

Fighting for Our Union,

Fighting for Tomorrow.

Legislative-Political Overview
2022 to 2023

CWA



Communications Workers of America (CWA)

CWA represents private and public sector workers in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico in 1,200 chartered CWA local unions. CWA members work in telecommunications and information technology, the airline industry, news media, broadcast and cable television, education, health care, public service and education, law enforcement, manufacturing, and other fields.

Major Employers: Among CWA's major employers are AT&T, Verizon, General Electric, the New York Times and Wall Street Journal, American Airlines, NBC and ABC television networks, the Canadian Broadcasting Co., the University of California, and the state of New Jersey.

History: Founded in 1938, CWA got its start representing telephone workers as the National Federation of Telephone Workers. It was renamed the Communications Workers of America in 1947. Today, CWA represents workers in all areas of communications, customer contact, high technology, and manufacturing professions in both the private and public sectors, including health care, public service, education, customer service, airlines, and many other fields. A number of unions have affiliated with CWA because of its democratic tradition and membership involvement: the Association of Flight Attendants (2003), the International Union of Electronic Workers (2000), The Newspaper Guild (1997), the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (1994), and the International Typographical Union (1987).

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

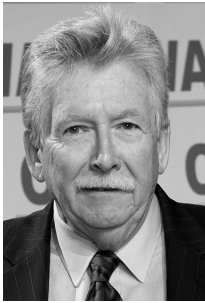
Key to CWA's legislative efforts and successes are the more than 1,000 Legislative and Political Action Team (LPAT) activists trained in effective grassroots political action. They take CWA's political and legislative program to their states and communities and build coalitions to fight for the passage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

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

Global Partners: CWA maintains close relations with counterpart unions in Latin America, the United Kingdom, Europe, Africa, and Asia, individually and through trade union federations. CWA is taking a leading role in working with international communications 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 essential part of their union work. CWA's charity of choice is the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, and CWA is among the most significant contributors, raising millions for pediatric HIV/AIDS research and education.

CWA Leadership



CHRISTOPHER M. SHELTON, President

Christopher Shelton was elected president of the Communications Workers of America by acclamation by delegates to the union's 75th convention on June 8, 2015. Before he was elected President, Shelton served as Vice President of CWA District 1, representing 160,000 members in more than 300 CWA locals in New Jersey, New York, and New England. He started his union career when he went to work for the New York Telephone in 1968 as an outside technician. He is a native of the Bronx, New York.



SARA STEFFENS, Secretary-Treasurer

Sara Steffens was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Communications Workers of America by delegates to the union's 75th Convention on June 8, 2015. Before her election to CWA's second-highest-ranking office, she served as Secretary-Treasurer of The NewsGuild-CWA, the CWA affiliate representing journalists and other media workers. A native of Minnesota, Steffens earned a journalism degree from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. In 1999, she worked as a reporter for nine years at the Contra Costa (California) Times.



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

Martin O'Hanlon, CWA – SCA Canada

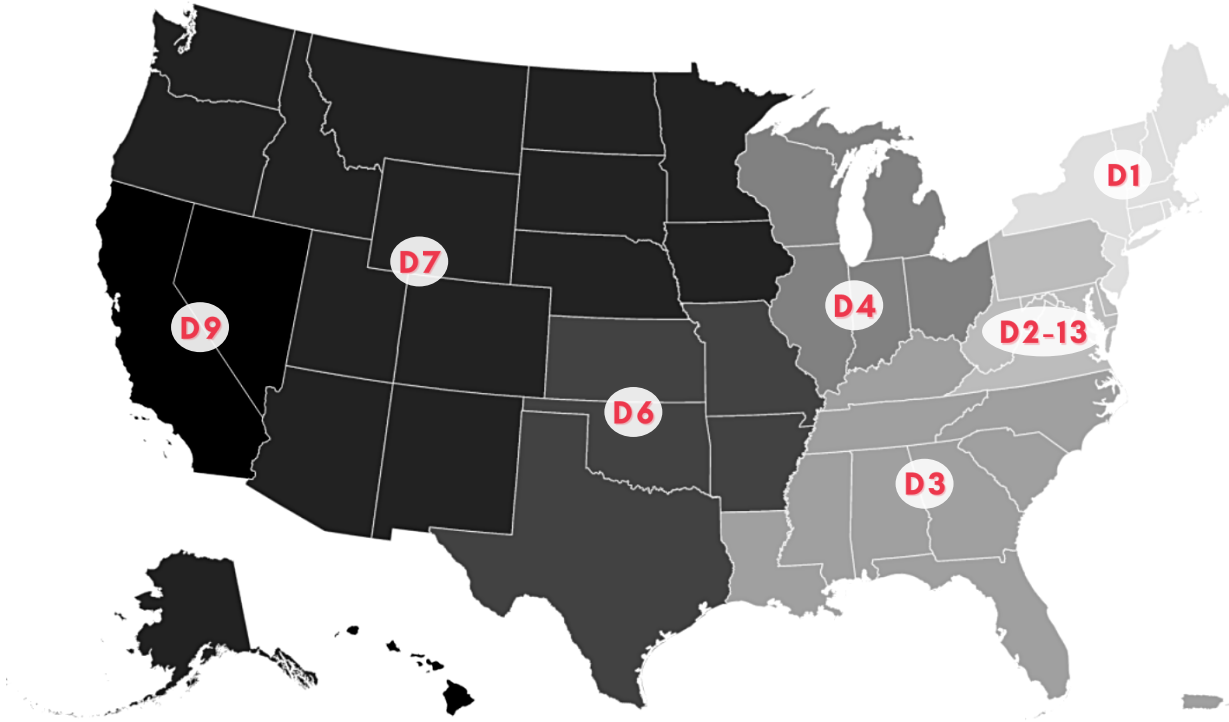
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Dante Harris, AFA-CWA Local 29012

Gloria Middleton, Local 1180

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Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act

The massive surge in economic inequality over the past quarter-century is related directly to many workers' lack of a strong voice on the job. Over that time, wages have stagnated for workers across the economy, while income has skyrocketed for CEOs and the wealthiest 1%. As of 2016, upper-income families had 7.4 times as much wealth as middle-income families and 75 times as much wealth as lower-income families. These ratios are up from 3.4 and 28 in 1983, respectively.

Over that same period, union density has declined substantially. Since the early 1980s, the overall unionization rate has been cut in half. This decline in unionization has created problems for all workers. For example, the Economic Policy Institute research shows that union jobs pay, on average, 16% higher wages than non-union jobs because workers can bargain collectively for higher pay. Unions also help reduce the racial wealth gap -- unionized black workers receive 19% higher wages than their non-union counterparts.

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

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

effectively exercise their right to organize, bargain collectively, and have a strong voice in the workplace. 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. 842/ S. 420)*** is a landmark worker empowerment bill that strengthens the NLRA and empowers workers nationwide. 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 captive audience meetings;
- Ensures that the National Labor Relations Board enforces orders in a timely manner;
- Ensures that workers and employers can 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.

