



Legislative-Political
Overview 2025-2026

CWA

Reclaiming Our Power: Workers Over Billionaires.

Communications Workers of America

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.

Collective Bargaining (major employers)



Verizon



United Airlines and
American Airlines



General Electric



NBC and ABC television networks
and Canadian Broadcasting Co.



New York Times and
Wall Street Journal



University of California
and the state of New Jersey

Our 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).

Advocacy, Partnerships & Solidarity

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 working to build a movement of organizations to win progressive changes. A founder of The Democracy Initiative, CWA works with labor and worker groups like Jobs with Justice, American Rights at Work, the AFL-CIO, and Change to Win, but also civil rights and consumer groups, such as the NAACP, Alliance for Justice, the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, Blue Green Alliance, 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.

Claude Cummings Jr. was elected president of the Communications Workers of America by delegates to the union's 79th convention on July 10, 2023. Before becoming president, he served as an at-large member of the CWA Executive Board, Vice President of CWA District 6 representing workers in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas, and led the union's Human Rights Department.

Cummings began working at Southwestern Bell Telephone Company (now AT&T) in 1973 as a Frame Attendant and Communications Technician, maintaining systems for customers including NASA. Before his election as District 6 Vice President, he served as President of CWA Local 6222, representing 8,000 members, after holding several leadership roles in the local, including Vice President. He was the first Black man elected to each of these positions.



Ameenah Salaam

Ameenah Salaam was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Communications Workers of America by acclamation by delegates of the 79th CWA convention on July 10, 2023.

A native of Wilmington, Delaware, Salaam started her union career when she went to work for Diamond State Telephone in 1991 as a customer service representative. She was elected as a CWA Local 13100 steward and served as Vice President of the local until September 1997 when she joined the CWA national staff. As an assistant to outgoing CWA President Chris Shelton, she has played critical leading roles in organizing, bargaining and mobilization campaigns, supporting staff and pushing CWA's core mission forward with effective strategic planning and fiscal responsibility.



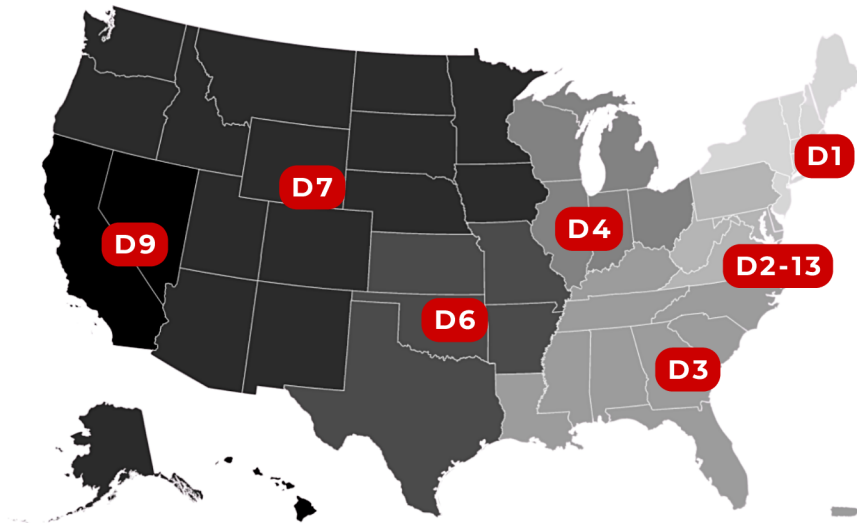
Sectors and Industries Vice Presidents

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

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Vera Mikell, Local 2205
Reginald Small, Local 6215
Marlene Jimenez, Local 7777

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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 2023, annual earnings for the top 1% and top 0.1% skyrocketed by 181.7% and 353.9%, respectively, while earnings for the bottom 90% grew just 43.7%. The top 1% earned 12.4% of all wages in 2023, up from 7.3% in 1979. The bottom 90% earned just 60.7% of all wages in 2023, far lower than their 69.8% share in 1979. Unions can help counteract this runaway inequality by supporting a more equitable society and economy. Research by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) found that:

- Unionized workers earn, on average, 12.8% more in wages than non-unionized peers. In places or industries where unionization is strong, unions also boost wages for nonunion workers.
- Unions reduce racial and ethnic pay gaps. Unionized Black and Hispanic workers are paid 12.6% and 16.4% more, respectively, than their non-unionized peers.
- Hourly wages for unionized women are 9.8% higher on average than for non-unionized women.

Moreover, the harm to workers caused by the lack of an organized voice on the job extends beyond 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 provide strong enough protections 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 **Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act (H.R. 20/S. 852)** is a landmark worker empowerment bill that restores workers' right to freely and fairly form a union and bargain for workplace changes.

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.

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 will strengthen workers' ability to come together and demand a fair share of the wealth they create.

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 degrade the quality of public services provided by state and local governments.

Public service workers fought on the front lines of the pandemic to protect their communities, often putting their communities' needs 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. It's time to level the playing field by establishing federal protections that guarantee public sector workers the right to join together and collectively bargain.

The **Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (H.R. 2736/S. 1352)** guarantees public sector employees in every state the freedom to stand together and negotiate for fair wages and working conditions. It establishes a nationwide minimum 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 empower them to protect and improve vital services. To build an economy that works for everyone, not just the billionaires and corporations, all workers must have the freedom to organize and collectively bargain. By supporting the PSFNA, members of Congress can help push back against these corporate efforts to destroy public sector workers' rights.

Protecting Call Center Workers and Consumers

Call centers are a major economic force in the United States, employing almost 3 million Americans. They 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 2024 was \$20.59 per hour, which compares favorably to other entry-level jobs. In union-represented jobs, wages are higher and benefits are more generous.

Historically, companies have shifted operations overseas, downsized, or shut down their U.S. operations. These jobs are often moved to countries where the local workforce faces horrific exploitation on the job, including poor safety and health standards, low wages, and violence for union organizing. Additionally, companies often move to countries where security measures to protect personal data are far less robust than those in the U.S.

Now, with the development of new technology, such as Artificial Intelligence, we are seeing call center jobs displaced and degraded. A 2023 survey of our membership found that the increased use of AI-enabled tools had negative workplace outcomes, including increased work speed, expanded discipline, higher workplace stress, greater customer abuse, and lower job satisfaction.

Our taxpayer dollars should not be used to reward this race to the bottom. The **Keep Call Centers in America Act (H.R. 4954/S. 2495)** protects call center jobs and consumers in the United States by stopping incentives that encourage companies to continue disinvesting in our communities and replace real human customer service with unhelpful artificial intelligence.

Specifically, it would:

- Require businesses to notify the Department of Labor (DOL) at least 120 days before relocating a call center overseas or contracting with businesses that outsource work overseas.
- Direct DOL to maintain a public list of employers that have relocated call center work overseas. Employers will stay on the list for five years unless an equal or greater number of call center jobs are returned to the U.S. or amend their contract with businesses that outsource work to require the work to be done in the U.S. Employers on the list are ineligible for new federal grants or loans and may face penalties or cancellation of existing awards after one year.

- Require agencies to prioritize U.S. employers that do not appear on the list for federal contracts and require that all call center work performed on federal contracts be performed in the U.S.
- Require call center agents to disclose the call center's physical location immediately and, upon customer request, transfer the call to a U.S. call center. If AI is used for customer service interactions, the customer must likewise have the option to connect with a real human agent immediately.
- Require DOL to prepare a report for Congress on the amount and location of call center work performed for the federal government and any job losses due to the use of artificial intelligence for customer service.

