireless broadband networks, to close the digital divide, and to create good jobs in the telecommunications and media industries should be guided by these principles:

**Universal Broadband:** Just as government policies helped bring affordable telephone service to all, our public policies should ensure that every individual, business, and community has access to and can use high-speed Internet at a price they can afford, regardless of income or geographic location. We need to ensure that all the companies

that rely on internet infrastructure to deliver their services pitch in their fair share to the Universal Service Fund, so we can have stable and adequate funding for access for affordability programs like the Affordable Connectivity Program, broadband in schools and libraries, and support for networks in high-cost rural areas.

**Good Jobs:** Public policies should support the growth of good, career jobs with respect for workers' rights. Companies that violate labor laws should be held accountable. Public funding to build broadband networks -- whether it's municipal, state, or federal dollars -- should create good jobs. Broadband grant programs should prioritize companies that have a well-trained workforce with good wages and benefits, and not reward low-road fly-by-night subcontractors that endanger worker and public safety.

**Investment in Next-generation Wired and Wireless Networks:** Speed matters on the Internet. Gigabit capacity is fast becoming the global standard. US policies should promote investment in higher capacity wired and wireless networks to achieve reliable and affordable access for consumers, businesses, schools, libraries, hospitals, and government agencies. As states start spending the broadband dollars from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, they must ensure that their program decisions prioritize future-proof fiber networks.

**Consumer Protections:** We are in the midst of a technology transition moving to all-Internet Protocol (IP) networks over fiber, coaxial cable, and 5G wireless. During this transition, public policy must continue to promote our nation's core values for communications: universal service, public safety, and consumer protection. Consumer protections, including privacy protections and guardrails around the use of artificial intelligence, should apply across the Internet ecosystem to both network and application providers.

**Open Internet:** Open Internet rules should promote free expression, innovation, and investment on the Internet. There should be

full transparency, no blocking, no throttling (slowing down), and no unreasonable prioritization of legal content on the Internet.

**Media Diversity, Quality Journalism:** Media diversity is essential to a thriving democracy. Media ownership rules that bar companies from owning multiple TV stations in the same market, prohibit stations from attempts to skirt those rules through “shared services agreements” and “joint services agreements,” and restrict the combination of local newspaper and TV stations are vital for local community needs and to preserve good jobs in print, video, and electronic media.

**Local Oversight of Infrastructure:** Localities play an important role in ensuring that broadband infrastructure is deployed safely in public rights-of-way and on public property. Our local elected leaders can also lead the way in addressing digital equity and promoting worker protections. Federal and state authorities should not preempt local authority over the permitting of wireless infrastructure and should instead work cooperatively with localities to ensure infrastructure is built safely and strategically to serve our communities



# AI Policy Must Protect Workers

*The following is adapted from the final report of the CWA Committee on Artificial Intelligence to the CWA Executive Board published November 2023. The full report can be found at [cwa.org/ai-principles](https://cwa.org/ai-principles)*

Developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) have the potential to change or disrupt work across CWA industries in ways that can benefit or hurt our members and communities. Some risks associated with AI are similar to past instances of new technology adoption, and we can look to previous worker demands and regulatory responses for guidance in addressing the potential harms of AI. Yet many gaps remain and new risks have arisen unique to machine learning. Ultimately, systemic reforms to strengthen democracy, including in our workplaces, are needed to ensure accountability for the effects of AI systems.

## Principles for Public Policy

1. Government policy should recognize the need for collective bargaining and worker consultation to play central roles in adoption of AI and other new technologies, and seek to strengthen and complement workers' bargaining power. Workers are the experts on their jobs and workplaces, and are therefore best positioned to identify risks and guardrails needed.
2. Government policy should set a floor in certain areas so workers can be assured of minimum standards of accountability for AI impacts from their employers, similar to the minimum wage and anti-discrimination laws.
3. Democratic institutions must counterbalance the corporate bias towards investments in technology that automate tasks and speed up work, which leads to loss of jobs, worsening of workplace conditions, and increased economic inequality.

inequality. Corporations pursue automation of tasks and management even when it does not improve productivity significantly, often in order to limit labor costs and worker power, leading to greater wealth concentration by shifting profits to company owners and executives

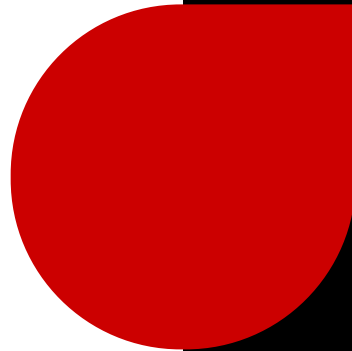
4. All levels of governments should use their authority as employers and market participants to set a standard for ethical and accountable AI adoption, which includes consultation with public sector workers and their unions alongside civil society.
5. Policymakers should continually update protections against misinformation that could impact our political system to match current communication technologies.
6. The criminal legal system must be required to evaluate any uses of AI to protect against bias and unaccountable decision-making.
7. Policymakers at all levels should advance protections against AI systems that may discriminate against people in protected categories.

The following policy recommendations serve as a starting place for our collective, ongoing advocacy:

1. The NLRB should act upon its authority to issue guidance mandating bargaining over implementation of AI, not just its effects, because the adoption of this technology has widespread and complex impacts on our workplaces. Further, lawmakers should seek strategies to shore up workers' ability to engage in meaningful bargaining over adoption of new technologies in the workplace.
2. Federal and state law should prohibit abusive use of AI tools for surveillance and management of workers. In general, employers should be limited in the data they collect and workers should have rights over data that is collected on them. CWA endorses the [Stop Spying Bosses Act](#) and [No Robot Bosses Act](#) in Congress, which together set limits on employers' use of automated surveillance and management and establish the Privacy and Technology Division at the DOL.
3. Policymakers should ensure decisions made by AI that impact workers and the public can be appealed to a human. These protections should include prohibitions on AI systems that result in discriminatory impacts. Policy frameworks, including the

White House Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights, must advocate a principled approach to AI deployment including transparency about how the algorithm works, protections against discrimination and for privacy, notice and explanation to users, human alternatives and fallback. These principles must carry over the workplace. President Biden's Executive Order on the Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence is a good first step and recognizes the critical role of collective bargaining in negotiating the risks and benefits of AI.