While this monumental piece of legislation passed the house, an arcane Senate rule known as the filibuster, has blocked passage of the PRO Act despite majority support and the urgent need to fix skyrocketing inequality. The PRO Act is important legislation that would ensure that workers' right to a voice on the job would be protected and strengthen the middle class. We must continue to push the Senate to choose to protect workers.

Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act

For years, the workplace rights of nurses, teachers, firefighters, 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 go after health and safety requirements, staffing levels, etc. These attacks on public employees cause harm to the quality of public services that state and local governments provide. Denying workers the freedom to organize makes it more likely that low-quality services will continue to be provided.

Currently, no federal law protects the freedom of state and local public service workers to join a union and collectively bargain. In the meantime, numerous states have passed free rider, so-called “right-to-work,” laws that force unions to advocate on behalf of public service workers who haven’t paid their fair share for those services. Since the outrageous, anti-worker Supreme Court decision in *Janus vs. AFSCME*, public service workers across the country have been working under this unfair free-rider law. It’s time to level the playing field by establishing federal protections to guarantee public service workers the right to join together and collectively bargain.

Members of Congress can help push back against these corporate efforts to destroy public sector workers’ rights by advancing the **Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (H.R. 5727)**. When public service workers have the freedom to join a union and negotiate, they improve their jobs and communities, which benefits everyone.

The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act gives dedicated public employees in every state the freedom to:

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- 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 (such as mediation or arbitration);
 - Use voluntary payroll deduction for union dues;
 - Engage in other concerted activities related to collective bargaining and mutual aid;
 - Not have their union be subject to rigged recertification elections; and
 - Sue in court to enforce their labor rights.

Union members earn higher wages than their non-union counterparts. They are more likely to have pensions, employer-provided health care, and benefits such as paid sick days and paid family and medical leave. Additionally, unions improve wages and benefits for all workers, not just union members. To create an economy that works for all of us, not just the wealthy few, workers must have the freedom to join a union. The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act would provide that right to public-sector employees nationally.

Building a Better America

The Senate filibuster is an anti-democratic tool often used to block pro-worker and pro-civil rights legislation. While our work continues to eliminate the filibuster, Congress must work around the filibuster and use budget reconciliation to create millions of good-paying jobs and make historic investments in healthcare, childcare, housing, education, clean energy, and more -- while ensuring the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share.

Using budget reconciliation, we can fund transformational priorities that our families and communities need to thrive and solve real problems that working people face. These priorities include passing key labor law reforms like imposing financial penalties on companies and CEOs that fire workers for attempting to join a union--by up or down majority vote.

While Congress deliberates what provisions will make it into the next budget reconciliation, we believe a final bill should include:

- Substantial financial penalties on employers and executives who break the law by threatening and firing workers who speak up to protect their rights on the job;
- An above-the-line deduction for the first \$250 of workers' union dues, making a fairer system for unions and workers at the negotiating table;
- An expanded and improved Trade Adjustment Assistance program to ensure that all workers are eligible for benefits if their jobs are offshored, including call center workers;
- Additional funding for the National Labor Relations Board, the federal agency charged with safeguarding workers' rights;
- Requiring companies receiving clean energy tax credits to implement labor standards on renewable energy projects;
- A payroll tax credit for compensation of local news journalists;
- Allowing Medicare to negotiate reduced prices for some of the most expensive drugs, including insulin;
- A 15% corporate minimum tax on large corporations and 2% surcharge on corporate stock buybacks;
- A global minimum corporate tax to stop rewarding companies for shipping jobs and profits overseas;
- Access to paid sick days and paid medical leave
- Access to high-quality preschool and childcare;
- Reinstating the expanded Child Tax Credit and making the refundability permanent;
- Extending the ACA premium tax credits through 2025; and
- Investing \$150 billion in housing affordability and reducing price pressures.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

A Win for Union Jobs

For decades we waited for a significant infrastructure investment that would provide critical funding and bring the United States up to speed with the world. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the nation was in dire need of an investment that would bring about economic recovery and ensure the needs of hard-working Americans were taken care of first.

The ***Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)***, passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden, provided hard-working Americans with this long-overdue investment. It makes historic investment in our nation's core infrastructure priorities -- including broadband, roads and bridges, rail, transit, ports, airports, the electric grid, and water systems-- and invests in communities too often left behind. **In addition, the IIJA centers around creating good union jobs so that our economy can grow sustainably and equitably for all--and for the first time ever, includes labor standards on federal broadband funding. This IIJA funding presents a major opportunity for us to secure good union jobs for CWA members and grow our union.**

The \$65 billion in funding for broadband in the IIJA supports the expansion and affordability of broadband by investing:

- **\$42.5 billion in block grants for states, territories, and the District of Columbia** to deploy affordable, high-speed networks and support a range of initiatives to bridge the digital divide;

- **\$2 billion of additional support for rural communities** administered through the Department of Agriculture;
- **\$2 billion in block grants for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program**, which will be made available to entities for broadband deployment as well as for digital inclusion, workforce development, telehealth, and distance learning;
- **\$1 billion to create the Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program**, a program for the construction, improvement, or acquisition of middle-mile infrastructure -- The "middle mile" is a backbone fiber network that connects major arteries and enables "last mile" broadband to the home;
- **\$2.75 billion to promote digital inclusion and equity** for communities that lack the skills, technologies, and support needed to take advantage of broadband connection -- Grants can be used to accelerate the adoption of broadband through digital literacy training, workforce development, devices access programs, and other digital inclusion measures;
- **\$14.2 billion to make permanent the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Fund**, building on the Emergency Broadband Benefit, providing \$30 monthly vouchers for low-income families to use toward any internet service plan of their choosing; and
- **\$600 million for states to use Private Activity Bonds (PABs)** to finance broadband deployment, specifically for projects in rural areas.

President Biden has both publicly and privately committed to using the IIJA to create good union jobs. The best way to ensure publicly-funded broadband deployment supports good jobs and high-quality work is to give preference to high-road employers that meet the following criteria:

- Guarantees that work will be performed by a directly employed workforce or that the employer has policies and/or practices to ensure that any employees of contractors used to comply with high-road labor standards;

- A locally-based workforce that supports job pipelines for traditionally marginalized communities;
- Appropriate safety training and safety practices, including the option of worker-selected safety committees;
- Professional certifications and/or in-house training to ensure that deployment is done at a high standard; and
- Respect for workers' rights under labor law.

States must submit 5-year action plans to the U.S. Commerce Department in the second half of 2022, once better broadband maps are available. CWA is working with the administration to establish strong pro-labor guidelines for states, providing input to states as they begin to develop their plans for submission and working with stakeholders to promote labor standards and consumer protections within the projects.

Closing the digital divide requires making broadband accessible through deployment and providing resources to support adoption. CWA can play an essential role in the equitable adoption of broadband by distributing leaflets about the Affordable Connectivity Fund so families can utilize the benefit (in addition to LifeLine, which many families already rely on and should be strengthened).

For too long, our country has been longing for these much-needed investments. The provisions passed through this law will stimulate our economy, create good jobs, and make our communities more sustainable for all. With its passage, the nation took a great leap towards strengthening our infrastructure to ensure that we are growing back stronger than ever.