The Keep Call Centers in America Act was introduced by Senators Gallego (D-AZ) and Justice (R-OH) and Representatives McDonald Rivet (D-MI) and Fitzpatrick (R-PA).

Democracy Reform

Our democracy works best when working families, not just the wealthy or well-connected, can participate fully and freely. However, growing corruption, newly erected barriers to the ballot box, and political greed have undermined the public's confidence that our democracy is truly of, by, and for the people. Now is the time to pass sweeping democracy reforms that would help restore political power to America's working families.

Many working people feel that Washington is rigged against them, and given the growing influence of money in politics, it's not hard to see why. We're witnessing a system where massive political donations don't just buy access, they can help buy real power and influence over the decisions that affect all of us. Instead of making it easier to vote and have a say, politicians are pushing efforts like the SAVE Act that could make it harder for eligible voters to participate. And at the same time, too many of the policies taking priority are tilted toward the wealthy and powerful, not the people who keep this country running.

That's why CWA is fighting for the passage of legislation that empowers workers by ensuring that all eligible voters have the opportunity and access to participate in a fair and equal democratic process. That includes pushing back on big money in politics because our government should work for working people, not the ultra-wealthy.

The passage of the **Freedom to Vote Act** is essential to restoring political power to America's working families. The Freedom to Vote Act is a transformational democracy reform package that 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
- Ban partisan gerrymandering to ensure voters pick their politicians and not the other way around

Equally important is the passage of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to ensure that every eligible voter can participate in our democracy. The Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* gutted the original Voting Rights Act of 1965 by stripping away the federal government's power to block discriminatory voting changes in states with a history of discrimination. To make matters worse, the Court's most recent ruling in *Louisiana v. Callais* weakened the law even further,

rolling back longstanding protections for communities of color and making it harder for voters, civil rights groups, and workers to fight back against unfair voting maps. Together, these decisions have stripped away critical protections, opened the door for more voter suppression, and made it harder for working people to have their voices heard.

As a result, 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 (H.R. 14/S. 2523)** would help address these 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 governments 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 the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would level the playing field and bring us closer to a fully functioning democracy. One that the highest bidder cannot buy, that gives hardworking voters the options they need to cast their vote safely, and that allows voters to choose their elected officials instead of the other way around.

High Quality and Affordable Health Care for All

In July 2025, President Trump signed the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” into law, an enormous transfer of wealth from working families to businesses and the rich. The law cut \$1 trillion in funding from health care programs, pushing an estimated 15 million Americans off their coverage within the next 10 years. Together with cuts to food assistance and investments to boost domestic clean energy production, these cuts to health care costs were used to fund \$1.4 trillion in tax cuts for households making over \$500,000 a year.¹

The effects of these cuts are already being felt by working families across the country. Costs for health care plans sold on state-based exchanges increased by 21% in 2026.² The end of enhanced subsidies for health coverage on state-based exchanges, originally signed into law under the Biden administration, more than doubled costs paid by millions of families in 2026.³

CWA families are also confronting the rising cost of health care under our employer-based plans. Over the last 15 years, the average premium for employer-sponsored family coverage grew by 94%, while wages for production and nonsupervisory workers grew by 67%.⁴ Through the power of bargaining and collective action, CWA members have limited the extent to which these increases are passed on to workers. However, rising health care costs restrain our ability to bargain for better wages, benefits and other improvements. Economists have estimated that rising employer health care costs over the past 10 years have led to a nearly 10% reduction in workers’ wages nationwide.⁵

The health care cuts enacted by Trump and Republicans in Congress will only exacerbate these trends. Experts estimate that enrollees in employer-sponsored coverage will see increases of \$182 - \$485 per person as hospitals raise prices to recover the costs of uncompensated care they are required to provide to the newly uninsured.⁶ Funding cuts will also hurt the ability of struggling providers to continue serving their communities, especially rural hospitals and nursing homes. Estimates suggest that 338 rural hospitals and 579 nursing homes across the country are at risk of closure due to funding cuts.⁷

Cuts to health care programs that leave working families uninsured, shift costs to our employer plans, and endanger essential community health care providers are not the answer to the rising cost of care in America. They only make the problem worse. 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 health 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.

Protecting and Expanding Medicare and Other Successful Health Programs – Millions of Americans depend on public insurance programs and subsidies for affordable coverage. Instead of targeting these programs for cuts to fund giveaways to businesses and the wealthy, Congress should build on popular, successful programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and the Affordable Care Act so that every American can have the security of comprehensive health coverage.

Congress should repeal the cuts enacted by Donald Trump and Republicans, restoring health care to 15 million Americans. The **Protecting Health Care and Lowering Costs Act (H.R. 4849/S. 2556)** would restore Medicaid funding and permanently extend the Affordable Care Act’s premium tax credits.

Congress should also take action to reduce the Medicare eligibility age, expand Medicaid in the 10 remaining states that have refused to implement this federally subsidized program, improve subsidies on the ACA exchanges, expand Medicare benefits to include dental, vision, and hearing coverage, and give all Americans the choice of enrolling in a Medicare-type public option health care plan.

Expand and Strengthen Protections Against Exploding Drug Prices – Americans pay more than any other comparable country for prescription drugs. In 2022, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act, which included landmark provisions that lowered the cost of prescription drugs for millions of Americans enrolled in Medicare. For the first time, the federal government is empowered to negotiate lower prices for a limited number of drugs for Medicare patients and will impose penalties on pharmaceutical companies when prices grow faster than inflation. The federal government estimates that Medicare beneficiaries will save \$1.5 billion from reduced drug prices in 2026, with additional savings expected in future years as additional rounds of drug negotiations are completed.⁸

However, more action is needed. Medicare is currently restricted to bargaining for a limited number of drugs each year. While these negotiated prices result in significant savings for retirees, active employees under employer health plans do not see relief in their drug costs. Congress should pass the **Lowering Drug Costs for American Families Act (H.R. 6166)**, which allows negotiations on more high-cost drugs and enforces negotiated prices and inflation caps for public and private health care plans that cover all Americans, reducing one of the biggest hurdles at the bargaining table.

Strengthen Employer-Sponsored Coverage – As health care costs have risen, employers have systematically eroded employer-sponsored health plans through 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.⁹ 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.

Broadband and Media Policy

Today, every CWA member knows that high-speed broadband networks are essential infrastructure in the 21st century, and are key to economic growth, job creation, and improvements in education, health care, public safety, and more. More than ever, Americans rely on quality networks to access our jobs, our schooling, and our loved ones.