4. Policymakers should take action to protect workers' copyrighted material and likenesses, and workers should be able to negotiate any use of their creations or selves. Federal, state and local governments should use multiple levers to push investment towards labor-augmenting technologies rather than labor-automating technologies. All levels of government should use adoption and procurement policy frameworks around AI that can act as models and guardrails for the private sector. This should include bargaining with public agency employees over adoption of AI technologies and transparency around the adoption process and goals meant to achieve.
5. Policymakers should advance a "Just Transition" framework for technology change and AI adoption in cases where it creates enough productivity gains for employers and workers to negotiate elimination of some jobs. This includes robust requirements for worker retraining alongside monetary compensation for jobs that are eliminated.



# Taking on Wall Street

## Tax Breaks and Loopholes for the Wealthy

For years, the federal tax code has not only failed to prevent, but has instead rewarded the bad behavior of multimillion dollar companies and their wealthy executives. Whether by providing companies with unparalleled tax breaks, incentivizing companies to move money and jobs overseas, or allowing companies to buy back their own stock from shareholders on the open market – the tax code has failed to ensure that corporations are paying their fair share.

Instead of fixing this problem, the enactment of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), signed into law by President Trump, worsened it. The Center for American Progress found that corporate investment immediately slowed down following the enactment of the TCJA. Additionally, despite its name, the TCJA did not create jobs -- it simply benefited the super-wealthy. For example, since its enactment AT&T has made over \$96.3 billion in profits and has paid less than 3% in taxes on that income. Instead of creating good union jobs with these record profits, as promised, AT&T has instead cut over 120,000 jobs since 2018.

It is abundantly clear that this law has failed to close existing tax loopholes for the 1%, and instead created new ones. The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy found that in the first five years of the TCJA's enactment, 109 of the largest profitable corporations paid zero federal taxes in at least one of those years. What's worse is that the law also established incentives for corporations to offshore more jobs by providing a 50% discount for foreign profits and creating a new exemption for "tangible investments" outside of the country. In other words, a company that builds a building or purchases equipment for a call center or factory overseas gets a special tax break for doing so.

## Stock Buybacks Over Worker Investments

The reality is that working people are suffering the most at the expense of these massive tax breaks. As the federal budget deficit continues to rise, while corporate tax receipts fall, it is the working class that is expected to fill in the gaps. Instead of corporations using the billions of dollars that they have profited to increase worker pay and benefits, invest in new equipment, or expand into new markets and create more jobs, many use these increased profits for stock buybacks and dividends.

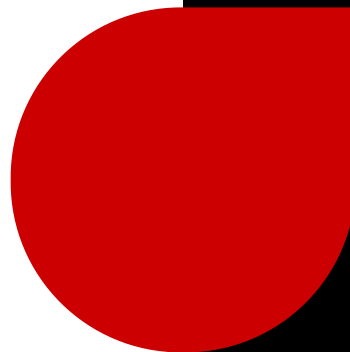
Stock buybacks are when companies buy back their own stock from shareholders on the open market rather than investing in workers or equipment. When a share of stock is bought back, the number of shares left on the market is reduced. As shares are reduced, this artificially boosts the company's stock price without the company ever becoming more profitable or hiring more workers. Since the compensation of most company executives and wealthy investors derives from short-term stock prices, higher stock prices makes them personally richer.

While buybacks are very beneficial to corporate executives and wealthy Wall Street investors, they cause harm to working families. For example, in 2019, AT&T announced that they were laying off 5,950 employees, bringing the total number of employees cut that year to 33,778. Simultaneously, they announced a three-year plan, committing to spend \$30 billion on stock buybacks. Instead of investing that money into their workers or equipment, AT&T made the decision to line the pockets of their executives and wealthy investors. In the years since, AT&T has invested an additional \$1.3 billion in stock buybacks, while the number of laid-off workers continues to rise.

## A Tax Code for Working Families

Our tax code should be helping to reduce inequality, not making life harder for working families. It is essential that the tax code benefits working people, ensures that the wealthy and multinational corporations pay their fair share, and helps create good jobs in the United States. Congress can help achieve that by passing legislation to fix some of the worst aspects of the GOP tax law:

- H.R.3694, the **Reward Work Act**, would end corporations' ability to buy back their stock on the open market by reversing the ruling that allows it and prohibiting companies from buying back their stock on the open market.
- S.413, the **Stock Buyback Accountability Act**, would increase the rate of the excise tax on the repurchase of corporate stocks from 1% to 4%.
- S. 4123, the **Carried Interest Fairness Act**, would get rid of provisions that allow billionaire private equity and hedge fund managers to pay a lower tax rate than teachers, firefighters, or customer service call center representatives.
- H.R.7041/S.3620, the **Tax Excessive CEO Pay Act**, would establish a higher corporate tax rate on companies that pay their CEOs a disproportionate amount of compensation compared to their workers.
- Both H.R.4119/S.1990, the **Tax on Wall Street Speculation Act** and **H.R.4870 /S.2491, the Wall Street Tax Act**, would establish a Wall Street sales tax, so that hedge fund managers and big bank executives have to pay a tiny sales tax on their trades, just as we do on our purchases.



# High Quality and Affordable Care for All

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fundamental failures of the American health care system. Millions of working families across the US lacked access to paid sick or family care leave and were vulnerable to losing affordable health care coverage. The Biden Administration and Congress took bold emergency action to strengthen the employer-provided health insurance system, expand public insurance programs, provide paid leave and give all Americans access to tests and vaccinations to reduce the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, these actions were largely temporary and have been unwound as we return to a status quo that was already broken before the COVID-19 virus emerged.

President Biden laid out a long-term vision for health care reform, and important progress has been made. In 2022, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act, which included landmark provisions lowering the cost of prescription drugs for millions of Americans. For the first time, the federal government will be empowered to bargain down the prices of a limited number of drugs for Medicare patients and will assess penalties to pharmaceutical companies when prices grow faster than inflation. These are landmark achievements, representing years of mobilization and advocacy, that will make coverage more affordable for retirees while simultaneously lowering government spending.