Broadband and Media Policy

High-speed broadband networks are essential infrastructure in the 21st century, enabling economic growth, job creation, and improvements in education, health care, energy conservation, public safety, and more. Increasingly, Americans access news, information, and video entertainment over digital platforms. Additionally, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands more now rely on high-speed broadband to access work, school, and healthcare.

Universal, affordable access to high-capacity Internet is essential to our nation's democracy and economy. Yet, despite considerable progress, significant gaps remain. More than 18 million Americans – including 25 percent of people living in rural communities – lack access to broadband at the FCC's 25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload benchmark. While broadband access is a problem, so is broadband affordability. Too many Americans have only one choice for a high-speed broadband provider. Nearly 45 percent of low-income households don't subscribe to home broadband, 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, close the digital divide, and create good jobs in the telecommunications and media industries should be guided by these principles:

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

The FCC's modernization of its low-income Lifeline program to support broadband and expansion of E-rate subsidies to schools and libraries are important digital equality achievements to build upon. In addition, federal and state governments should encourage broadband deployment to facilitate universal access and close the digital divide.

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 investments in higher capacity wired and wireless networks, giving consumers, businesses, schools, libraries, hospitals, and government agencies competitive choices driving innovation, service improvements, and price competition.

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

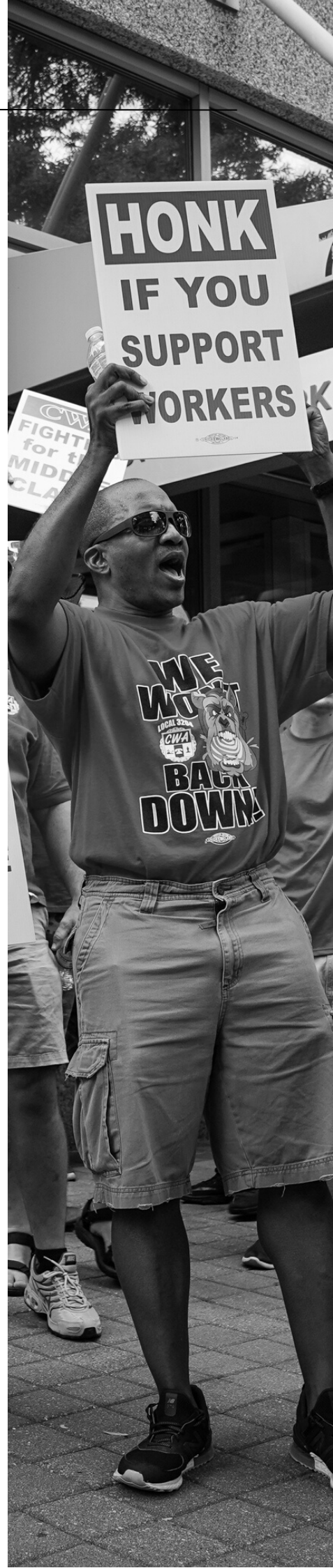
Good Jobs: Public policies should support the growth of good, career jobs with respect for workers' rights. Companies that violate labor laws should be held accountable.

Open Internet: Open Internet rules should promote free expression, innovation, and investment on the Internet. There should be full transparency, no blocking, no throttling (slowing down), and no unreasonable prioritization of legal content on the Internet.

Media Diversity, Quality Journalism: Media diversity is essential to a thriving democracy. Media ownership rules that bar companies from owning multiple TV stations in the same market, prohibit stations from attempts to skirt those

rules through “shared services agreements” and “joint services agreements,” and restrict the combination of local newspapers and TV stations are vital for local community needs and to preserve good jobs in print, video, and electronic media.

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



Protecting Call Center Workers and Consumers

Call centers are a major economic force in the United States, employing more than 2 million Americans. Call centers often provide strong, family-supporting, middle-class jobs with great benefits for workers. The average wage for a call center worker in 2021 was \$17.75 per hour, with union-represented jobs providing even higher wages.

However, developments in telecommunications technology and a broken tax code have made it easier for companies to move their call center operations overseas, where the local workforce faces horrific exploitation on the job, including poor safety and health standards, low wages, and violence for union organizing.

Companies that offshore call center work often move to countries where security measures to protect personal data are far less robust than those in the U.S. There is a strong link between overseas call centers and security problems, which puts American consumers at risk for identity theft, fraudulent transactions, and general mishandling of sensitive information. For example, the FCC levied a \$25 million fine against AT&T for consumer identity theft emerging from company call centers in Mexico, Colombia, and the Philippines, affecting 280,000 Americans.

U.S. taxpayer money should not be awarded to companies that make a practice of sending U.S. jobs overseas. This epidemic has resulted in greater job losses here in the U.S and the erosion of middle-class communities while risking the data of millions of American consumers.

The *Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act (H.R. 4603/S. 2409)* takes important steps to protect workers and consumers. Specifically, it would require:

- **Disclosure of call center location to U.S. consumers:** It would require the relocated overseas call center agent to disclose the physical location of their operation. For example, a customer may hear, “Hello, my name is Jane from Manila.”
- **Right to transfer:** U.S. consumers would reserve the right to request the call be transferred to a customer service agent who is physically located in the U.S.
- **Create a ‘bad actor’ list of U.S. companies that make a practice of sending U.S. jobs overseas:** It would require a publically available list, kept by the Department of Labor, of all employers that relocated entirely or a significant portion of their call center or customer service work overseas. These companies would be ineligible for Federal grants or guaranteed loans. Preference will be given to U.S. employers that do not appear on the list for awarding civilian or defense-related contracts. Employers that relocate a call center will remain on the list for up to 5 years after each instance of relocating a call center.
- **List removal:** If a ‘bad actor’ relocates a call center into the U.S. (brings jobs back), they will be removed from the list.

Democracy Reform

A fundamental pillar of a just democracy is the assurance that all have the opportunity to participate in a fair and equal democratic process. However, the rise of money in politics and barriers to the ballot box have made it increasingly difficult for America's working families to have their voices heard. CWA is committed to an election process that empowers workers and reduces the influence of Wall Street.

Historically we've championed two major democracy and voting rights reform bills: The **For the People Act (H.R. 1)** and the **John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4)**. Both of these bills passed the House of Representatives this congress in their independent forms. However, a Senate minority is stalling the progress, even with the bills combined into one, by using the Senate filibuster. The filibuster raises the threshold to end the debate on a bill to a supermajority of 60. Fifty-one votes are needed to pass a bill; to move to a final vote, 60 senators have to vote in favor of a motion to end the debate.

As a result, the two bills were combined in an effort to get the most vital pillars of each bill across the finish line. This prompted the creation of the **Freedom to Vote: John R Lewis Act (H.R. 5746)**. CWA proudly endorsed this crucial piece of legislation to make strides towards ensuring that our democracy is truly of, by, and for the people.

Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act (H.R.5746)

In 2010, the Supreme Court opened the floodgates to dark money in our political system through their ruling in Citizens United and McCutcheon v. FEC. Three years later, they also gutted the Voting Rights Act through their ruling

in *Shelby County v. Holder* by asserting that its provisions were no longer responsive to the current conditions in the voting districts in question.

As a consequence of these three rulings, corporations were granted the First Amendment right to spend unlimited, undisclosed amounts of money on elections and policy, and states began to shorten early voting windows and increase their use of photo ID requirements. These changes have suppressed people's right to vote by drowning out their voices and making it increasingly difficult for them to access the ballot box—the result: a steep decline of confidence in our political system among hardworking, voting Americans.

The passage of the Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act is a crucial step in restoring that trust in our democracy. This bill would expand voting rights, root out corruption, and ensure a government that truly functions for the people, among other things. Specifically, it:

- Implements automatic, online, and same-day voter registration;
- Makes election day a federal holiday;
- Expands early voting, no-excuse vote by mail, and simplifies absentee voting;
- Bans partisan gerrymandering and requires states to have fair mapping processes;
- Requires organizations that fund elections to disclose their donors;
- Upgrades online political spending transparency rules to ensure voters know who is paying for the advertisements they see; and
- Strengthens anti-corruption rules such as banning members of Congress from serving on corporate boards

In addition to the changes to our election system, this bill would restore key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that have been struck down or weakened by the Supreme Court. Namely, it would establish national preclearance standards, which is a process for reviewing

voting changes in jurisdictions that have historically discriminated against communities of color. It would also create a new coverage formula for detecting repeated instances of voting rights violations in the previous 25 years.

A determined minority of the Senate used the filibuster as a means to block the passage of this critical bill, despite majority support. The filibuster has a legacy of blocking the advancement of civil and voting rights time and time again. This is why we must also fight for an end to the Jim Crow relic, the Senate filibuster. Without the removal of the filibuster, the period of debate on a bill could go on forever, consequently causing a bill to die in the Senate. Senators must support ending the filibuster so that we can finally pass the Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act and have it become law.

These necessary changes to our democracy will ensure that we can pass future legislation that strengthens our power in the workplace with bills that prevent call center offshoring, protect our right to unionize and rein in the power of Wall Street.

The Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act would level the playing field and bring us closer to a fully functioning democracy that gives hardworking voters the options they need to be empowered to cast their vote and puts an end to dark money in our political system.



Stock Buybacks Hurt Workers

One of the most glaring examples of corporate greed we face is the rise of stock buybacks. Over the last decade, instead of investing in employee compensation and new infrastructure, companies have put 94% of their profits into stock buybacks and dividends. Stock buybacks allow corporations to squeeze as much profit as they can out of their employees to increase the profits of wealthy shareholders. At the end of the day, workers see a decrease in their bargaining power and a dramatic rise in income inequality, all in the name of maximizing “shareholder value”.

What are stock buybacks?

Stock buybacks are when companies buy back their own stock from shareholders on the open market rather than investing in workers or equipment. When a share of stock is bought back, the company reduces the number of shares left in the market. When the number of shares is reduced, this artificially boosts the company’s stock price without the company ever becoming more profitable or hiring more workers. This is a strategic move that benefits company executives and wealthy investors since most of their compensation derives from stock, and a higher stock price makes them personally richer. It hasn’t always been this way. In fact, until 1982, buybacks were considered a form of market manipulation, but a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) ruling that year gave companies free rein to buy back stocks.

How do buybacks harm workers?

While buybacks are very beneficial to corporate executives and wealthy Wall Street investors, they cause harm to working families. Before the stock buyback explosion, companies often used excess profits to increase worker pay and benefits, invest in new equipment, or expand into new markets and create more jobs.

Now that the majority of profits go to buybacks, there is little money left to invest in workers’ and companies’ future growth. For example, in 2019, AT&T announced that they were laying off 5,950 employees, bringing the total number of employees cut that year to 33,778. Simultaneously, they announced a three-year plan, committing to spend \$30 billion on stock buybacks. But, instead of investing that money into their workers or equipment, AT&T decided to line the pockets of their executives and wealthy investors.

To make matters worse, the practice of stock buybacks has skyrocketed since the passage of the 2017 corporate tax cut, as companies have used their handouts on buybacks rather than on workers. Last year, while working families struggled to recover financially from the COVID-19 pandemic, companies bought back over \$850 billion of their own stock. Policymakers in Congress and the Administration must focus on ending this practice that’s harmful to the economy.

What is the legislative fix?

The **Reward Work Act** puts an end to corporations’ ability to buy back their stock on the open market. It would do so by reversing the 1982 SEC ruling and banning companies from buying back their stock on the open market.

The **Stock Buyback Accountability Act (S. 2758)** levels the playing field between shareholder giveaways and real investments by assessing a two percent excise tax on the amount spent by a publicly-traded company on buying back its own stock. This tax would not apply to the extent the stock buyback is used to fund an employee pension plan, an ESOP, or similar vehicle, is used for employee stock plans, or is below a de minimis threshold.

For too long, corporate executives have decided to prioritize making their short-term share price as high as possible instead of helping the workers who are the backbone of the company. It is time Congress acts to ban stock buybacks and help create jobs across the country.

Tax Fairness for Working Families

For years, the federal tax code has incentivized companies to move money and jobs overseas to cut company costs and increase executive profits. Unfortunately, instead of fixing this problem, the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, signed into law by President Trump, has worsened it.

Despite its name, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act did not create jobs -- it simply benefited the super-wealthy. Since its enactment, for example, AT&T has saved \$32 billion in taxes; however, instead of creating good union jobs, as promised, it has cut more than 83,000 jobs. Moreover, this law failed to close existing tax loopholes for the 1% and instead created new ones.

According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, in the first three years that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was in effect, 39 of the companies on the Fortune 500 list paid no federal income tax. Moreover, the law establishes a 50% discount for foreign profits and creates a new exemption for “tangible investments” outside of the country--in other words, a company that builds a building or purchases equipment for a call center, or factory overseas gets a special tax break for doing so.

The Center for American Progress found that the federal government has seen the largest year-over-year drop in corporate tax revenue outside of a recession since the passage of this law. The federal budget deficit rose by \$113 billion in its first year, while corporate tax receipts fell by about \$90 billion. Should this trend continue, the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget estimates that \$1.9 trillion will be added to the federal deficit over the next decade. That means that these massive tax breaks on the wealthy are responsible for nearly 80 percent of the increase in the federal budget deficit.

A Fair Tax Code

Our tax code shouldn't be working against working families. On the contrary, it should be designed to benefit working people, ensure that the wealthy and multinational corporations pay their fair share, and help create good jobs in the United States. Congress can help achieve that by passing legislation to fix some of the worst aspects of the GOP tax law:

- **H.R. 1785/S. 714, the *No Tax Breaks for Outsourcing Act***, would eliminate the law's incentives that provide benefits to companies that send jobs overseas.
- **H.R. 1068/S. 1598, the *Carried Interest Fairness Act*** would get rid of provisions that allow billionaire private equity and hedge fund managers to pay a lower tax rate than teachers, firefighters, or customer service call center representatives.
- Both **H.R. 2735/S. 1283, the *Tax on Wall Street Speculation Act*** and **H.R. 328/S. 817, the *Wall Street Tax Act*** would establish a Wall Street sales tax so that hedge fund managers and big bank executives have to pay a tiny sales tax on their trades, just as we do on our purchases.