Universal, affordable access to high-capacity Internet is essential to our nation's democracy and economy – and it's the law¹⁰ – but due to corporate greed and decades of deregulation, our networks lag those of other countries and the digital divide is wide. As of 2024, 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 Federal Communications Commission's speed benchmark of 100 Mbps download/20 Mbps upload.¹¹ 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 government must fulfill its promise to deliver high-speed Internet at an affordable price regardless of income or geographic location. For this to happen, Congress must update our universal service laws and regulations for the 21st century. 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 affordability programs like Lifeline, 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. Public funding to build broadband networks 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

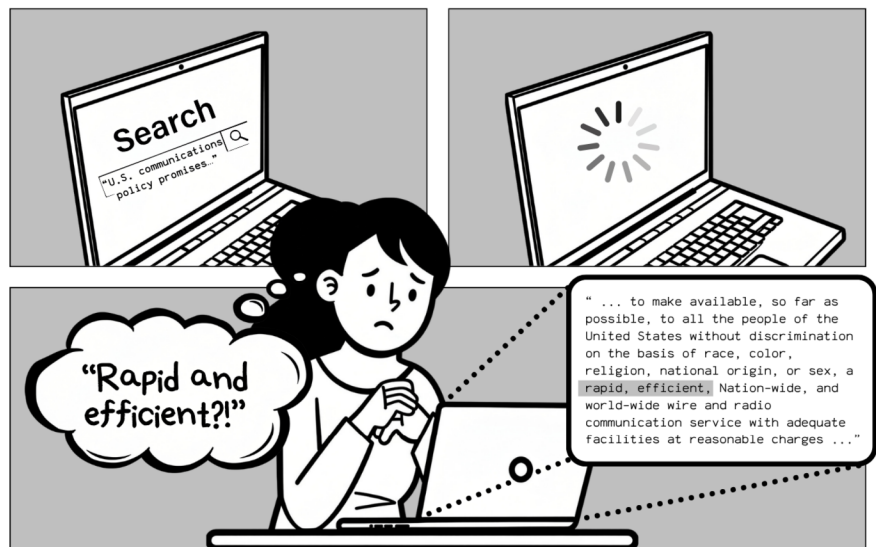
capacity wired and wireless networks to achieve reliable and affordable access. As states start spending the broadband dollars from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, they must ensure that their program decisions prioritize future-proof fiber networks and hold satellite technology providers accountable.

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. Industry should not be allowed to use this transition to circumvent the principles of universal service, public safety, and consumer protection. To properly exercise democratic oversight of our communications networks, the federal government should reestablish Title II common carrier status for broadband, and states should assert regulatory oversight over broadband and voice-over-IP (VoIP) services.

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

Media Diversity, Quality Journalism: Media diversity is essential to a functioning democracy. Federal law requires the FCC to protect diversity in broadcast media by issuing licenses to use the public airwaves and prohibiting a company from owning TV stations that reach more than 39% of the US population. Today, the risk of unfettered consolidation of media companies threatens to undermine quality local journalism while raising the risk of censorship. The FCC and Congress must maintain the national limits on broadcast ownership and stop granting harmful “waivers” of local and national ownership rules. When broadcast and media companies merge into giant players that control the market, it hurts workers and it hurts local news. Communities rely on broadcast for emergency information, political updates, and local news, and we can’t let harmful broadcast mergers continue.

RE-REGULATE BROADBAND



For many people, this promise hasn't been delivered.

Workers First Initiative on Artificial Intelligence

Employers across the country are racing to adopt new Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. Without common-sense legal guardrails and a voice for workers in their design and implementation, these tools have the potential to displace workers, degrade job quality, and undermine service quality. CWA has a long and proud history of bargaining over new technologies and advocating against harmful uses of technology in the workplace. We can build on this history to challenge employers' harmful uses of AI and confront new risks unique to machine learning. For example, unchecked automated surveillance and management technologies pose a growing risk as employers use them to monitor workers' on and off-duty activities and impose discipline without oversight, accountability, or transparency.

The **Stop Spying Bosses Act (H.R. 7690 /S.262 in the 118th Congress)** creates much-needed standards, protections, and oversight to counter invasive and exploitative surveillance technologies that are spreading unchecked.

The **No Robot Bosses Act (H.R. 7621/S. 2419 in the 118th Congress)** aims to prevent discrimination and wrongful discipline by prohibiting employers from relying exclusively on an automated decision system in making employment-related decisions and by establishing the Privacy and Technology Division at the DOL.

Policymakers should also take action to protect workers' work product and likenesses from uncompensated use by both employers and AI platforms, and to ensure that workers can negotiate any use of their creations or selves.

Additionally, algorithmic justice is a civil rights issue. AI is increasingly shaping our lives in housing, hiring, healthcare, and finances. Corporations increasingly rely on AI to hire, fire, monitor, and discipline workers, with little or no human oversight or accountability. Without clear safeguards, these systems risk perpetuating and entrenching bias and discrimination across our economy. These tools must be proven accessible, transparent, and fair before being deployed at scale.

The **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Civil Rights Act** establishes critical guardrails to prevent AI discrimination, requires corporations to be transparent about how they use AI, and holds corporations accountable when their AI systems perpetuate bias.

For more on how CWA members can advocate for pro-worker AI policy, check out the AI Policy Toolkit, part of CWA's Resource Hub on AI: <https://cwa-union.org/workers-rights/artificial-intelligence>

A Tax Code for Working Families

At a time when working families are already stretched thin, our tax code has failed to provide much relief. Instead, it continues to tilt the playing field toward the top and leaves working people with less money in their pockets, rising living costs, and fewer opportunities to get ahead. Through legislation such as the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) and the so-called One Big Beautiful Bill Act, these disparities have worsened.

Rigging our tax code to benefit multinational corporations and the wealthy at the expense of working people is a betrayal of all our hard work. Since the passage of these regressive tax bills, corporations have raked in billions of dollars for their executives and moved tens of thousands more jobs overseas. All the while, working people have been left with crumbs and stripped of some of the few tax breaks we had, such as deductions for our union dues.

Despite the proven role unions play in raising wages, reducing inequality, and giving workers a stronger voice in our democracy, the tax code still fails to support working people who choose to organize. Instead, it rewards companies that spend millions to undermine workers' rights. That means the very system that should be helping level the playing field is doing the opposite, making it harder for working families to get ahead. 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. 995/S. 409)

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 and 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 Act (H.R. 2692/S. 1310)

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 expenses for anti-union campaigns as ordinary business expenses. 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 alone. 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 on busting unions from being tax-deductible business expenses.

The Tax Fairness for Workers Act would restore the deduction for union dues and make it an above-the-line tax deduction. Before 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 about 11 percent of tax filers itemize deductions, more workers across sectors and wage levels would benefit from this legislation.

Curbing Corporate Greed and the Power of the Ultra-Wealthy

For years, the tax code has rewarded corporate greed, whether by providing companies with unprecedented tax breaks, incentivizing offshoring, or stock buybacks. The 2017 and 2025 tax bills disproportionately worsened this situation by funneling wealth to large corporations, Wall Street, and the top 0.1% at the expense of deep cuts to the public services and investments that working families rely on.

Dismantle Concentrated Wealth and Power

Repealing these tax giveaways for the rich is a critical step towards building an economy that works for all of us and supports a healthy democracy. But returning to our pre-2017 tax code is not enough. Major reform is needed to enable us to pass the whole range of policies needed to build better lives for working families:

- Double the Wage for Overtime Act: updates the Fair Labor Standards Act to guarantee covered workers at least double their hourly wage for overtime, instead of the current minimum of time-and-a-half.
- The **Price Gouging Prevention Act (H.R. 4528/S. 2321)**: allows the FTC and state attorneys general to stop sellers from charging a grossly excessive price, regardless of where the price gouging occurs in a supply chain or distribution network.
- The **American Energy Independence and Affordability Act (H.R. 5862)**: restores the full clean electricity production and investment tax credits for wind, solar, and other zero-emission power sources, supports domestic manufacturing of clean energy components, and strengthens U.S. supply chains, while bringing down energy bills for working families.
- The **Stop AI Price Gouging and Wage Fixing Act (H.R. 4640)**: bans surveillance-based pricing and wage setting, automated systems that use personal data to manipulate costs and pay, and is enforced by the FTC, EEOC, and state attorneys general.