In contrast, former President Trump and his Republican allies have an agenda that would increase health care costs for working families and throw millions of Americans off their insurance plans. Former President Trump has made clear in his public statements that he is still intent on “repealing and replacing” the Affordable Care Act. President Trump and Congressional Republicans’ previous attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act would have ended insurance coverage for 23 million

Americans. Republicans in the US House of Representatives have spent 2024 pushing for legislation to establish a “Fiscal Commission” with the goal of lower government spending through cuts to Medicare and Social Security benefits.

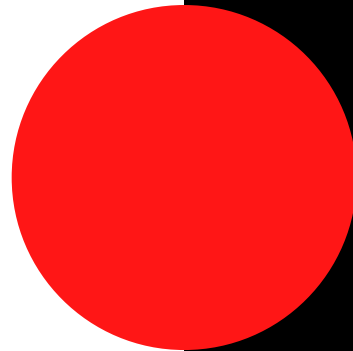
All Americans deserve access to quality, affordable health care and the financial protection of comprehensive health insurance. Our ultimate goal is to create a universal, comprehensive health care system. We can move toward that goal and make care more affordable for all Americans by strengthening employer coverage and building on the existing programs that are important to our members, retirees, and their families (Medicare, Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and the ACA).

**Expand and Strengthen Protections Against Exploding Drug Prices** – Americans pay more than any other comparable country for prescription drugs. These costs are an enormous burden on all working families. Congress and President Biden took an important first step by establishing price negotiations and inflation caps under Medicare. However, more action is needed. Medicare is currently restricted to bargaining for a limited number of drugs each year. While these negotiated prices would result in significant savings for retirees, active employees under employer health plans would not see relief in their drug costs. Congress should pass the Lowering Drug Costs for American Families Act (H.R. 4895) to expand on this legislation, allowing negotiations on more high-cost drugs and enforcing negotiated prices and inflation caps for public and private health care plans that cover all Americans.

**Strengthen Employer-Sponsored Coverage** – As health care costs have grown, employers have systematically eroded employer-based health plans with higher premiums and deductibles. This cost shifting has outpaced wage increases for many working families and has increasingly made care unaffordable for the 165 million Americans who rely on job-based coverage. Strengthening the “Employer Mandate” which was passed as part of the Affordable Care Act will ensure that all workers have affordable coverage while eliminating the competitive disadvantage for union employers that provide good coverage.

**Expanding Medicare and Other Successful Health Programs**

– Millions of Americans depend on public insurance programs and subsidies for affordable coverage. Congress can take action to build on popular and successful programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and the Affordable Care Act so every American can have the security of comprehensive health coverage. That includes reducing the Medicare eligibility age, expanding Medicaid in the remaining states that have refused to implement this federally-subsidized program, improving subsidies on the ACA exchanges, expanding Medicare benefits to include dental, vision, and hearing coverage, and giving all Americans the choice of enrolling in a Medicare-type public option health care plan.





# Protecting Our Retirees

Unions stand as pillars of support and advocacy for retirees. As individuals who have offered their labor and skills to society, retirees deserve security and stability in their retirement. Unions play a crucial role in advocating for fair pensions, healthcare benefits, and other essential provisions to ensure that retirees can live with dignity and without financial hardship after their years of service. While it is crucial that we acknowledge and celebrate the Biden Administration's policy victories that enable us to enhance the protection of retirees, we must continue to fight for further advancements in safeguarding their rights in the future.

The Inflation Reduction Act and the American Rescue Plan have emerged as pivotal legislative initiatives in doing just that. These laws have provided crucial relief measures and safeguards for retired union members. By implementing targeted strategies to combat rising inflation and bolstering social safety nets, these acts have not only stabilized the financial circumstances of retirees but have also injected a sense of security and resilience into their lives.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) will make a huge difference in alleviating the strain on retirees' fixed incomes and promoting better health outcomes. Through the passage of the IRA and the ARP, the Biden Administration:

- **Reduced prescription drug costs for retirees** and capped out-of-pocket Medicare costs. The IRA also capped out-of-pocket costs for insulin, allowed Medicare for the first time to negotiate lower prescription drug prices, and required drug companies to issue rebates if they increased prices faster than inflation.
- The ARP **expanded subsidies for Affordable Care Act (ACA) health insurance plans**, making healthcare more affordable for retirees not yet eligible for Medicare. It offered incentives to states to expand Medicaid coverage, benefiting low-

income retirees, and included provisions to prevent a potential decrease in Social Security benefits due to the pandemic's economic impact.

- The ARP allocated funds to **protect struggling multiemployer pension plans**, safeguarding retirement benefits for millions of workers and retirees. This action has already protected the pensions of over 10,000 CWA retirees for decades to come.

## Fiscal Commission

While those actions have been instrumental in protecting the livelihood of retirees, it's imperative we remain vigilant for the challenges that lie ahead. Most immediately, extremists in Congress are strongly advocating for the formation of a so-called "fiscal commission" to make recommendations regarding the national budget. This commission would enable the fast tracking through Congress of cuts to Social Security and Medicare benefits without full debate and consideration.

Despite the fact that most U.S. adults are opposed to proposals that would cut into Medicare or Social Security benefits, historically, fiscal commissions have recommended cuts to Social Security and Medicare or indiscriminate pay freezes or layoffs. In fact, House Speaker Mike Johnson, who is one of the leading advocates for creation of this commission, has explicitly endorsed raising the retirement age and cutting cost-of-living increases for Social Security beneficiaries.

CWA is prioritizing protecting Social Security in our advocacy around budget negotiations. We will continue to push for legislation to bolster retirement security, preserve healthcare access, and mitigate financial hardships, ensuring that retirees can maintain stability and dignity after they leave the workforce.

# Working Families Need Paid Leave!

At some point, nearly everyone will need to take time away from work to deal with a serious personal or family health condition, recover from short-term illnesses or to bond with a new child. Only 27 percent of workers in the US have access to paid family leave through their employers. And nearly 28 million people — nearly one in five private sector workers — can't earn a single paid sick day.

The COVID-19 pandemic made very clear why this is such a big problem--workers who are sick or are caring for family members who are sick put their entire workplaces at risk by coming to work. Working people without paid sick days are 1.5 times more likely than those with paid sick days to report going to work with a contagious illness. Congress took the necessary step of ensuring paid sick time for millions of workers at the height of COVID-19 pandemic. However, these protections expired at the end of 2020, leaving millions of workers facing financial hardships.