Working Families Need Paid Leave!

Many CWA members and millions of workers across the country have little or no paid sick leave or paid family and medical leave. Over 32 million private-sector workers, about 1 in 4 workers, in the United States lacked any form of paid sick days—including most people working in the lowest-paying jobs. High-risk food preparation and service workers and personal care and childcare workers are among the least likely to have paid sick days, although their services are among the most essential.

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

COVID-19 is not the only disease that is spread when sick employees are forced to come to work in order to make ends meet. Without mandatory paid sick time for all workers, no insurance plan can ensure care is affordable because serious illness means a loss of income for struggling workers. State and local governments have taken the lead, requiring paid sick leave for working families. Congress must pass legislation mandating paid sick days and leave for all, such as:

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- The **Job Protection Act**: 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**: provides up to 12 weeks of paid leave per year to qualifying workers for the birth or adoption of a new child, the serious illness of a family member, or a worker’s own medical condition and;
 - Adopting legislation that would provide universal, guaranteed paid sick days for all workers - regardless of employer size or sector - that meets and covers the needs of workers as the pandemic continues.

The COVID pandemic has highlighted the health and economic consequences working people face when they lack access to paid leave. Our society is only as healthy as our most vulnerable members. Paid sick days and paid leave are critical health investments, and Congress must act to establish permanent structures to guarantee all working people with the leave they need when they need it.

High Quality and Affordable Care for All

As we enter a new phase of the COVID-19 epidemic, we have been presented with new challenges that expose the continued failures of the American healthcare system. During the height of the pandemic, emergency actions and relief measures taken by Congress have expired or are set to expire soon, leaving behind many who are still at risk. Additionally, holes in America's insurance system continue to leave millions uninsured or unable to afford needed care as a result of their high-deductible coverage.

The Federal government took action during the pandemic to strengthen the employer-provided health insurance system, expand public insurance programs, and provide paid sick time and free testing to reduce the spread of the virus.

The Build Back Better program, championed by President Biden, sought to build on this progress by expanding access to paid family and sick leave, putting new limits on escalating prescription drug costs, reducing coverage costs on the Affordable Care Act exchanges, filling the insurance gap in states that have not expanded Medicaid, and expanding Medicare to cover new hearing benefits for seniors. Unfortunately, these popular and necessary actions have not yet been enacted by Congress.

We have a unique opportunity to make care more affordable for all Americans while building on the programs that are important to our members, retirees, and their families – Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and the ACA.

All Americans deserve access to quality, affordable health care and the financial protection of comprehensive health insurance. While our goal is to create a universal,

comprehensive health care system (such as Medicare For All), there are immediate actions Congress can take to build on what has worked and move us toward our ultimate goal:

Make Drug Prices Affordable For All Americans – Americans pay more than any other comparable country for prescription drugs. These costs are an enormous burden on all working families. Congress is currently considering historic action that would allow Medicare to bargain with pharmaceutical companies to lower drug costs and put new safeguards to protect Americans in both public and private plans from out-of-control cost increases. This is a necessary step to ensure access to life-saving medication for all Americans, and Congress must take this opportunity for action.

Strengthen Employer Sponsored Coverage – As health care costs have grown, employers have systematically eroded employer-based health plans with higher premiums and deductibles. This cost-shifting has outpaced wage increases for many working families and has increasingly made care unaffordable for the 157 million Americans who rely on job-based coverage. Strengthening the “Employer Mandate,” which was passed as part of the Affordable Care Act, will ensure that all workers have affordable coverage while eliminating the competitive disadvantage for Union employers that provide good coverage.

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

Equality for All!

While important strides have been made in achieving equality for LGBTQ+ individuals, a great deal of work remains to ensure they have basic legal protections in states across the country. Nationwide marriage equality ensured that same-sex couples have the right to marriage in all 50 states, yet, under federal law and most states' laws, LGBTQ+ people aren't explicitly protected from discrimination on the job, in the workplace, in housing, or in public accommodations. In many states, this means a same-sex couple could legally marry one day and risk being fired from their jobs, excluded from jury duty, evicted from their apartment, or refused service at a restaurant the very next day.

The **Equality Act (H.R. 5/S.393)** ensures that the same workplace protections our nation has already extended based on characteristics like race, sex, and religion are equally available to LGBTQ+ people. This bill would amend existing federal civil rights laws to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in education, employment, housing, credit, and federal jury service. Additionally, the Equality Act would place protections against discrimination in public services and update the list of covered public services to include retail stores and services such as banks, legal services, and transportation services.

The Act would also provide protections for women not covered in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Specifically, women would be protected from discrimination in public places and discrimination in the distribution of federal funds. In addition, the Act would ensure women are charged the same price as men for goods and services. It would also provide protection from discrimination in the distribution of federal funds, such as the awarding of a federal contract.

Further, the Equality Act would also extend protections from discrimination to individuals who associate with LGBTQ+ individuals, such as children of same-sex couples, in the same sectors of work, employment, housing, credit, education, public accommodations, or jury service.

This Act is a vital piece of legislation for ensuring that LGBTQ+ individuals and women enjoy the same civil rights as everyone else. By explicitly including sexual orientation and gender identity in these fundamental laws, LGBTQ+ people will finally be afforded the exact same protections as other historically discriminated groups under federal law.

It is Time to Raise the Minimum Wage!

As the cost of living has continually increased for working Americans, the federal minimum wage has been stuck at \$7.25 an hour for over a decade. For many Americans, working 40 hours or more a week is not enough to support themselves and their families. Airline employees, call center workers, retail store employees, and bank workers work full time for some of the most highly profitable corporations, but many still earn poverty-level wages. Although worker productivity is on a constant incline, a full-time federal minimum wage worker today earns 18% less than what their counterpart earned at the time of the last wage increase.

At a time when wage stagnation and income inequality hold back our families and our economy, the **Raise the Wage Act of 2021 (H.R. 603 / S. 53)** 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 \$15 an hour by 2025;
- Automatically increase the minimum wage each year at the same rate that median wages increase; and
- Phase-out the subminimum wage for tipped, disabled, and youth workers.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the Raise the Wage Act will raise the earnings of 32 million workers, or 21% of the workforce, including raising the wages for at least 19 million essential and frontline workers. In addition, the bill will also aid in closing racial income

disparities as earnings would rise for nearly 1 in 3 black workers, 1 in 3 Hispanic workers, and 1 in 5 white workers.

Since the minimum wage rose to its current \$7.25 an hour in 2009, it has lost 17% of its purchasing power. The Raise the Wage Act will generate \$107 billion in additional wages, putting more money in the hands of working people who will help stimulate the economy. Boosting pay puts money into the hands of workers who would, in turn, help create jobs from the growing demand. With more income, workers can buy homes and cars and support small businesses in our neighborhoods, cities, and states.

