



## **Mid-Atlantic Bargaining Report # 17**

**July 27, 2015**

The Union and the Company bargaining committees did not meet today, even though the Company made it a point on Friday to advise the Union it intended to do so. The Union reached out to the Company at noon after not hearing from them regarding scheduling a meeting. The Company advised they have nothing to present to the Union today. It is not clear to your committee why they would not.

The Union has multiple data requests pending with the company that are needed to prepare additional proposals as well as force the company to justify its own retrogressive proposals.

Five weeks into bargaining and the Union and the Company remain far apart. The comprehensive proposal they passed would be devastating for every member. The Union came to the table and initially passed proposals based upon the thousands of surveys that were filled out by our members. Proposals that would make sure our members have a future at this company and proposals that would address the many loopholes currently in our contracts that the company uses to harass us on a daily basis.

In 2012, during a time of great economic stress, the Company came to the Union and after 15 months of bargaining, including mediation, and reached an agreement that the company said they had to have to survive. Since then, every year they have made billions of dollars in profits and not one Executive Officer at Verizon has made a single sacrifice like they told us they needed us to do. The latest insult being Lowell Macadam getting a 16% raise in one year while we have paid more in healthcare, lost pensions for new hires, froze pensions for current members, made significant changes in incidental absence payments and made other changes to our contract that have resulted in stressful working conditions and excessive discipline to our members.

During this round of bargaining Verizon's first proposal was worse than what it presented in 2011. The first proposal includes thousands of dollars in increases per year to healthcare for each employee, no retiree healthcare bargaining in the future, an employee choice to eliminate either the pension

benefit or the 401k savings plan benefit, a reduction in the disability benefit, including the elimination of the accident disability benefit, further reduction to tuition assistance, further reduction in vacation selection percentages, elimination of all caps on overtime, reduced overtime rates to time and a half and pay only for hours worked over forty, contracting out exclusive fiber facilities work throughout our footprint, the ability to move you to another state on a temporary assignment, permanent forced transfers that require home relocation, eliminate the job security language for all employees and as a final slap in the face a list of 30 locations that they intend to close. The Union's response was to reject the company's offer and restate our position for this round of bargaining.

This corporation is not near bankruptcy; in fact they just posted second quarter profits of \$4.4 billion. We reviewed the company's proposals, their explanations, the data they use to support the need for the changes and the Union cannot see the need for the changes the Company has proposed. We advised the company we are open to hear any proposal they want to pass – but warned they need to understand we will not sit idle and agree to contract out our work, hand over our pensions or decimate our healthcare plans.

Now instead of meeting with the union, or providing the information requested by the Union or working constructively towards a contract they spent the time crafting an email to all of you trying to tell you what the Union's initial proposals were. As if you didn't know what you had asked for, as if it wasn't clear in the hundreds of meetings held by locals across the footprint in the past couple of months or as if this wasn't clear in the many speeches held at the Rally in NY on Saturday.

Let's be clear. When we went to the table we proposed a significant wage increase. When questioned what was meant we responded with we want an increase similar to what Lowell McAdam got – 16%. We asked for pensions for ALL employees and a cost of living increase for retirees, some who make just a few hundred dollars a month. We demanded changes in our contract that guarantee fair and respectful treatment because this Company has proven they cannot be trusted. We also asked for Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a holiday because IT IS ABOUT DAMN TIME. The healthcare was to return the healthcare to what it was in 2012 because the past three years have shown the Company was not economically hurting as the Company had claimed. Job Security WAS TO MAKE EVERYONE EQUAL as are the Union's proposals on pensions.

The Union takes this bargaining just as seriously as the company. These proposals were not intended as jokes; they are serious issues our members asked us to fix. We are fighting to protect our futures with this company and create new ones for others. Job security is not a joke. A fair wage is not a joke. Healthcare and Pensions are no joke.

Tomorrow, everyone should go into work and ask your supervisor questions on Verizon's email. Ask them why The Verizon bargaining committee was not at the table on Monday. Tell them we are five days out. Tick tock.