Without mandatory paid leave or paid sick time for all workers, no insurance plan can ensure care is affordable because illness, health condition or starting a new family means a loss of income for struggling workers. Strengthening paid family leave at the bargaining table is important, but in order to make true progress we need comprehensive, national medical, family and sick leave that is inclusive of all workers and family types. Congress must pass legislation mandating paid sick days and leave for all, such as:

- The **Job Protection Act (H.R. 694/S. 210)**: expands FMLA to encompass all workers – no matter the size of their employer or part-time status – by shortening the timeline for employees to be eligible for coverage as well as ensuring workers who take paid leave are protected and may return to their jobs;
- The **FAMILY Act (H.R. 3481 /S. 1714)**: provides up to 12 weeks of paid leave per year to qualifying workers for the birth or adoption of a new child, the serious illness of a family member, or a worker's own medical condition and;
- Adopting legislation that would provide universal, guaranteed paid sick days for all workers - regardless of employer size or sector - that meets and covers the needs of workers as the pandemic continues.

The benefits of paid family and medical leave are well documented, yet the vast majority of working people in the United States do not have access to this basic protection. Our society is only as healthy as our most vulnerable members. Paid sick days and paid leave are critical health investments and Congress must act to establish permanent structures to guarantee all working people with the leave they need when they need it.

# It is Time to Raise the Minimum Wage!

As inflation and growing expenses continue to raise the cost of living for working Americans, for over a decade, the federal minimum wage has been stuck at \$7.25 an hour. Workers earning the minimum wage effectively earn 26 percent less than what their counterpart earned when this rate was established 15 years ago. For many Americans, this means that the money they earn working 40 hours or more a week is simply not enough to support themselves and their families.

Despite working full-time for some of the most highly profitable corporations, many airline employees, call center workers, retail store employees, and bank workers are barely making enough to make ends meet. In fact, the National Low Income Housing Coalition authored a report which indicates that a full-time minimum-wage worker can't afford a one-bedroom rental in 93% of all US counties. This is simply inexcusable. Working people deserve their share of the wealth they help create and incomes that rise as they become more productive.

At a time when wage stagnation and income inequality hold back our families and our economy, the **Raise the Wage Act (H.R.4889/S.2488)** will begin to reverse that cycle and raise pay broadly, especially for the most vulnerable members of the workforce. Specifically, the Raise the Wage Act will:

- Raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 an hour to \$17 an hour by 2028;
- Automatically increase the minimum wage each year at the same rate that median wages increase and;
- Phase out the subminimum wage for tipped, disabled, and youth workers.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the Raise the Wage Act will raise the earnings of 27 million workers, or 19% of the workforce. The bill will also aid in closing racial income disparities as earnings would rise for nearly 1 in 3 black workers, 1 in 3 Hispanic workers and 1 in 5 white workers. Since the minimum wage rose to its current \$7.25 an hour in 2009, it has lost 26% of its purchasing power. The Raise the Wage Act will generate \$86 billion annually in wages for the country's lowest-paid workers, with the average affected worker who works year-round receiving an extra \$3,100 per year. Boosting pay puts money into the hands of workers who would in turn help create jobs from the growing demand. With more income, workers can buy homes, cars and support small businesses in our neighborhoods, cities and states.

Our entire country succeeds when we create good jobs with livable wages, empower working people through unions, and invest in our future. By raising the minimum wage, we can ensure fair compensation for workers, reduce poverty and income inequality, and help grow the economy.

# A Pro-Worker Trade Policy

American workers have seen firsthand how our trade policies have encouraged companies to offshore jobs, driving down wages, benefits, and working conditions for U.S. workers. Corporate-written trade and globalization deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) led to the offshoring of millions of good jobs in industries like manufacturing and call centers and caused a race to the bottom in labor, environmental, and public health standards.

Protecting workers and creating good jobs here in the U.S. must be central as Congress and the Biden Administration attempt to enhance our competitiveness and address our broken supply chains. Our elected officials must ensure any trade policy includes strong labor and environmental protections with swift and certain enforcement. Past U.S. trade deals have included weak provisions on labor and the environment with ineffectual enforcement mechanisms that made it almost impossible to win cases protecting workers' rights and the environment—the first successful labor rights cases under any trade agreement did not come until the Biden Administration worked to protect labor rights in Mexico. Enforcement must also work for all sectors, as the Biden Administration recognized earlier this year in bringing a labor rights case protecting call center workers for the first time under any U.S. trade agreement.

Trade policy must also include resources and tools to combat unfair trade practices, such as:

- A renewal of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) with robust funding and support to help all workers whose jobs are outsourced, regardless of sector;
- Stronger labor eligibility criteria and enforcement process to ensure that workers are protected under any renewal of the Generalized System Preferences (GSP);
- The bipartisan *Level the Playing Field Act 2.0*, which strengthens U.S. trade remedy laws to protect American workers and push back against China's egregious efforts to manipulate the global market; and
- The *Import Security and Fairness Act*, which prevents bad actors from exploiting the de minimis loophole to evade U.S. rules and regulations designed to ensure that imports comply with U.S. rules.

However, our trade deals must not include pro-corporate provisions that harm workers like Investor-State Dispute Settlement, lengthy monopoly protections for prescription drugs that keep prices high, or any provisions that would interfere with the enactment of the U.S. Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act.

Lastly, our trade policy should include stronger rights like cross-border collective bargaining, which would allow workers to join together across borders to negotiate with multinational corporations to raise wages and standards in the U.S. and across the world by preventing corporations from pitting workers in the U.S. against workers in other countries who are denied their rights and paid unfair wages.

# Empowering Bank Workers Protects Consumers and Our Entire Economy



“Wells Fargo is a corporate recidivist that puts one out of three Americans at risk for potential harm.” - **Rohit Chopra**, Director of the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

**Bank work is highly stressful.** Bank workers keep branches open, solve customers’ problems, process and underwrite loans, assist families experiencing financial difficulties, identify and report fraudsters and money laundering, help consumers obtain the financial products they need to thrive, create and maintain computer systems and platforms and much, much more. Mistakes can harm customers and cost workers their jobs. Poor working conditions including low staffing, inadequate pay and pressure to meet product goals can make already stressful jobs much worse.