Rein in Wall Street and Rebalance Corporate Priorities

With the average S&P 500 CEO making 285 times more than the typical worker, extreme pay gaps continue to undermine corporate performance and promote turnover. Instead of investing in their workforce, corporations are launching record-breaking stock buybacks to enrich executives and to rework the tax code so they don't have to pay a sales tax on million-dollar trades, fueling risky

speculation and concentrated wealth. To tackle these extreme levels of inequality and ensure the financial sector pays its fair share, Congress must pass:

- The **Tax Excessive CEO Pay Act (H.R. 5298/S. 2818)**: establishes a higher corporate tax rate on companies that pay their CEOs a disproportionate amount of compensation compared to their workers.
- The **Reward Work Act (H.R. 8612)**: ends corporations' ability to buy back their stock on the open market by reversing the ruling that allows it and prohibiting companies from doing so.
- The **Tax on Wall Street Speculation Act (S. 1990/H.R. 4119 in the 118th) and Wall Street Tax Act (S. 2127/H.R. 4035)**: establishes 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.
- The **Carried Interest Fairness Act (H.R. 1091/S. 445)**: eliminates the carried interest loophole, a tax provision that benefits wealthy Wall Street money managers, including private equity barons and hedge fund managers.

Protecting the Rights of Workers on Strike

Gross abuses of worker rights have forced CWA members and other workers off the job numerous times in recent years. Persistent problems like unsafe working conditions, unlivable wages, and inadequate breaks force workers to make the impossible choice to go on strike. However, the decision can come with significant financial repercussions. Workers lose their regular income for the duration of the strike, and often face other coercion from their employers to return to work, including threats to terminate their healthcare coverage. These threats can seriously impact workers' access to medical treatment and restrict their ability to provide food, shelter, and safety for their families.

We can support striking workers by ensuring that Congress passes legislation to protect their ability to continue providing for their families in times of need. The following legislation will ensure that when workers decide to strike, they can do so with dignity and security.

Unemployment Insurance Protections

Unemployment insurance serves as a crucial safety net for workers who find themselves in the challenging position of being on strike. In such circumstances, unemployment insurance provides essential support to striking workers by offering them temporary financial assistance. This assistance helps alleviate the financial strain that striking workers and their families may experience during periods when they are not receiving wages from their employer. Without this financial support, workers might be forced to abandon their strike prematurely due to financial hardship, undermining their ability to negotiate for fairer working conditions and wages.

Additionally, unemployment insurance upholds the principle of solidarity among workers, enabling them to stand together in pursuit of their collective interests without undue economic hardship. Thus, ensuring access to unemployment insurance for workers on strike not only safeguards their economic well-being but also strengthens their ability to advocate for improved working conditions and equitable treatment in the workplace.

SNAP Protections

Access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits is critical for workers on strike, as it provides essential support to mitigate the economic challenges they face during this period of labor action. 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 workplace rights. 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.

Healthcare Protections

While employers cannot legally fire workers for participating in a protected strike, they can, and often do, threaten to cut workers' healthcare as a coercive tactic to silence them. We can look to the example of workers at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette who were on strike for over 1,100 days due to unfair labor practices by the newspaper's owner, Block Communications. Despite workers being on strike due to harmful changes to their healthcare, Block Communications terminated the healthcare plans of striking journalists, leaving them and their families without any company coverage. Coercive tactics like these undermine the NLRA and create a loophole for corporations to punish employees for exercising one of their most effective tools to protect their rights, wages, benefits, and working conditions.

CWA supports the following legislation, which would bolster the power of striking workers by ensuring they don't have to choose between healthcare, feeding their families, and keeping a roof over their heads at the expense of their workplace rights. We are proud to support:

- The **Empowering Striking Workers Act (H.R. 5206/S. 273)** ensures workers nationwide are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits after 14 days of striking.
- The **Food Secure Strikers Act (H.R. 2357/S. 1156)** repeals the restriction on striking workers from receiving SNAP.
- The **Striking and Locked Out Workers Healthcare Protection Act (H.R. 3532/S. 1984)** deems it an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) for employers to cut or alter workers' health insurance while they are on strike or locked out.

It is Time to Raise the Minimum Wage!

As inflation and rising expenses continue to raise the cost of living for working Americans, the federal minimum wage has been \$7.25 an hour for over a decade. Despite working full-time for some of the most profitable corporations, many airline employees, call center workers, retail store employees, and bank workers, among others, are barely making ends meet.

Right now, the federal minimum wage is worth less than it has been since 1956. Since the last raise in 2009, it's lost more than 30% of its buying power. And if it had kept up with rising prices since its peak back in 1968, it would be about \$14.93 an hour today instead of what it is now. For many Americans, this means that the money they earn working 40 hours or more a week is not enough to support themselves and their families. 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. 2743/S. 1332)** 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 2030;
- Automatically increase the minimum wage each year at the same rate that median wages increase after 2030;
- Phase out the subminimum wage for tipped, disabled, and youth workers so that all workers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act would have the same wage floor

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the Raise the Wage Act will raise the earnings of 22 million workers by 2030, or 15% of the workforce. The increases would provide an additional \$70 billion annually in wages for the country's lowest-paid workers, with the average affected worker who works year-round receiving an extra \$3,200 per year.

With more income, workers can buy homes, cars, and other goods, 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.

Workplace Equality for All!

Legal protections rooted in inclusion and fairness have come under renewed political and legal pressure across the United States, even as public support for equality continues to grow. State legislatures have advanced hundreds of bills affecting LGBTQ+ people, particularly transgender individuals, impacting access to health care and participation in public life. At the same time, a growing number of state policies and legal challenges have created uncertainty for employers about what workplace training and diversity efforts are allowed. In some cases, companies and public agencies have scaled back or eliminated inclusion and training programs to avoid legal risk, even though these programs are designed to prevent discrimination and improve fairness at work. These shifts have had real consequences in workplaces across the country, including the federal workforce, where Black women, who make up a significant share of employees, have been disproportionately affected by recent agency cuts and changes to DEI-related initiatives. As a result, workplace protections are becoming inconsistent depending on where people live or work, and efforts in multiple states to restrict or override local nondiscrimination rules have left LGBTQ+ employees with uneven safeguards. In this environment, strong federal protections are increasingly necessary to ensure that basic workplace rights are consistent and not dependent on geography or political conditions.

Big wins like nationwide marriage equality have helped ensure same-sex couples have the same rights in all 50 states. However, under federal law and most state laws, LGBTQ+ people are still not explicitly protected from discrimination in employment, housing, credit, or public accommodations. In some states, this means a same-sex couple could legally marry one day and still risk being fired, denied housing, excluded from jury duty, or refused service at a restaurant the next.

The **Equality Act (H.R. 15/S.1503)** would extend existing federal civil rights protections based on characteristics like race, sex, and religion to LGBTQ+ people. It would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in education, employment, housing, credit, and federal jury service, and strengthen protections in public accommodations, including retail stores and services such as banks, legal services, and transportation.

It would also expand protections for women beyond the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensuring nondiscrimination in public spaces and federal funding decisions, requiring equal treatment in goods and services, and prohibiting discrimination in federal contracting.

