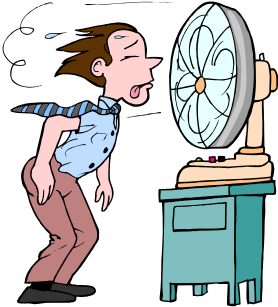


# NEWSLETTER

*Communication Workers of America*  
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## **EITHER WE'RE IN THIS FIGHT OR WE'RE NOT**

A few short months ago the newly elected Governor of Wisconsin, Scott Walker, stripped tens of thousands of workers of their right to bargain. He was seeking (so he said) steep contributions from unionized workers in state employment. After much back and forth, the unions representing the public employees agreed to the new contributions towards their health care and retirement plans. For a person of reasonable mind and truthful intent, that would have been good enough. But not for Walker. It quickly became apparent that his true intent was (and remains) to cripple labor. Not just public employees, if you think that, you are in need of an injection of “wake me up” medicine! After the state unions agreed to his demands, he pressed ahead with his so called budget repair bill and with its passage, severely damaged the public employees’ right to negotiate. Now imagine that happening to you for a moment in the private sector. Your employer tells you what you are going to contribute and then says you will not be allowed to bargain over it! Is this the USA or not. The various unions immediately began demonstrations all over the state that lasted for weeks and weeks. Still Walker refused to even talk about it. And the demonstrations were not just limited to union labor, oh no, there were all sorts of citizen groups, clubs, organizations and just plain interested Wisconsin citizens who could not believe and were not going to accept, that kind of dictatorial bashing by one individual. They were outraged (and still are) that Walker single handedly crushed the democratic process. Now let’s look at some of what happened. The 14 democrats in the state senate left the state so as to slow down the process and allow for cooler heads to prevail and for the citizenry of Wisconsin to have their collective say and try getting Mr. Walker to be reasonable. Many in Wisconsin said that the 14 state senators were wrong to leave the state, that they somehow abdicated the responsibility of their jobs. That’s a valid point and if you are one of those who are outraged by that, I won’t try to talk you out of it. However, I don’t agree that they shirked their responsibility, instead I believe they saw their job at that time was to allow for those who Walker had shut out of the process to have a say. And the only way that was going to happen was for them to leave for a couple of weeks. Did Mr. Walker say, before his election in November of 2010 that he intended on balancing the state budget? Yes he did. Did he say he was going to do it on the backs of working people? No he did not. Did he say he was going to dismantle the employees union and their right

to bargain? No he did not. There are those who say that if he had said his real intentions he would not have been elected. I am one of those who believe that. Is this the first time a politician has lied? Absolutely not. Will it be the last time? We can only hope, but with Walker it's a good bet he will lie again. The bill was challenged in front of the Wisconsin State Supreme Court. The issue challenged was whether or not the requirements for proper meeting postings were followed. The Republicans won that round. It will most likely be challenged on its merits all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. In the mean time, time marches on and we need to battle those who would dismantle and destroy us right here in Wisconsin. That will take work, involvement, boots on the ground and money to get it done. I have talked with some of you who are adamant that the union should remain "out of the fight". Some of you say the union either is backing the wrong legislators when we support those who support us or that we should not be involved at all. As if putting our collective heads in the sand will make it all go away. Well, that won't work. All that will produce is sand in your face! Let it be known right up front, the union does NOT USE DUES MONEY IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF ANY CANDIDATE, REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT. We quit doing that years and years ago. Many union members voluntarily contribute money over and above their union dues to labors political action teams, that money can be and is, used to directly fund a candidate's campaign. But again understand: IT IS NOT UNION DUES MONEY. The union does use a very small fraction of dues revenue to do the research and publicize issues involving working people and which candidates or party is for and against and why. It is called political education and all sides and factions do it. The lions' share of dues money goes to negotiate contracts, enforce and police those contracts, grievance administration, arbitrations, training of stewards, board members & officers, conduct meetings, travel involved with all of this, lodging involved with all of this, lease a local office (Wausau), conduct referenda and elections and much, much more. Does the union support republicans? Yes if they've shown that they support us! The same for democrats. So what it is coming down to is this, are we going to fight back against those who are determined to make us wage slaves or not? Are we going to just sit back and get our butts handed to us? I'm not, and I hope you don't either. There's always room in this union for more than one opinion or point of view, always has been and always will be. But there will be no room for anything if we stand down and let the establishment bury us. And make no doubt about it that is exactly what is going on. There will be recall elections throughout the summer and a recall of Mr. Walker beginning early next year. For the sake of your job, your income (and all that goes with it), and your rights, get involved, offer to help. We're only a call away.

Thanking you all for your work and support,

Michael Oliver – CWA Local 4671

### [Grievance Report – CWA Local 4671](#)

#### **NEW FRONTIER**

Employee was Discharged for miss use of company time. Call Center. Appealed to first formal step. Employee wants to be returned to Restricted or to Full unrestricted duty. When his physician releases him. Meeting scheduled at first formal step. The company is eroding the bargaining unit membership by the use of contractors in the Sun Prairie Call Center.

#### **VERIZON**

The company is eroding the bargaining unit membership by the use of contractors in the position of BTL Techs. Appealed to top step.