**First labor union at a megabank: Wells Fargo workers are forming a union to fight back.** CWA’s new union, **Wells Fargo Workers United-CWA** grew out of its **Committee for Better Banks (CBB)** campaign which has been at the forefront of holding Wall Street and mega banks accountable for their treatment of workers, consumers and the communities they serve. This is the first union at a U.S. megabank ([ABC News](#)). Overcoming fierce opposition from bank executives, workers at 12 Wells Fargo branches in 9 different states have already won votes to form a union. You can check out our progress at our website ([betterbanks.org/wfwu](https://betterbanks.org/wfwu)). Even after being grilled by US Senator Brown, chair of the Banking Committee, the bank’s CEO Charles Scharf still insisted he opposed workers’ effort to form a union. ([Video](#))

**U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown calls on bank regulators to investigate Wells Fargo’s unfair labor practices and calls on CEO to stop union busting.** On October 4, 2023, Senator Brown, who is also chair of the Senate Banking Committee, sent a **letter** to the Federal Reserve Board and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, urging them to investigate Wells Fargo’s labor violations because they indicate vulnerabilities to the bank’s corporate governance and risk management framework which are essential to maintaining the safe and sound operations of the bank.

**Empowering bank workers will improve government oversight of financial institutions.** Federal agencies have untapped authority to keep big banks in check. By eliminating barriers to bank workers participating in bank supervision while establishing mechanisms that integrate their direct and independent consultation, bank workers could blow the whistle on malfeasance harming consumers while being able to more easily organize a union with their coworkers. Just imagine, if Wells Fargo workers had formed a union prior to 2016, the “fake accounts” scandal would probably never have occurred. Here’s a summary of [CWA’s bank worker empowerment proposals for the Biden-Harris Administration](#).

**Take Action Now to support Wells Fargo workers’ fight for justice.** Please **fill out this brief questionnaire** to let us know what connections you have with the bank. (<https://bit.ly/wfwucwasurvey>)



# Fighting for Local News

Since 2008, the news industry has suffered a 28% decline in total jobs. The job level is static in broadcast, but we've lost more than half of all jobs at U.S. newspapers, sliding from about 71,000 jobs in 2008 to just 31,000 jobs in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic further eroded jobs since then with little evidence of journalism job regrowth. The news industry shed 3,087 digital, broadcast and print news jobs in 2023 — the highest annual total since 2020. Digital-only newsrooms have increased, but not at a rate sufficient to replace local news jobs lost at newspapers.

Yet, workers in news are organizing unions at a rapid pace and fighting back against industry decline. The NewsGuild-CWA sector is one of the fastest growing private sector unions in the country, with more than 7,300 new members joining since 2017 across 156 workplaces. That's growth of 39%.

The consequences for the job losses in local news are huge for our union and for our democracy. Communities with less local news have lower bond ratings, higher taxes, more government corruption and waste. They also have less government spending on public services and are more likely to have more toxic emissions than communities with robust local news coverage. And communities with less local news vote less and have fewer contested races. They also know less about their elected representatives. In 1966, 70% of voters could name their mayor. In 2016, only 40% could.

Local news is the most trusted news source with 75% of American adults saying they have a lot or some trust in the information that comes from local news organizations.

Because of the declines in jobs, particularly at the local level, local news jobs must be the

priority in any legislative actions to address the decline of the U.S. news industry. NewsGuild-CWA members across the country are using every tool in the toolbox, including legislation, to fight back against industry decline.

In April 2024, New York Governor Kathy Hochul signed into law a revenue package that included a historic \$30 million in tax credits each year over three years, covering half of a journalist's salary up to \$50,000 each year. Publishers will only be able to use these employment tax credits to rebuild their newsrooms by hiring new reporters and retaining current staff. The organizing effort for this initiative was spearheaded by the Albany Newspaper Guild, New York News Publishers Association, the New York State AFL-CIO, The NewsGuild-CWA and the Communications Workers of America beginning in 2022. In May 2024, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker signed into law a similar bill that included \$25 million in tax credits over a 5 year period, covering \$15,000 per current reporter and \$25,000 per new hire. The effort was spearheaded by The Chicago News Guild, the Illinois State AFL-CIO, the NewsGuild-CWA and the Communications Workers of America.

***The Community News & Small Business Support Act (H.R. 4756)*** would provide tax credits for local news reporting jobs and local advertising. The bill would provide companies a tax credit up to \$25,000 for every local journalist they employ up to 1,500 employees, securing jobs for thousands of NewsGuild-CWA members and potentially creating thousands of more jobs. The NewsGuild-CWA and AFL-CIO enthusiastically support the Community News & Small Business Support Act.

***The Saving Local News Act (H.R. 7360)*** would make it easier for print and online news outlets to become non-profits, allowing them to focus more on producing quality content rather than on maximizing profits. The NewsGuild-CWA is in strong support of this bill.

Over the past decade Google and Facebook have gobbled up a sizable portion of all



digital advertising revenue. That lock on advertising has prevented news organizations from being competitive online when the platforms benefit from news coverage without paying for it. And the same companies, with the addition of other startups, are now scooping up content created by union members to train artificial intelligence systems, typically without compensation. ***The Journalism Competition and Preservation Act (S. 1094)*** would provide an antitrust exemption for news companies (broadcast, print and digital) to collectively negotiate and have arbitration to get added revenue out of the platforms. NewsGuild-CWA members support changes to the bill to prioritize workers and high-quality journalism, including by: ensuring at least 70% of any additional revenue goes to saving and creating jobs, providing clear transparency to workers and the American people, and prohibiting participating companies from stock buybacks during the term of the agreement. The NewsGuild-CWA strongly recommends these critical changes before the legislation can be passed.

# IUE-CWA

As the Industrial Division of CWA, IUE-CWA represents a force of 40,000 workers united collectively to seek dignity on the job and a secure future for ourselves, our children and all future generations. The Division is headed by President Carl Kennebrew.

## **U.S. MANUFACTURING IS CRITICAL FOR THE U.S. ECONOMY**

Every new manufacturing job we create adds another 1.6 jobs to the local service economy, and for every dollar in manufacturing sales, another \$1.34 is added to the economy. Investments in manufacturing have a stronger impact than investments in any other economic sector. Manufacturing also is one of the pathways to stable, middle class employment for millions of workers across the country. Workers in manufacturing jobs earn 22 percent more in annual pay and benefits than the average worker in other industries.