The Equality Act would further extend protections to individuals who associate with LGBTQ+ people, such as children of same-sex couples, across employment, housing, education, credit, public

Building a Worker-Centered Immigration Agenda

We have an economic system that treats immigrants as an exploitable workforce, allowing employers to use immigration status as a tool to keep workers from organizing, which hurts every working person in this country. The fight for immigrant justice and the fight for worker justice are the same. Building a welcoming immigration system will help spur inclusive growth, raise standards across industries in countries, and close gaps in income and opportunity.

The Trump Administration has used immigration as a ploy to distract from policy changes that favor corporations over workers and undermine our democratic norms. Recent actions include a sharp escalation of raids and enforcement, the use of military forces in civilian settings, armed agents entering schools, hospitals, and courthouses, and threats to deploy troops at polling places. These actions have led to the arrest of hundreds of union members, including lawful permanent residents and U.S. citizens, many of whom have been detained in inhumane conditions or deported without due process.

GE/Haier Appliance Park - Louisville, Kentucky

Last year, the Trump administration, without warning, revoked the legal immigration statuses of more than 150 IUE-CWA members at GE Appliances, resulting in their employment being terminated without notice. These workers were working in the U.S. under the CHNV (Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Venezuela) program, which allowed people from these countries to come to the U.S. under a legal visa. One of the worst parts was how they were notified—a simple letter in the mail, with no official government letterhead. Some folks even thought it was fake.

As a result, manufacturing lines were thrown into chaos. Members' badges were prematurely deactivated and chaos ensued within the building. It hurt GE's ability to put out American-made appliances. These workers came to this country legally and are hard-working, tax-paying members of the community. The changes in immigration law are endangering the lives of these workers and tearing their families apart.

What can Congress do?

The only way to stop the race to the bottom in wages and standards is for working people of all races,

religions, and immigration statuses to stand together and demand an end to policies that put profits over people.

Real immigration reform must create an immigration system that can help raise standards in our workplaces and ensure equal, enforceable rights for all working people. Congress should pass legislation that:

- Creates a pathway to citizenship for vital members of our workforce, our communities, and our union, such as through the **Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 1589)** and the **SECURE Act (S. 2106)**
- Codifies protections into law that prohibit enforcement actions at sensitive locations, including schools, hospitals, places of worship, courthouses, polling places, and union halls, like in the **Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (H.R. 1061/S. 455)**
- Protects from deportation to workers who have filed a workplace claim, are involved in workplace agency investigations and enforcement, or are undergoing a workplace injury or illness treatment, such as in the **POWER Act (H.R. 1828 in the 118th Congress)**
- Ends employer control over worker status
- Reallocates money away from immigration enforcement that allows abusive employers to operate with impunity toward investment in good union jobs and raising working and living standards for workers and their families.

CWA is strongly committed to breaking down barriers and fighting for immigration reform that protects and ensures the safety of all immigrants and refugees in this country, not only in their workplace but also in the larger community. We will stand in solidarity with all working people, no matter their immigration status. Every working person in the US deserves to live and work with dignity, regardless of where we were born.

Protecting Worker Rights Around the Globe

CWA has been at the forefront of fighting for a fair trade policy that protects workers, the environment and our public health for decades. Unfair, corporate written trade policies have prioritized the interests of multinational corporations over the interests of workers and communities.

Unfortunately, while the Trump Administration has pursued a different set of trade policies, these new policies have been erratic and, like previous policies, designed primarily to benefit insiders and the most connected, not American workers.

Most troublingly, the Department of Labor has cut or eliminated dozens of programs aimed at combating child labor, forced labor and human trafficking. The U.S. currently has far less capacity on the ground in countries where worker rights abuses run rampant to help workers exercise their rights than we did just a few years ago, and the International Labor Affairs Bureau is currently barely functioning. In addition to harming workers across the globe, these cuts have jeopardized the jobs of NewsGuild-CWA members at organizations like the Solidarity Center who work to implement these programs and protect worker rights.

Moreover, while some of the individual trade deals that the Trump Administration has struck with other countries have nominally included labor rights protections, some of which even theoretically extend beyond the provisions included in past trade deals, these deals are categorically lacking in labor rights enforcement provisions. As such, workers facing abuse still lack the tools to enforce their rights.

Future trade policy must restore and enhance the programs protecting international labor rights that have been cut, and build on past commitments, including the Rapid Response Mechanism that was included in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, to ensure that any trade deals in the future include strong labor and environmental protections and the tools to provide meaningful, timely accountability when those protections are violated, regardless of sector.

It is also critically important to pair these tools with strong incentives to invest domestically and a tax code that rewards domestic job creation rather than the outsourcing of money and jobs.

The Case for Paid Leave and Sick Days

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 a short-term illness, or bond with a new child. More than 106 million people, or 73 percent of workers, do not have paid family leave through their jobs, and nearly 60 percent lack access to paid personal medical leave through their employer. This gap forces impossible choices, with nearly one-quarter of U.S. adults reporting they have lost a job or been threatened with job loss for taking time off work due to illness or to care for a sick child or relative.

Workers without paid leave or sick days are more likely to delay medical care. When workers do not have paid sick leave, they are also more likely to report going to work while contagious, such as with the flu. Paid leave also lets people support older family members with serious health conditions, helping them fulfill treatment plans, manage their care, and avoid complications and hospital readmission.

People's access to paid leave should not depend on where they live or work, or on the kind of job they hold. Without mandatory paid leave or paid sick time for all workers, no insurance plan can ensure care is affordable, because illness, health conditions, or starting a new family can mean a loss of income for struggling workers. Strengthening paid leave and sick days at the bargaining table is important, but 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. 1035/S. 408)**: 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. 5390/S. 2823)**: provides workers with up to 12 weeks of partial income when they take time for their own serious health conditions, including pregnancy and childbirth recovery, the serious health condition of a family member, and the birth or adoption of a child, and covers workers in all companies, no matter their size;
- The **Healthy Families Act (H.R. 7531/S. 3869)**: allows workers to earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days each year to be used to recover from their own illnesses, access preventive care, provide care to a sick family member, or attend school meetings related to a child's health condition or disability.

Our society is only as healthy as our most vulnerable members. Working families need a nationwide paid family and medical leave standard that is comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable. Paid sick days and paid leave are critical health investments and Congress must act to establish permanent structures to guarantee all working people the leave they need when they need it.

Protecting Our Retirees

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. By implementing targeted strategies to combat rising inflation and bolster social safety nets, these measures have not only stabilized retirees' financial circumstances but also injected a sense of security and resilience into their lives. We must continue to fight for further advancements in safeguarding their rights.

Rebuilding our Healthcare System

The enactment of the Big Ugly Bill created a healthcare crisis by slashing over \$1 trillion in funding for Medicaid, CHIP, and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and leaving 15 million people uninsured. The reductions in funding could force 338 hospitals and up to a quarter of nursing homes to close, eliminate 6,000 community clinics, and worsen patient care due to severe understaffing.

The law also accelerates the projected insolvency of the Medicare Part A Trust Fund to 2040, largely because of a new tax deduction that reduces the Social Security revenue that funds Medicare. Medicare Part A covers inpatient hospital care, skilled nursing facilities, home health services, and hospice care.

Repealing the Big Ugly Bill is critical to restoring ACA coverage protections, strengthening Medicaid access, and preventing further damage to the health care system. Congress should also pass the Medicare Dental, Hearing, and Vision Expansion Act (S. 939), which would allow Medicare to cover dentures and comprehensive vision care (including eye exams and prescription eyeglasses) as well as provide comprehensive hearing care for moderate or profound hearing loss, including prescription hearing aids, and provide preventive and procedural dental care to cover cleanings, x-rays, and fillings.