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

Advancing an Immigration Agenda for All Workers

Every working person in the U.S. should have access to the life-changing power and protection of a good job and the status to stand up freely for their rights at work. We have an economic system that treats immigrants as an exploitable subclass. It lets employers use immigration status as a tool to keep workers from organizing. That hurts every working person in this country. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Our immigration system should lift up standards, wages, and rights for all working people. The ***Dream and American Promise Act (H.R. 6)*** will benefit our entire workforce by providing a well-earned path to citizenship for working people who have made positive contributions to society for decades. Recipients of TPS (Temporary Protective Status), DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), and DED (Deferred Enforced Departure) help to build, feed, serve, educate, and care for everyone in our nation. They work in every state and every sector of the economy. The Dream and Promise Act will empower this vital group of workers and create a pathway to establish the precedent for changes that we are eager to replicate for the broader workforce.

Corporations that pit workers against one another to break collective worker power stand to gain the most if the working class is not united in solidarity. The only way to reverse the race to the bottom for workers' wages and standards for working people of all races, religions, and immigration status is to stand together and demand an end to policies that put corporate profits over people. The Dream and Promise Act will do just that by helping to raise wages and

labor standards in our country and protecting the freedom of all workers to join together in a union without fear.

The House of Representatives passed the Dream and Promise Act, but the Senate filibuster is delaying its progress as the bill awaits a vote. The Senate must act now to avoid termination of TPS, DACA, and DED protections, which would cause far-reaching damage to worksites and communities. Refusal to protect the rights and status of these vital workers will result in collective harm to us all. The labor movement must continue to stand in solidarity with all working people, no matter their immigration status.

A Worker Centered Trade Agenda

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

Protecting workers and creating good jobs here in the U.S. must be central as Congress and the Biden Administration attempt to enhance our competitiveness and address our broken supply chains. Our elected officials must ensure any trade policy includes strong labor and environmental protections with swift and certain enforcement. Past U.S. trade deals have included weak provisions on labor and the environment with ineffectual enforcement mechanisms that made it almost impossible to win cases protecting workers' rights and the environment—the first successful labor rights cases under any trade agreement came last year as the Biden Administration worked to protect labor rights in Mexico. A fair trade policy requires much stronger rules with an enforcement mechanism that delivers accountability in a timely way.

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

- A renewal of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) with robust funding and support to help workers whose jobs are outsourced;

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- A reauthorization of the Generalized System Preferences (GSP) with updated labor eligibility criteria and enforcement process to ensure that workers are protected;
 - The bipartisan **Level the Playing Field Act 2.0**, which strengthens U.S. trade remedy laws to protect American workers and push back against China's egregious efforts to manipulate the global market;
 - The bipartisan **National Critical Capabilities Defense Act**, which establishes a new review process to protect our supply chains and guards against the offshoring of critical capabilities so as to ensure that the United States can quickly detect supply chain vulnerabilities; and
 - The **Import Security and Fairness Act**, which prevents bad actors from exploiting the de minimis loophole to evade U.S. rules and regulations designed to ensure that imports comply with U.S. rules.

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

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

IUE-CWA

As the Industrial Division of CWA, IUE-CWA represents a force of 150,000 active and retired workers united collectively to seek dignity on the job and a secure future for ourselves, our children, and all future generations. The Division is headed by President Carl Kennebrew.

U.S. Manufacturing Is Critical For The U.S. Economy

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

Trade Deals Have Already Destroyed Millions Of Manufacturing Jobs And Lowered Wages

IUE-CWA is committed to fighting back against broken trade deals designed 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) create a race to the bottom in labor, environmental, and public health standards that have weakened our protections and undermined American workers' wages, benefits, and working conditions. For example, the U.S. suffered a 3.4 million net job loss due to just two trade deals – NAFTA and allowing China into the WTO. Most of these were jobs in the manufacturing sector. Overall, sixty thousand U.S. manufacturing facilities have closed since NAFTA. One study calculated that the downward pressure on wages and benefits caused by offshoring costs the majority of American households \$2,560 each year.

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

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

lots of opportunities for public involvement to ensure that the deals reflect the needs of working people, not special interests.

- **Keep Good-Paying Jobs At Home:** Our tax code should ensure that the super-wealthy and multinational corporations pay their fair share and encourage the creation of good jobs here in the United States. The **No Tax Breaks for Outsourcing Act (H.R. 1785 / S. 714)** would stop rewarding companies that ship jobs overseas and reverse the offshoring incentives embedded in the tax law.

Outside of a worker center trade agenda, Members of Congress should also:

Invest In Offshore Domestic Manufacturing

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

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

Ensure Investments In Our Semiconductor Industry Go Toward Good Jobs

As Congress looks to ramp up our domestic chip industry to address the current chip shortage, we strongly support efforts to ensure that this funding creates good jobs and ensures that future investment builds domestic capacity and is not ultimately offshored. IUE-CWA currently represents the only unionized semiconductor manufacturer in the country. Unfortunately, we have seen how companies in the industry have successfully busted unions creating bottom-of-the-barrel, low-wage, and low-standard jobs. As the industry grows from the influx of funding, we welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to grow a skilled workforce that provides good-paying union jobs.



AFA-CWA

The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA) is the Flight Attendant union organized by Flight Attendants for Flight Attendants. We are an autonomous sector within CWA. AFA represents nearly 50,000 Flight Attendants at 18 airlines, serving as a voice for Flight Attendants in their workplace, industry, media, and Capitol Hill. AFA's goals are to negotiate better pay, benefits, working conditions, and work rules at their airline and to improve their safety on the job. AFA's legislative priorities for the 117th Congress include:

Cabin Air Safety Act of 2022 (S. 3944/H.R. 7267)

AFA's work on cabin air quality spans decades and includes massive health initiatives such as banning smoking on planes. The air that passengers and flight crews breathe on airplanes can be toxic. On most commercial flights, air for cabin pressurization and ventilation comes from the engine compressor. Essentially, external air is drawn in from the engines, compressed, warmed, and then pumped into the pressurized aircraft cabin. This is called bleed air. Bleed air is not filtered, and oil from the engines and fuel can leak, become vaporized, and enter the cabin air supply causing a fume event.

Oil fumes are often described as smelling like "dirty socks" or as being musty, moldy, or foul. Hydraulic fluid fumes often have a distinctive acrid odor. Exposure to these fumes can cause acute symptoms like dizziness, fainting, headache, and delayed responses. To the unsuspecting victim, crew member, or passenger of a fume event, these symptoms are often passed off as jet lag, dehydration, or fatigue.

AFA urges members of Congress to cosponsor the Cabin Air Safety Act of 2022. The bill provides training for aviation crew members to respond to and report smoke/fume incidents onboard commercial flights; sets standards for reporting smoke/fume events; requires the FAA to develop a standardized form to collect data

and investigate smoke/fume events, and requires research and deployment of detectors and other air quality monitoring equipment on commercial aircraft.

This is a common-sense piece of legislation that would have a meaningful health and safety impact for passengers and flight crews to understand the health impacts of exposure to oil fumes onboard aircraft. Clean cabin air is necessary for flight attendants' health and safety.