## **TRADE DEALS HAVE ALREADY DESTROYED MILLIONS OF MANUFACTURING JOBS AND LOWERED WAGES**

IUE-CWA is committed to fighting back against broken trade deals designed to only benefit the 1% and multinational corporations. Corporate-written trade and globalization deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), create a race to the bottom in labor, environmental and public health standards that has weakened our protections and undermined American workers' wages, benefits, and working conditions. The U.S. suffered a 3.4 million net job loss due to just two trade deals – NAFTA and allowing China into the WTO. Most of these were jobs in the manufacturing sector. Overall, sixty thousand U.S. manufacturing facilities closed since NAFTA. One study calculated that the downward pressure on wages and benefits caused by offshoring costs the majority of American households \$2,560 each year.

Members of Congress should instead fight for fair trade deals that:

- **Include Strong Labor And Environmental Protections With Swift And Certain Enforcement:** Past U.S. trade deals have included weak provisions on labor and the environment with an enforcement mechanism so poorly designed that the U.S. never once won a single dispute over labor or environmental abuses until new actions taken under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada agreement by Ambassador Katherine Tai's Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. A fair trade policy requires much stronger rules with an enforcement mechanism that delivers accountability in a timely way. It also should include stronger rights like cross-border collective bargaining, which would allow workers to join together across borders to negotiate with multinational corporations to raise wages and standards in the U.S. and across the world by preventing corporations from pitting workers in the U.S. against workers in other countries who are denied their rights and are paid unfair wages.
- **Do Not Include Special Handouts For Companies That Offshore Jobs:** Many existing trade deals give multinational corporations access to a separate judicial system called "Investor-State Dispute Settlement" (ISDS). ISDS provides special legal protections for companies that move factories overseas and has been called a "subsidy for offshoring." It has been shown to be rife with conflicts of interest and it has routinely been used to attack public interest laws protecting workers, the environment and public health.
- **Include Strong Rules Of Origin:** Strong rules of origin ensures that the goods and services benefiting from the terms of the agreement are actually produced in the countries that are part of the agreement. Positive standards designed to benefit workers, communities and the environment will achieve little if corporations can use loopholes embedded in weak rules of origin and take advantage of an agreement with goods and services produced elsewhere.

- **Are Negotiated Transparently:** Instead of the secretive process that allows special access for corporate lobbyists, our trade deals should be negotiated in the light of day with lots of opportunity for public involvement to ensure that the deals reflect the needs of working people, not special interests.
- **Keep Good-Paying Jobs At Home:** Our tax code should ensure that the super-wealthy and multinational corporations pay their fair share and encourage the creation of good jobs here in the United States. The No Tax Breaks for Outsourcing Act (S. 780/H.R. 1711) would stop rewarding companies that ship jobs overseas and reverse the offshoring incentives embedded in the tax law.

Members of Congress should also:

### **INVEST IN DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING OF WIND POWER EQUIPMENT, ELECTRICAL GRID & RELATED COMPONENTS**

IUE-CWA workers are eager to support the Biden administration achieving its national goal to reach 100 percent carbon pollution-free electricity by 2035 by ensuring that the manufacturing supply chain for offshore wind turbines takes root in the United States.

We want to see offshore wind turbine generators and components deployed in American oceans made right here, on American shores. Thousands of IUE-CWA members have the skills necessary for the U.S. to achieve its green energy transition, and help train new cohorts of electrical workers; in fact, IUE-CWA members have been at the forefront of manufacturing power generating equipment for generations.

IUE-CWA members also make electrical equipment that helps transmit, distribute, and utilize electrical energy and turn it into work.

Consistent with [CWA Resolution \(#78A-21-05\): Securing Our Labor Rights in the Climate Transition](#):

- IUE-CWA supports effective investment in a resilient, and fair decarbonization of our energy systems, based on a strong domestic manufacturing base, in a manner that is environmentally sound.
- This is an opportunity for IUE-CWA

members to grow the union across the electrical and electromechanical industry and deal with catastrophic global warming – which is a threat to all working people and life on this planet.

IUE-CWA wants to see unimpeded freedom of association and respect for all workers' rights, including the right to collectively bargain, high road labor standards, inclusive community benefits and environmental justice be part of industrial policy and day to day practice.

### **ENSURE INVESTMENTS IN OUR SEMICONDUCTOR INDUSTRY GO TOWARD GOOD JOBS**

Passing the CHIPS & Science Act into law was a significant step towards getting U.S. manufacturing back on the map and has immense potential to create thousands of good union jobs in the semiconductor industry. However, more action is needed to prevent the industry from continuing its decades-long assault on worker organizing, ensure workers are safe on the job, and ensure the jobs created through this historic federal investment are high-quality and community-sustaining.

IUE-CWA represents workers at one of the only union-represented chip factories in the country, as well as multiple semiconductor supply chain facilities. We have an active organizing campaign at Momentive Technologies, a semiconductor supply chain company in Strongsville, OH where [workers have faced aggressive union-busting](#). IUE-CWA also recently signed an historic [first-in-the-industry labor peace and community workforce agreement for semiconductor production workers](#) with Akash Systems and is negotiating a labor peace agreement with Micron.

It is critical that Micron [follows through on its commitment](#) and negotiates a labor peace agreement with IUE-CWA. Additionally, the Department of Labor should work alongside the Department of Commerce to operationalize the Good Jobs Principles in facility workforce commitments during the due-diligence phase, and include metrics and processes to measure, track, and report publicly on those goals and commitments in the final set of terms.

# AFA-CWA

The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA-CWA) represents 55,000 Flight Attendants at 20 airlines. AFA has an independent governance structure on policies and procedures, while maximizing our strength in numbers and building power and capacity for working people together with our CWA siblings. AFA-CWA's mission is to unite all flight attendants in order to achieve fair compensation, job security, seniority protections, and improved quality of life through organizing, bargaining and political action while serving as the leading voice for a safe, healthy and secure aircraft cabin for passengers and crew alike. AFA-CWA is committed to promoting economic and social justice for all workers through education and action.