Restoring the Social Security Administration

Shortly after taking office, the Trump Administration fired the inspectors general at 19 agencies, including the Social Security Administration, creating a chilling effect on transparency and oversight. About 25 million calls to Social Security offices ended without the callers receiving service because they disconnected, did not answer a callback, SSA could not call back, or all telephone lines were busy. Many retirees waited up to 2 hours to speak to a representative on the agency's 1-800 number. To protect retirees, it is essential to roll back the changes imposed by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and commit to fully staffing the SSA.

Increasing Benefits and Extending Program Solvency

Rather than working to protect Social Security, the Trump Administration and other officials are

pushing to raise the retirement age, cut benefits, and even privatize the program to pay for tax cuts for the billionaires and corporations. pushing to raise the retirement age, cut benefits, and even privatize the program to pay for tax cuts for the billionaires and corporations.

Cutting Social Security and Medicare would be a betrayal of the millions of workers who have spent their careers paying into these programs. Instead, we should enact legislation like:

- The **Medicare and Social Security Fair Share Act (H.R. 3271/S. 1690)** would extend solvency for 75 years and increase monthly benefits by \$200 by requiring those earning over \$250,000 to pay their fair share into the trust fund. The bill will extend Medicare by 20 years while also augmenting fairness in the tax system.
- The **Social Security Expansion Act (H.R. 1700/S. 770)** extends the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund for 75 years by lifting the payroll tax cap and applying the Social Security payroll tax to income above \$250,000. It also increases benefits for both current and future beneficiaries by \$200 per month and improves the accuracy of annual cost-of-living adjustments by adopting the Consumer Price Index.

AFA-CWA Legislative Priorities

The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA-CWA) represents 55,000 Flight Attendants at 20 airlines. AFA-CWA's mission is to unite all flight attendants 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.

No More Mid-Air Collisions

On January 29, 2025, AFA lost two of our Flight Attendant crew and family on PSA Flight 5342 when a military helicopter flew into the regional jet over the Potomac River. This accident was 100% preventable and must never happen again.

There are two bipartisan bills that seek to improve safety standards:

1. The **ROTOR Act (S. 2503/H.R. 6222)** mandates ADS-B technology for all aircraft operating in controlled airspace and ensuring that every pilot, military and civilian, can see what is in their path in real time to prevent midair collisions. ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
2. The **ALERT Act (HR 7613)** is a comprehensive package that addresses all 50 recommendations issued by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), ranging from air traffic control training reforms to the modernization of commercial collision avoidance systems (ACAS Xa), which relies on ADS-B in technology. ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE

We are working with aviation labor and allies to promote a conference between the House and Senate in order to implement the strongest possible safety provisions. We cannot afford a legislative stalemate to stall this process. It is urgent that Congress conference these bills to close safety loopholes and ensure safer skies for everyone.

Safer Skies Act - Closing the Part135/380 Waiver Loophole

AFA strongly supports the Safer Skies Act of 2025, which would require passengers on scheduled charter service flights to undergo the same TSA screening as passengers on commercial flights. This closes a loophole that lets some charter carriers avoid standard safety requirements.

Some charter carriers exploit this gap by marketing reduced screening to sell seats on pre-scheduled flights. The number of flights operated as a scheduled charter, using FAA Part 135 and DOT 380 waiver, has grown more than 1,600% in nine years. Part 135 governs commuter and on-demand operations (charter and small regional service), while Part 121 applies to commercial carriers such as

United, Alaska-Hawaiian, American, and Delta, as well as their regional partners. The airlines seeking to game the system use larger regional jets that are reconfigured to 30 or fewer first class-like seats, making it possible for passengers to buy their way out of safety and security standards that are required otherwise for commercial airlines.

We will NEVER forget the events of September 11 and are committed to preventing any repeat. Even a regional jet can cause catastrophic damage if weaponized. We urge Congress to pass the Safer Skies Act and close the dangerous security loophole and we encourage Congress to also address the undermining of safety regulations as well.

Toxic Cabin Air

The dangers of toxic cabin air are well documented and can be extremely dangerous. AFA supports the bipartisan Safe Air on Airplanes Act, legislation to ensure clean air on airplanes and the safety of the nearly 3 million people who fly daily by requiring the FAA to phase out “bleed air” systems in newly designed aircraft and include sensors/filters on existing aircraft.

Except for the Boeing 787, the ventilation air that passengers and crew breathe during a flight is called “bleed air” because it is bled off the engine compressors. Despite the well-known risks, the current bleed air system does not undergo filtration before it reaches the passengers and crew.

Earlier this year, the Wall Street Journal highlighted the steep rise in the number of US airline reports of oil and hydraulic fluid fumes in the cabin and flight deck (“fume events”) sent to the FAA. There is a fix for this, and we encourage Congress to act with urgency to implement it.

Organizing at Delta/Sky West

AFA-CWA organizing campaigns: 29,000 Delta Flight Attendants and 4000 Flight Attendants at SkyWest Airlines. 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 lawmakers' attention to this is so important and helpful. Help us thank the offices that signed letters of support and remind lawmakers that we need their attention to workers' rights if we are going to ensure good jobs, a thriving economy, combat money in politics, and promote democracy.

Fighting for Local News

The NewsGuild sector of CWA is proud to represent journalists, interpreters, labor union staffers and nonprofit workers across the United States and Canada.

Local news is the most trusted news among American adults, with 70% saying they have a lot or some trust in the information that comes from local news organizations, compared with 56% having trust in national news organizations. As the news industry faces existential threats, the Guild membership is rising to the challenge.

THE STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

The news industry has suffered a steep decline since 2005 with the closure of 40% of newspapers and the loss of over 75% of newspaper jobs. Though digital-only newsrooms have increased, they have not increased at a rate sufficient to replace other local news jobs lost, and their growth is largely concentrated in urban areas (where communities are already more likely than their rural counterparts to be served by local publications, exacerbating gaps in rural news coverage). Two newspapers shutter every week on average.

The consequences of the job losses in local news are profound. Research has shown that communities with fewer local news sources are more likely to:

- Vote at lower rates and have fewer contested races
- Be less informed about their candidates and representatives
- Have more government corruption and waste
- Pay higher taxes and have lower bond ratings
- Have higher rates of toxic emissions

Though factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to this decline, these job losses were accelerated by consolidation under hedge funds and private equity, as well as the rise of AI – a symbiotic partnership that represents the culmination of corporate greed. Consolidation of local newsrooms brings layoffs, depriving smaller communities of local news while an increasing number of journalists stay based in large cities. At the same time, news executives are increasingly looking at artificial intelligence to replace journalists, resulting in “AI slop.”

Yet news workers are unionizing at a rapid pace. The NewsGuild-CWA is one of the fastest-growing private-sector unions in the country, adding more than 8,700 new media members since 2016 across 171 workplaces.

THE NEWSGUILD-CWA PRIORITIES

The NewsGuild-CWA believes that journalism is at its strongest when it is local, human and union.