PUMP Act (S. 1658/H.R. 3110)

Flight Attendants face a number of challenges in the workplace as they return to work after the birth of a child. There are currently no federal protections for nursing Flight Attendants. Often the sole breadwinner, Flight Attendants must choose between continuing to nurse their newborn children and returning to work in order to support their families.

A 2021 survey of Flight Attendants who have nursed found that an overwhelming majority (86 percent) indicated they faced obstacles pumping while on and off duty, as well as in between flights. As a result, 75 percent of responding Flight Attendants decided to quit pumping and expressing breast milk because it was too difficult to find the time and a private location.

Respondents reported a lack of support from their management in an attempt to find the time or place to express their milk also resulted in them stopping pumping earlier than planned and painful health conditions such as mastitis.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies breastfeed exclusively for the first six months and then continue to nurse, along with the introduction of solid foods, for the first year or "as long as is mutually desired by the mother and the baby." The health benefits of breastfeeding children are well documented. In addition, studies show that supporting nursing mothers leads to less absenteeism, health care costs, increased morale and productivity, and many other benefits.

In 2010, the Break Time law, which amended the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to require that employers provide reasonable break time as well as a private place other than a bathroom to express milk, provided a monumental step in the right direction. However, millions of nursing mothers, including Flight Attendants and Pilots, were unintentionally left out of this important piece of legislation. The PUMP Act finally rectifies this oversight.

On October 22, 2021, the PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act passed the House 276-149. We call on the Senate to pass the PUMP Act and provide a chance for nursing Flight Attendants to pump during the workday.

Fair and Open Skies Act (H.R. 3095)

The Fair and Open Skies Act would help prevent foreign airlines from using “Flags of Convenience” to avoid the regulations of their home countries or otherwise undermining labor standards. This legislation would protect our jobs and a strong U.S. aviation industry.

A “flag of convenience” business model permits airlines to establish operations in countries with the lowest labor standards, the direct opposite of the stated purpose of these trade agreements. Under the “flags of convenience” model, jobs are transferred to countries without labor rights and with the lowest pay and working conditions. It was this business model that effectively undermined the U.S. commercial shipping industry.

H.R. 3095 ensures that air carriers operating within the U.S.-EU Air Transport Agreement of 2007 comply with Article 17 bis protecting the statutory rights of workers against the threat of carriers shopping around for cheap labor. The bill also goes further to protect against “flag of convenience” airlines from operating into the U.S. from countries other than the European Union by allowing the Secretary of Transportation to reject a foreign air operating certificate to a flag of convenience carrier and ensuring that any applicant to the U.S. does not undermine labor standards.

This legislation is already producing positive results. Norse Atlantic Airways, **not** to be

confused with Norwegian Air International (a Flag of Convenience carrier), is committed to directly employing its flight crews and upholding workers’ rights to join a union in an agreement with AFA that will support 700 new union jobs in the U.S. over the next year. Norse is demonstrating that the success of a business starts with respecting workers and investing in good, union jobs. But not all foreign air carriers are willing to do the same. American workers deserve enforcement of strong job protections in foreign trade agreements. AFA strongly supports H.R. 3095, the Fair and Open Skies Act, and urges Members of Congress to cosponsor the bill and vote YES should it come before the full House for a vote.

Protection from Abusive Passengers Act (S. 4019/H.R. 7433)

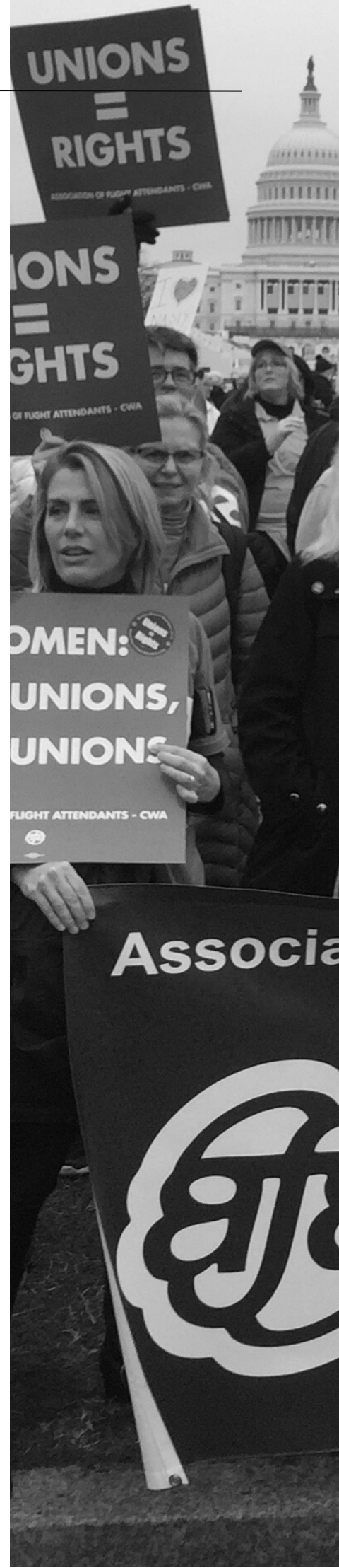
Flight attendants are aviation’s first responders, charged with the safety and health of passengers and crew. The disruptions in the cabin and failure to comply with crew instructions are a threat to the safety of the flight. We simply cannot allow this behavior to become commonplace for this reason alone.

In 2021 the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) documented 5,981 unruly passenger reports, initiated 1,113 investigations, and assessed \$5 million in fines. A 2021 AFA member survey found that, nearly 85 percent of all respondents who had dealt with unruly passengers in the first half of 2021 and that 58 percent had experienced at least five incidents during that time. Seventeen percent, or nearly 1 in 5 respondents, reported experiencing a physical incident.

Today, an aggressive passenger can be banned from one airline but then promptly fly on another one, putting more crews, passengers, and gate agents at risk and sending a message of lax (if any) oversight. This is not acceptable. A central database that all the airlines can access to share information about passengers who are banned from flying makes practical sense.

The Protection from Abusive Passengers Act protects airline crew members and passenger service agents, security screening personnel, and

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



Fighting for Local News

Since 2008, the news industry has suffered a 28% decline in total jobs. The job level is static in broadcast, but we've lost more than half of all jobs at U.S. newspapers, sliding from about 71,000 jobs in 2008 to just 31,000 jobs in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has further eroded jobs since then. Digital-only newsrooms have increased, but not at a rate sufficient to replace local news jobs lost at newspapers. Yet, workers in news are organizing unions at a rapid pace. The NewsGuild-CWA sector is one of the fastest-growing private-sector unions in the country, adding more than 7,300 new members since 2017 across 156 workplaces. That's growth of 39%.

The consequences of the job losses in local news are huge. Study after study has shown that communities with less local news vote less and have fewer contested races. They also know less about their elected representatives. In 1966, 70% of voters could name their mayor. In 2016, only 40% could.