## **FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 – We Did It!**

In May 2024, the FAA Reauthorization Bill passed the House 387-26 after passing the Senate 88-4. We can't overstate the importance of action on this five year funding and priority plan for our national air transportation system. The bill is about safety first and foremost. But none of us would have jobs without a working air transportation system either. As the system has become stretched over the years due to extensions and shutdowns, this safety, infrastructure, modernization, and federal sector jobs bill also became critical job security legislation for the private sector. Lead lawmakers responsible for this legislation and deserving of recognition: Senate Commerce Committee Chair Maria Cantwell, House T&I Committee Chair Sam Graves, and Ranking Member Rick Larsen. Summary of labor provisions AFA-CWA supported and worked to achieve in the bill:

- Cabin Air Safety: advances study of air quality and reporting/tracking of fume events
- Temperature in Aircraft Cabins: requires study of cabin temperatures with the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.

- Crewmember PUMPing Guidance for Flight Attendants and Pilots
- Improving Aircraft Evacuation Standards: certification standards for today's cabin environment
- National Academies study on radiation exposure on aircraft
- Emergency Medical Equipment review and update, including overdose response
- Strengthens Maintenance Requirements: closes safety loopholes at foreign repair stations.
- Secondary Cockpit Barriers - installation on all commercial passenger aircraft.
- Rampworker Safety: minimize or eliminate ingestion zone and jet blast zone accidents.
- Crewmember Self-Defense Training Updates
- Task Force to Deter Crewmember Interference
- Requires airlines to have policy on combating sexual assault, working with labor and clear reporting for passenger and crew.
- Expands the crewmember interference language and penalty to include workers in the airport.
- Airport service worker - a comprehensive review of the domestic airport service workforce and examine the role of, impact on, and importance of such workforce to the aviation economy.

We will monitor the FAA as they work to implement these and other issues.

## **Protection from Abusive Passengers Act (H.R. 2394/S. 1058)**

In 2023, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) documented 2,075 (down from a 2021 high of 5,981) unruly passenger reports, initiated 512 investigations, and assessed \$7.5 million in fines. Disruptions in the cabin and failure to comply with crew instructions are a threat to the safety of the flight and these same bad actors are often engaged in disrupting the safety for all workers at airports. The Protection from Abusive Passengers Act protects airline crew members, passenger service agents, security screening personnel, and passengers by banning abusive passengers from

- commercial aircraft flights. An abusive passenger would be someone who was assessed a civil penalty by the FAA or TSA or was convicted of interfering with a crewmember, passenger service agent, or security personnel. This common-sense legislation prevents a passenger from being banned on one carrier and then flying on another, allowing for due process of law.

### **Safe Air on Airplanes Act (H.R. 8533)**

On May 23, 2024, Representatives Maxwell Alejandro Frost (D-FL), Mike Lawler (R-NY), Robert Garcia (D-CA), and John Garamendi (D-CA) introduced the bipartisan Safe Air on Airplanes Act, legislation to secure clean air on airplanes and ensure the safety of the nearly 3 million people, including flight crews and passengers, who fly daily.

While studies and reporting/record keeping of fume events were included in the FAA Reauthorization, the Safe Air on Airplanes Act bill gets to the root cause of the issue. It will end the use of bleed air systems for ventilation in new commercial aircraft designs, require filters on bleed air systems to effectively keep oil particulates out of flight deck and cabin air within seven years, and phase out the use of bleed air systems for ventilation in existing commercial aircraft designs in the coming years. Currently, the Boeing 787 model is the only airplane that does not use a bleed air system.

### **Contract Negotiations**

Under the Railway Labor Act (RLA), contracts do not expire. Contracts become amenable and there is no statutory time limit for negotiations. Airline management has benefited from long, drawn out negotiations - years of overdue improvements for workers. Without the threat of a release to a 30-day cooling-off-period and strike deadline, management doesn't move at the table. This also unnecessarily strains the resources of the National Mediation Board (NMB) with on-going disputes in mediation, while delaying much-needed increases for frontline workers. In the U.S. today, six Flight Attendant contracts are in federal mediation with the NMB: American, Air Wisconsin, Alaska, Avelo, Omni,

and United. Pay increases have stalled over years of negotiations, from 2-5 years. Another eight AFA airlines are negotiating or in preparation to begin soon: ATI, Breeze, Eastern Airlines, Frontier Airlines, Horizon, Mesa, Norse, and PSA. Congressional letters were recently sent to the NMB, encouraging full use of the statute, including the right to strike, to settle contract disputes. Led by Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D-NM), the House had 178 bi-partisan signatures. At the time of printing this document a Senate companion letter led by Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) is circulating in the Senate to add to the House message to the NMB. Signers listed at [afacwa.org/nmbRTSletters](https://afacwa.org/nmbRTSletters)

### **Organizing at Delta/Sky West**

AFA-CWA organizing campaigns: 28,000 Delta Flight Attendants and 4000 Flight Attendants at SkyWest Airlines. It is unlawful for management to retaliate against any worker engaging in concerted activity over issues of mutual concern. Workers rights codified in the Railway Labor Act (RLA) include the freedom to organize without coercion, intimidation, and other forms of interference from management. But there is no enforcement mechanism under the law and airlines routinely violate these worker rights with no consequence. That is why lawmaker attention on this is so important and helpful. This spring, letters from both House members and Senators were sent to Delta management calling on the airline to follow the law. Signers listed at [afacwa.org/DeltaNeutralLetters](https://afacwa.org/DeltaNeutralLetters)

Help us thank the offices who signed these letters and remind lawmakers that we need their attention on workers' rights if we are going to ensure good jobs, a thriving economy, combat money in politics, and promote democracy.

# Advocating for Passenger Service Agents

The Communications Workers of America (CWA) represents 20,000 passenger service agents across American Airlines, Inc. and wholly-owned regional subsidiaries Piedmont Airlines and Envoy Air. CWA passenger service members across the country have been advocating to ensure their safety in the workplace and fair compensation. These are significant issues for members who play critical roles in maintaining the smooth operation of the aviation industry:

## **Advocating for Safety Improvements for Airport Ramp Workers**

On December 31, 2022, CWA Local 3645 member Courtney Edwards was killed after a tragic on-the-job accident on the ramp. Our union successfully advocated for protections and training requirements in the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2024. The legislation directs the FAA to issue a safety review of airport ramp operations and hazards, including risks of engine ingestion and jet blast zones. The FAA will also publish training materials related to these hazards for ground crews. This is a step in the right direction to prevent other tragedies from impacting ground service workers.