1. The Guild remains committed to fighting the spread of news deserts and encourages the passage of legislation that provides much-needed financial support to local newsrooms and the journalists they employ. The Guild rejects the chain consolidation and the rapid dissolution of the local newsrooms that strengthen public connections, foster civic engagement and reflect back to residents the distinctive character of communities across the country. The Guild supports legislation that protects the existence of these outlets, affirms the indispensability of local journalists and eschews monopolies in favor of independent newsrooms.
2. The Guild believes in AI for assistance, not organizing work creation. As such, union journalists should be in control, not out-of-touch news executives. The Guild fights against layoffs and salary reduction through the implementation of AI. Because transparency is a core ethical concern of journalists, the Guild supports clear labeling on AI-produced images, videos and text. Guild journalists should not have their work or likeness used without permission and compensation.
3. The Guild maintains that the best way to ensure that journalism remains local and human is to increase the density and strength of good union jobs in the industry. The Guild calls for additional legislation that prioritizes benefits for unionized newsrooms and reinforces the rights of workers to bargain collectively.

To fight the spread of news deserts, the Guild supports the passage of the Community News and **Small Business Support Act (H.R. 1753)**, which was introduced in February 2025 with bipartisan support. If passed, the bill would provide tax credits to support local journalism, including a payroll tax credit covering a percentage of journalists' wages (capped per employee), as well as incentives for newspaper subscriptions and local advertising. This would secure jobs for thousands of NewsGuild-CWA members and potentially create thousands more jobs. The NewsGuild-CWA and AFL-CIO enthusiastically support the Local Journalism Sustainability Act. Similar legislation was passed in Illinois and New York last year.

Public, Healthcare and Education Workers

CWA represents more than 140,000 public, health care, and education workers in states from coast to coast, including blue- and white-collar workers, social workers, educators, and health care providers, as well as computer programmers, heavy equipment operators, and corrections and police officers.

The Right to Collective Bargaining

The fundamental right of public sector workers to organize and bargain collectively has been under sustained and intense assault at the state and local levels for decades. Members of Congress can help push back against these corporate efforts to destroy public sector workers' rights by passing **H.R. 2736/S. 1352, the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (PSFNA)**. The PSFNA guarantees public sector employees in every state have the freedom to stand together and negotiate for fair wages and working conditions. It establishes a nationwide minimum standard for collective bargaining rights that all states must provide to public sector workers.

Ending Unfair Public Pension Offsets

Enacted in 1977 and 1983, the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) reduce Social Security benefits for nearly 3 million public servants. These provisions applied to public service workers whose government pensions were earned through employment outside the Social Security system. In 2025, President Biden signed the Social Security Fairness Act into law, reversing decades of unjust policy that had limited Social Security benefits for public sector workers and their spouses.

Protecting Merit Staffing and Stopping Privatization

PHEW-CWA represents merit state employment Services (ES) workers who help Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants navigate the job market, comply with work search requirements to initiate and remain eligible for UI benefits, and play critical roles in administering state UI programs and connecting jobless workers to benefits.

The Department of Labor under the Trump Administration proposed a rule that would permit states to replace merit-based staff with private contractors, non-merit staff, or any combination of these, effectively privatizing core ES functions. This shift would effectively open the door to the privatization of core ES functions.

CWA strongly opposes the Wagner-Peyser proposed rule and asks the Department to withdraw it. As public services face devastating cuts, maintaining highly trained, merit-based professionals is critical. The public relies on these skilled experts to provide the reliable, high-quality employment services they need.

Reversing the “One Big Beautiful Bill” Cuts

The “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” (OBBA), signed into law in July 2025, gives over \$4 trillion in tax breaks for the billionaires and corporations at the expense of historic cuts to the social safety net, shifting massive financial burdens onto state governments and jeopardizing the job security of public service workers.

The law makes the deepest cuts to Medicaid in the program’s history, increasing the number of uninsured people by more than 14 million in 2034. This cut will place a massive burden on the healthcare system and its workers, as uncompensated care will rise, forcing providers to absorb the costs. The law also cuts SNAP benefits for an estimated 22 million families, making groceries more expensive for those who can least afford it. Additionally, the law enacts onerous work and reporting requirements that will create an administrative headache for state and local eligibility workers.

As states try to cover the new cost of healthcare and food assistance, funding for higher education and other public services are often the first thing cut when state budgets get tight, leading to job losses for public sector workers. States will have to choose between feeding their residents, keeping hospitals open, or funding their colleges – all while the wealthiest Americans see their taxes drop. Congress must reverse these cuts, restore funding to these critical programs, and ensure our public sector workers are protected.

Funding our higher education research jobs

PHEW-CWA represents academic workers and researchers at higher education institutions that have seen their careers derailed by recent federal cuts. Under the Trump Administration, the politically motivated attacks on science led to the termination, freezing, and delay of critical grants. For example, two of the largest public supporters of scientific research in the United States, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), saw devastating cuts. A total of 5,844 NIH grants and 1,996 NSF grants were canceled or suspended.

The widespread disruption has led to immediate layoffs and career instability for workers, as well as halting critical research in medical science and public health. Delays in this kind of research not only set back scientific breakthroughs but also jeopardize public health. Congress should reverse these cuts and prevent federal funding from being used to undermine higher education or specific fields of study.

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. President Carl Kennebrew heads the division. Key sectors are industrial and home appliances, transit buses and other vehicle and parts manufacturing, electrical and electronics equipment, aerospace and defense, advanced materials, and furniture.

U.S. MANUFACTURING IS CRITICAL FOR U.S. PROSPERITY

Manufacturing is critical to the success of our nation and propels economic development across service sectors and local communities, ensuring we make the things we need to prosper. Every new manufacturing job we create adds 7.4 jobs to the broader economy, and for every dollar in manufacturing sales, another \$2.69 is added to overall economic activity. Defending union standards and organizing new members in manufacturing are pathways to stable, middle-class employment for millions of workers across the country, with positive effects for workers across all sectors.

SUPPORT FAIR TRADE NOT TRADE CHAOS

IUE-CWA is committed to fighting back against broken trade deals designed only to 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) and their Trump-driven replacements, have created a race to the bottom in labor. These environmental and public health standards have weakened our protections and undermined American workers' wages, benefits, and working conditions. The U.S. suffered millions of job losses due to just two trade deals – NAFTA in 1994 and China's acceptance to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. Most of the jobs lost were in the manufacturing sector, which shrank from 16.8 million jobs when NAFTA took effect on January 1, 1994, to 12.5 million jobs in February 2026. Overall, sixty thousand U.S. manufacturing facilities have closed since NAFTA's passage. While the Trump Administration has thrown out the old trade rulebook, manufacturing jobs have continued to shrink under his watch. One broken set of rules has been replaced by another set, more chaotic, but just as unfair to American workers.

PROMOTE REINVESTMENT IN EXISTING PLANTS

IUE-CWA continues its fight against offshoring, but setting fair trade rules is not sufficient. We also need policies that promote and support the introduction of new production lines in our existing represented factories.

Members of Congress should also:

INVEST IN DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING OF ELECTRICAL POWER EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING RENEWABLES, TRANSFORMERS AND OTHER ELECTRICAL GRID COMPONENTS

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.

IUE-CWA workers eagerly supported the Biden administration's goal to reach 100 percent carbon pollution-free electricity by 2035 to ensure that the manufacturing supply chain for offshore wind turbines and other renewables would take root in the United States. The Trump Administration's move to block and dismantle offshore wind power plants has stopped in its tracks the creation of up to 1,000 wind manufacturing jobs that IUE-CWA was set to organize into the union, and deprived our nation of essential industrial capacity, delaying the necessary diversification and decarbonization of our energy supply.

IUE-CWA remains committed to ensuring that the manufacturing supply chain for offshore wind turbines takes place in the United States and becomes a unionized industry from the get go. 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 to help the U.S. achieve its green energy transition and train new cohorts of electrical workers.