Communities with less local news also had lower bond ratings, higher taxes, and more government corruption and waste. They also have less government spending on public benefits and are more likely to have more toxic emissions than communities with more local news coverage.

Local news is the most trusted news among American adults, with 75% saying they have a lot or some trust in the information that comes from local news organizations, compared with 58% having trust in national news organizations.

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

The **Local Journalism Sustainability Act (H.R. 3940 / S. 2434)** would provide tax credits for local news reporting jobs, subscriptions, and

local advertising. The bill would provide companies a tax credit of up to \$25,000 for every local journalist they employ up to 1,500 employees, securing jobs for thousands of NewsGuild-CWA members and potentially creating thousands of more jobs. The NewsGuild-CWA and AFL-CIO enthusiastically support the Local Journalism Sustainability Act.

The **Future of Local News Act (H.R. 3169 / S. 1601)** would support a review of the industry. The bill would establish a committee to examine, report on and make recommendations related to the state of local news in the U.S. The NewsGuild-CWA supports this legislation.

Over the past decade, Google and Facebook have emerged as a duopoly, controlling a majority of all digital advertising revenue. That lock on advertising has prevented news organizations from being competitive online when the platforms benefit from news coverage without paying for it. The **Journalism Competition and Preservation Act (H.R. 1735 / S. 673)** would provide an antitrust exemption for news companies (broadcast, print, and digital) to collectively negotiate and have arbitration to get added revenue out of the platforms. The NewsGuild-CWA believes that the bill must be changed to prioritize workers and high-quality journalism, including by preventing participating companies from stock buybacks during the term of the agreement, incentivizing job retention and creation by making more of the revenue going towards journalism jobs, and more transparency so everyone knows how much each company will get and how they spend that additional money. The NewsGuild-CWA strongly recommends these critical changes before the legislation can be passed.

Advocating for Passenger Service Agents

The Communications Workers of America (CWA) represents 15,000 passenger service workers across American Airlines, Inc. and wholly-owned regional subsidiaries Piedmont Airlines and Envoy Air. CWA has advocated for a work environment that is safe from hazards and abuse, and that pays fair wages for our frontline aviation workers, whose duties are critical to the continued safe operation of the aviation industry. We are proud of our internal commitment to addressing these issues, including the endorsement of key legislation, and of our work with other aviation unions to raise standards for our members and all front-line aviation workers:

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

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recorded 5,981 incidents of unruly passengers inside U.S airports. As of April 2022, the FAA has recorded 1,272 incidents, 807 of these related to mask enforcement policies, and only 206 cases have led to actions taken by the FAA to address these issues. Incidents involving passenger service members have not been recorded or properly addressed, and alcohol sales in the airport, flight delays, and mask enforcement responsibilities made it challenging for our members to perform their duties in a safe and efficient way.

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

CWA also calls on the Department of Justice to prosecute verbally and physically abusive passengers under existing laws that were written to protect our front-line members and to provide clear guidance to airport police departments and other local law enforcement agencies who are tasked with documenting incidents and refer them for federal prosecution. The health and safety of airline workers, the traveling public, and the entire aviation industry depend on a strong and coordinated federal response to assaults against all employees in our aviation system.

Raising Wage and Benefit Standards for Frontline Airline and Airport Workers

CWA has formed a coalition with other airport unions to advocate for new minimum wage and benefit standards for all workers at airports that receive federal grants, modeled on the protections provided to federally contracted workers under the Service Contract Act. Under this model, employees of the airport, the airlines, and other contracted employees would have the protection of wage and benefit minimums set by the Department of Labor.

Empowering Bank Workers

CWA's Committee for Better Banks (CBB) campaign is at the forefront of holding Wall Street and mega banks accountable for their treatment of workers, consumers, and the communities they serve.

Bank work is highly stressful. Frontline bank workers keep branches open, solve customers' problems, process and underwrite loans, assist families experiencing financial difficulties, identify and report fraudsters and money laundering, help consumers obtain the financial products they need to thrive, and much more.

Unfortunately, bank workers are too often disrespected and treated as an afterthought by CEOs more concerned with spending billions in profits on stock buybacks to inflate their stock prices and fatten their own bonuses at the expense of everyone else. Bank workers endure tremendous stress and pressure from inhumane sales goals, performance metrics, and workloads. For example, many workers must solve complex customer problems and move on to the next in a few short minutes without making any errors and abiding by strict regulatory guidelines or risk disciplinary action and losing incentive pay.

CWA is helping bank workers fight back! Members of CBB helped uncover the fake accounts scandal at Wells Fargo [see Netflix' "Dirty Money"], discriminatory monitoring analytic software at Santander, and other misconduct harming both employees and customers. Wells Fargo workers continue to hold the bank accountable, even helping to convince regulators to keep sanctions in place that forced one CEO to "retire". (Reuters, April 9, 2019). Workers are combating systemic racism by exposing the financial industry's biased hiring and promotion practices through our bank accountability project (CNN, March 18, 2021). During the pandemic, CWA helped workers speak

out, pressuring banks to invest in telework and protect the health and safety of thousands of workers (VICE, April 7, 2020, and American Prospect, July 20, 2020).

Bank workers form a union for the first time in 40 years! Recently, more than 100 Beneficial State Bank workers organized and ratified their first CWA union contract. "I came to Beneficial from Wells Fargo; I've always thought it had been a good idea to unionize [my workplace]," said Desiree Jackson, an assistant vice president in Oakland who helped organize her union. "As our bank grows, I want to make sure we don't grow in the direction that Well Fargo and Bank of America did." [Vice, March 2, 2020] Burnout and stagnant wages spurred workers at the Genesee Co-Op Federal Credit Union in Rochester, New York, to organize next (American Banker, February 14, 2022).

Support in the U.S. Congress. Ms. Jackson at Beneficial State Bank and member of CWA Local 9412 testified before the U.S. House Financial Services Committee about the negative consequences for workers and customers of mega-bank mergers (HFSC, September 29, 2021).

Empowering bank workers will improve government oversight of financial institutions. Federal agencies have untapped authority to keep big banks in check. By eliminating barriers to bank workers participating in bank supervision while establishing mechanisms that integrate their direct and independent consultation, bank workers could blow the whistle on malfeasance harming consumers while being able to organize a union with their coworkers more easily. The policy recommendations below will elevate worker perspectives in bank industry oversight and empower them to participate without fear of reprisal:

1. **Eliminate barriers to worker participation in bank supervision by establishing a "just cause" employment standard.** Effectively integrating bank worker perspectives in industry oversight requires adequate protections to reduce barriers and ensure full participation in the oversight process.

Creating a “just cause” protection would mean they could only be fired or disciplined for a legitimate reason, empowering workers to provide unvarnished information to bank examiners and regulators.

2. Implement mechanisms that integrate direct, independent consultation with and feedback from frontline bank workers. Bank workers are eager for a role in industry oversight, but they need new mechanisms for participation that can empower them to more easily organize into unions.

Take Action Now! to Support Wells Fargo workers uniting to demand better treatment and the right to organize without fear of retaliation or discrimination, sign the pledge: <https://bit.ly/wfpledge>



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