



## Regional Bargaining Report # 59

**Tuesday, April 12, 2016**

Negotiations at the Regional table have ground to a halt. Earlier this afternoon an off table discussion was held regarding Call Sharing. No progress was made on the issue. Talks have recessed for now, subject to call by either party.

The Company has spent more time sending messages to our members giving them “bargaining facts” than they spend at the bargaining table. The Company’s “bargaining facts” emailed today to our members stated the Company had been contacted by Federal Mediation and agreed they were willing to mediate if the Unions extended the strike deadline. CWA responded with a press release stating “CWA did not authorize anyone at the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to approach Verizon about extending the strike date. Either the FMCS acted without authorization or Verizon executive vice president Marc Reed is lying.” Our guess is little Mark is lying again!

Clearly Reed’s goal is to mislead the public and our members regarding all the facts. A recent news article where Reed was quoted stated that out of the last 4 bargaining cycles the union leadership took the workers out on strike 50% of the time. Those of us that were here for the last 4 bargaining cycles remember it a little differently. We saw under Verizon CEO’s leadership, including Marc Reed, our members were forced to strike for a fair contract 100% of the time in the last 2 contracts. Enough of the bullshit, scare tactics and lies!

With less than 12 hours to go it is becoming clear this company is not taking us seriously. The clock is ticking. At 6AM tomorrow morning this company will find out just how serious we really are.

We have communicated a lot of information in these bargaining reports over the past 10 months. Tonight we want to make clear what the major issues are causing our members to take to the picket lines and withhold our labor from the greedy corporation Verizon. So here is why we are going on strike.

**1). WAGES:** The company offered increases of 6.5%. When you factor in the rising cost of all the other monetary items the company proposes changing, it is not an “increase”, but a step backwards. Union wage increases are negotiated once real commitments from the company are made on all of the issues affecting our members.

**2). JOB SECURITY-** CWA supported Bell Atlantic’s merger with GTE. Job security language in 2003 was the cost for CWA’s support. Now Verizon seeks to eliminate that job security language unless we agree to allow forced temporary transfers of employees to other states, close rural call centers forcing

employees to move or commute excessive distances or quit and force employees to travel up to 50 miles more before compensating employees.

**3). PENSIONS** – The Company has proposed to cap pension accruals at 30 years. They also propose to lock in the life expectancy portion of the pension cash out calculation potentially costing members the 3% annual pension band increase proposed. Our members deserve pensions that will provide reliable retirement security.

**4). CALL SHARING** - The company contracts over 5,000 employees in the Philippines, Mexico, Dominican Republic and elsewhere. Contractors handle over a million calls originating in the Mid-Atlantic States and the company wants an agreement to lower the percentage of calls it commits to its own employees. They are also proposing call routing that will get the call to a contractor quicker. This is all designed to eliminate call center jobs. This agreement is also a job security issue for all call center employees. It is vital that the Union prevail in securing call center work.

**5). HEALTHCARE** – The Company seeks significant increases in healthcare contributions while diminishing plan coverage. They want us to pay more for less coverage.

**6). RETIREE MEDICAL** - The company proposes continuing your healthcare but they want your costs to be increased at the same pace of active employees, even though you don't earn a paycheck, overtime or benefit from wage increases.

**7). FORCED OVERTIME ASSIGNMENTS** – The company has manipulated overtime in our bargaining units because they are understaffed. The Company has mismanaged out of town projects and overtime to a point where they have exhausted the existing workforce. The company has abused employees by assigning overtime almost daily and then canceling the assignment, sometimes just minutes before the overtime is scheduled to start. This practiced has caused our members to pay for daycare when it was not necessary, to miss family events and impacted quality of life issues.

It is disgraceful for this Company to demand our members and retirees sacrifice years of negotiated benefits while they sit back with fat salaries and bonuses. We will not stand by and let this Company continue to destroy good middle class jobs. The clock is ticking and time is running out. Whether wired or wireless, none of this network works without us.

Once again, as of 6AM Wednesday, April 13, 2016 the CWA Executive Board authorized a strike against Verizon, Verizon Wireless and Verizon Connected Solutions. If you are at work, you need to immediately get up and leave. As of 6AM, we are on strike. If you are scheduled to report to work tomorrow, you should contact your Local for picket instructions.