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

- IUE-CWA supports effective investment in a resilient, fair, and environmentally sound decarbonization of our energy systems, based on a strong domestic manufacturing base.
- This is an opportunity for IUE-CWA members to grow the union across the electrical and electromechanical industry and address catastrophic global warming – 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 bargain collectively, high-road labor standards, inclusive community benefits, and environmental justice, be part of industrial policy and day-to-day practice.

DEFEND & EXPAND INVESTMENTS IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

IUE-CWA members produce many of the most advanced public buses on the streets of U.S. cities, contributing to affordable transportation, energy efficiency, reduced congestion on the roads, and decarbonization - an essential public service. IUE-CWA has organized over 1,000 new members,

opening the path to improved living standards in this industry, and will defend sustained federal investment in public transport, which is more needed than ever by millions of working-class families in the face of extremely high oil prices and high vehicle prices that make daily transportation a very difficult ordeal for many.

ENSURE INVESTMENTS IN OUR SEMICONDUCTOR INDUSTRY GO TOWARD GOOD JOBS

Passing the CHIPS & Science Act into law in 2022 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. IUE-CWA is seeking a labor peace agreement with Micron.

In New York, 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 to include metrics and processes to measure, track, and publicly report on those goals and commitments in the final set of terms.

Advocating for Passenger Service Agents



The Communications Workers of America (CWA) represents 23,500 passenger service agents across American Airlines and wholly-owned regional subsidiaries Piedmont Airlines and Envoy Air. Our members work as ramp agents, baggage handlers, customer assistance representatives, cabin cleaners, bus drivers, and lounge workers, and are the backbone of our nation’s air transportation system.

CWA leadership has made meaningful and lasting shifts in how passenger service members are supported within the Union. We remain committed to pursuing every legislative avenue to improve workplace safety, bargaining power, and fair wages for our members.

Elevating Safety and Visibility for Passenger Service Agents

The 2024 FAA Reauthorization Act directed the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study the economic impact of airport service workers on the aviation industry. The report affirmed what CWA members have long known: frontline aviation workers are essential to the aviation economy and safe operation of our nation’s air transportation system. The GAO report also concluded that unionized frontline workers earn higher wages and benefits than non-unionized workers in the same roles.

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

In 2025, the FAA recorded 1,621 incidents involving unruly passengers, about 23% fewer than in 2024. While incidents have declined since peak levels in 2021, incidents involving passenger service members still go unrecorded and unaddressed. Sec. 432 of the 2024 FAA Reauthorization clarifies that Federal crewmember protections cover airport and air carrier employees performing ticketing, check-in, baggage claim, and boarding functions.

Advancing Wage and Benefit Standards for Frontline Airline and Airport Workers

Despite falling short of passage in the 2024 FAA Reauthorization Act, CWA members continue to fight for higher wages and benefits for all airport service workers. In coalition with SEIU and UNITE-HERE, CWA members are mobilizing to reintroduce the Good Jobs for Good Airports (GJGA) Act. The Act would establish a Federal standard for wages and benefits across large, medium, and small airports across the U.S. CWA supports this bill because higher pay for frontline workers is the foundation of a safe, stable, and thriving aviation industry.

Advocating for Safety Improvements for Airport Ramp Workers

On December 31, 2022, CWA Local 3645 member Courtney Edwards passed away after a tragic on-the-job accident on the ramp. As a result, in the 2024 FAA Reauthorization Act, we successfully included language directing the FAA to issue a safety review of airport ramp operations and hazards, including risks of engine ingestion and jet blast zones. The FAA is currently in the regulatory process to determine the details of the study. CWA has issued comments on how the survey should be conducted and what it should entail.

National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians- Communications Workers of America (NABET-CWA)

NABET-CWA represents over 7,000 workers in broadcasting, cable, film, and related industries. Our belief in the power of numbers and collective action leads us to use collective bargaining, contract enforcement, job training, political activity, and organizing to improve wages, working conditions, and job security.

Defending a Free and Independent Media

First Amendment Protections Under Attack: The First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech and press. Some rights are central to the work of NABET-CWA members and our partners across the media industry. Broadcasters operate under licenses issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which is responsible for regulating use of the public airwaves under established legal standards, not political pressure.

However, increasing threats to revoke broadcast licenses, pressure news organizations over editorial decisions, and interfere in coverage risk undermining a free and independent press. These actions set a dangerous precedent and weaken a fundamental pillar of our democracy.

Political Interference in News Coverage: Political interference and hostile rhetoric toward the media are not abstract concerns; they have real consequences. On several instances, the Trump Administration has threatened to revoke the FCC licenses of networks for exercising their free speech rights. This level of political pressure has influenced programming decisions, altered news coverage, and targeted specific outlets, reflecting a troubling pattern.

Recent examples illustrate how this pressure can shape newsroom decisions. A 60 Minutes segment on deportations to El Salvador's CECOT detention facility was pulled shortly before airing, with reports indicating the decision was driven by political, not editorial, considerations. The segment later aired in a modified form. In another instance, the FCC Chair publicly criticized and pressured CNN over its coverage of the Iran war, calling for "accountability" and changes at the network. This is an extraordinary step that signals potential government influence over editorial content.

When government officials attempt to pressure or retaliate against news organizations for their reporting, they risk crossing the line from oversight into censorship. These actions create a chilling effect, threatening journalists' and media professionals' ability to report freely and without fear of retaliation.

Rising Threats to Journalist Safety: At the same time, media workers, especially reporters and camera operators in the field, are facing increasing threats to their personal safety. Hostile rhetoric directed at the press has contributed to harassment, intimidation, and physical attacks. Incidents have included assaults on reporters and camera crews, damage to equipment and news vehicles, and interference with live reporting and newsgathering. These conditions make it harder for journalists to do their jobs and can lead to self-censorship, reduced coverage, and lower newsroom morale. In response, NABET-CWA and our allies are advocating for stronger protections, including:

- The **Press Act (H.R.7184)** protects journalists from being forced to reveal confidential sources except in limited emergencies
- The **Journalist Protection Act (H.R. 3203 / S.1601)**, which would establish federal penalties for those who intentionally harm or intimidate journalists

Protecting media workers is essential to preserving the public's right to know.

Public Media Funding Attacks

Public broadcasting, supported through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), provides essential services, including educational programming, local journalism, and emergency communications. Recent efforts to cut or rescind federal funding have destabilized this system, breaking with longstanding bipartisan support and disrupting the ability of NABET-CWA members, including those with NPR and PBS, to produce trusted content.

The Impact on Communities and Workers: Cuts to public media funding have led to job losses and canceled programming across the country, loss of educational content relied on by schools and families, reduced access to local news in rural and underserved communities, and weakened emergency communication systems, including alerts and remote broadcasting.

Public media is often the only reliable source of information in vulnerable communities. So, when funding is cut, those communities are left behind. Congress can help by:

- Restoring previously approved \$535 million in funding for the CPB

- Maintaining the advance appropriation structure to ensure stability and independence
- Opposing efforts to eliminate or reduce federal support for public broadcasting
- Supporting long-term, bipartisan investment in public media infrastructure

A free press and strong public media system are essential to a functioning democracy. Congress has a critical role to play in protecting media workers, defending First Amendment rights, and ensuring that all communities have access to trusted information.

NABET-CWA urges Congress to act now to protect press freedom, safeguard media workers, and restore funding for public broadcasting.

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