#### **Frontier Communications, Rhinelander**

CWA. Security Clause Requires all Bargaining unit members must apply for member ship as a condition of employment. Appealed to arbitration.

Management employee transferring to craft wanting time bridged for seniority recognition. Arbitration approved.

#### **CENTURY LINK**

The company is using none union engineering employee to Continually and consistently perform bargaining unit work for the Rice Lake exchanges. Top step meeting was held. Appealed to arbitration.

# T-Mobile workers win union voice in Connecticut

Jul 19, 2011

Hamden, Connecticut -- T-Mobile USA technicians in Connecticut today voted for representation by the Communications Workers of America-TU.

The vote was 8-7 for CWA-TU representation with one challenged ballot of a union supporter who had recently transferred into the unit. The challenge will not affect the outcome.

The Connecticut technicians are the first to vote for union representation at T-Mobile USA. T-Mobile operations in Germany, owned by Deutsche Telekom, fully respect workers' right to bargain collectively, but U.S. management historically had undertaken a campaign of delaying tactics and interference to intimidate workers. The Connecticut techs stood strong against these tactics and for a union voice.

“CWA is proud to work with these T-Mobile techs, and with T-Mobile workers in New York who want to organize and bargain for a voice on the job. They stood up for what’s right,” said CWA District 1 Vice President Chris Shelton.



CWA Local 1298 President Bill Henderson said “this vote made history, with T-Mobile workers fighting back to beat the odds and win the union voice they want. It showed the desire of people to have a union and an even playing field. Hopefully this will mean a new direction for all working people.”

Bo Larsen, World President of UNI Telecom, representing 3 million workers, who observed the election to show the continuing supporting of the global labor movement for the rights of T-Mobile USA workers for a union voice, said: “No worker should be intimidated for wanting a union voice and bargaining rights.”

Last week, UNI Global Union joined the International Trade Union Confederation (representing 175 million workers); ver.di, the union for DT workers and CWA in filing a complaint under the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises against DT and T-Mobile for anti-worker activities in the United States. Read the complaint here <http://weexpectbetter.org/oecd>.

## *Save Bargaining Rights*

### **Tell Congress: Oppose the Colombia Trade Agreement**

Before August, a new free trade agreement with Colombia will likely come to a vote in Congress. Colombia’s record of unfair treatment of workers, poor working conditions, and restricted bargaining rights speaks for itself. As we also struggle to protect workers’ rights in the United States, this agreement would move us further in the wrong direction by sanctioning an economic system designed to keep workers down.

**Make sure your voice is heard. Use our simple tool to send a letter to your Senators and Representatives urging them to oppose the deal.** We have provided a sample letter below, but the most effective messages are written in your own words. Even a single, short paragraph will help show Congress that without fair labor standards, there is no such thing as free trade – only a race to the bottom. Send them your letter from [www.cwa-union.org](http://www.cwa-union.org)

## Rechenbach: Strong, Vibrant Labor movement will restore America



Jul 14, 2011

*Retiring CWA Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Rechenbach bids farewell as a national officer but pledges to be an active volunteer in his home state of Ohio.*

In a farewell convention speech filled with his trademark humor, retiring Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Rechenbach outlined the challenges CWA faces but also its strengths: dedicated activists and leaders with a shared passion to make things better for members, their families and all workers.

"It is what we all in this room hold in common — the desire to make things better for our coworkers and our nation, to gain respect on the job and dignity in the workplace, to bring economic security to the homes of our members," Rechenbach said.

Doing so is a bigger challenge than ever, he said, pointing to the soaring gap between what American workers and CEOs earn, and the country's extreme inequality of wealth.

"Anyone want to guess how long it would take for the average CWA member to earn what the top hedge fund manager earns in one year? 35,217 years," Rechenbach said. "Oh, and by the way, you currently pay a tax rate that is more than double what the hedge fund manager pays."

The rich "aren't getting richer in this country because they are smarter," he said. "The people with incomes over a million dollars aren't the teachers who shape our children's minds and characters, they aren't the factory workers on an assembly line or the construction workers building a new home, they aren't the scientists searching for a cure for cancer, they certainly aren't the telephone workers, newspaper reporters, flight attendants, call center workers, printers, TV technicians or public workers that belong to our union."

Rechenbach discussed the many ways CWA has tightened its belt financially, from leasing out large portions of the headquarters building, to staff reductions through attrition, to agreements from both union and exempt staff to forgo raises and accept health and pension benefit changes. Further, he said, CWA officer salaries remain among the lowest in the labor movement.

Under Rechenbach's leadership, CWA has also reduced its number of fulltime officers, merging Districts 2 and 13 and the Telecom and C&T offices, and eliminating the executive vice president position, held until this week by Annie Hill. Delegates elected Hill to succeed Rechenbach as secretary-treasurer.

While CWA, its members and working families nationwide are doing everything they can to be financially responsible and continue to make ends meet, Wall Street and CEOs are enriching themselves and shipping jobs overseas, and through their money have a direct line to Congress to write the rules that benefit only them, Rechenbach said.

"The only hope to turn around this nightmare cycle of wealth distribution to the top is a strong and vibrant labor movement," he said. Our opponents "will do anything and everything they can to crush us, but as the song goes, like a tree standing by the water, we shall not be moved."