## **Protecting Frontline Aviation Workers from Physical and Verbal Abuse in the Workplace**

In 2023, the FAA recorded 2,075 unruly passenger incidents. Only 512 of these cases were investigated further and 402 cases resulted in enforcement actions by the FAA to address these issues. Incidents involving passenger service members have not been recorded or properly addressed, and alcohol sales in the airport, and flight delays continue to make it challenging for our members to perform their duties safely and efficiently.

The health and safety of airline workers, the traveling public and the entire aviation industry depend on a strong and coordinated federal response to assaults against all employees in our aviation system. The FAA Reauthorization of 2024 provides new protections to prevent assaults against agents by clarifying the rules outlawing assaults against security screening personnel apply to airport or air carrier employees performing ticketing, check-in, baggage claim, or boarding functions, as Congress originally intended.

CWA endorses the ***Protection from Abusive Passenger Act (H.R. 7433/ S. 4019)***, which protects frontline passenger service members and airline flight crews, security screening personnel and other customers from unruly passengers. The Act would ensure that violent offenders convicted of assaulting frontline aviation workers will be placed on a commercial no-fly list maintained by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

## **Raising Wage and Benefit Standards for Frontline Airline and Airport Workers**

CWA, in coalition with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and Unite-HERE, successfully advocated for the inclusion of a GAO study to review the importance of the domestic airport service workforce in the aviation industry in the FAA Reauthorization bill. Following the study, a public working group may be convened to evaluate and discuss the report's findings. For far too long, both airports and airlines have exploited and underpaid many service workers, notwithstanding the huge profits that those workers enable for their employers.



# Public Service Loan Forgiveness

Although the Supreme Court struck down the Biden-Harris administration's student debt relief program and payments on federal student loans have resumed, the Biden Administration recently announced that it will continue to take steps to relieve the burden of student debt for public sector workers who put themselves on the frontlines to provide our communities with the services they need and rely on. By removing the anxieties that come with crippling student loan debt, more qualified individuals will be encouraged to pursue a career in public service and stay for the long haul. Learn more about the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program: <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/public-service>

## Privatization of Government Services

Corporations have for years recognized that an easy way to generate profits is through the public sector, which is why there are always pushing efforts to privatize public services. The American Rescue Plan (ARP), signed into law by President Biden in 2022, provided \$350 billion in funding to states, cities, and towns. The ARP saved the public sector and illustrated how investing in workers pays off. With potential budget cuts coming in the near future, PHEW members must be ready to be engaged and activated against the privatization of government services and ensure our state and local governments manage their in-house workforces by budgets and workloads instead of arbitrary personnel caps, freezes, cuts, and privatization.

## PHEW State and Local Advocacy

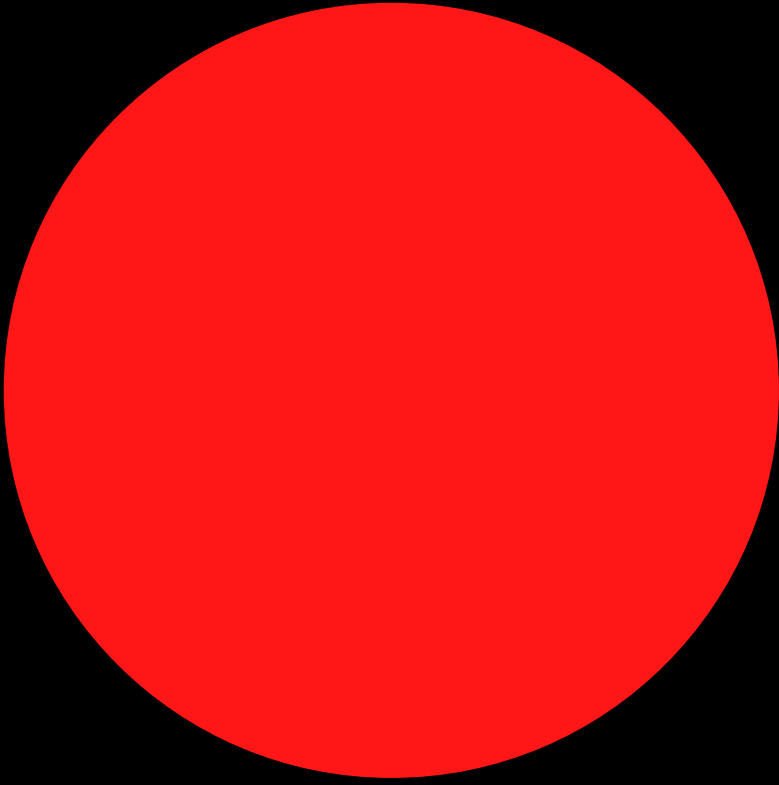
State and local governments also have a number of tools available to them to strengthen worker rights, raise wages and benefits, strengthen worker dignity, voice and health safety on the job, and help reverse the

increasing income inequality that has harmed workers and our economy for many years. State and local workers have been fighting for some big wins across the county:

CO ballot measure on municipal bargaining: At the moment, fire, police, and sheriff deputies in Denver have collective bargaining but workers in the City and County of Denver do not. PHEW members joining together in coalition with other unions have been working hard in Colorado to support an initiative to place collective bargaining rights for city workers on the ballot in the fall of 2024. The coalition is also pursuing an alternate path to victory—an amendment to the city charter through the City Council. This is one of the ways that PHEW members are being creative and looking at all available options to gain collective bargaining rights on the local level.

Eliminating mandatory fees for graduate workers: PHEW members have been hard at work for years to put an end to the crushing fees graduate workers are forced to pay to the universities in order to do their jobs. We've won in many states across the country, including TN and most recently, in NY where members of Local 1104 lobbied for a pro-worker budget to phase out fees.

Properly funded pensions: After years of PHEW members and allies fighting to make sure pensions are properly funded, the State of New Jersey made the full pension payment two years in a row and included an additional \$500 million. This comes after sustained engagement that included lobby days, letter writing and other engagement with legislative officials.



501 3rd Street NW,  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 434-1100

[www.cwa-union.org](http://www.cwa-union.org)  
@CWAUnion

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