Moving Forward, CWA Strong, 2020 and Beyond

CWA held elections across the country during the second half of last year, and here in CWA District 9 (D9: California, Nevada, and Hawaii) delegates from CWA Locals overwhelmingly elected Frank Arce as our new Vice President. Frank brings with him over 35 years of experience in representation, organizing, mobilization, legislative and political action, collective bargaining, and more, and is ready to move D9 forward in 2020 and beyond. Whether it be upcoming contract negotiations with AT&T Core (wireline) or Frontier this year, or AT&T Mobility (wireless) next year, Frank has committed to fully engage D9 and work with all Locals to educate, activate and mobilize our membership. To be sure, 2020 will hold its challenges, including contract fights, local, state and federal legislative advocacy, and the upcoming political cycle with the midterm and general elections. However, no matter what obstacles we might face, D9 and Locals will continue to work hard for all CWA members. Let’s keep moving forward, CWA Strong, 2020 and beyond!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

It’s 2020, a new year, new decade, and a new opportunity to move forward on what matters to all CWA members: regaining power in the workplace, securing good contracts, fighting back against corporate greed, and growing our collective strength as a labor movement. Now is our time to shine. It’s our time to thrive. Are you ready?!

WHO ARE WE?

CWA District 9 is 60,000 members strong, representing workers at over 100 different employers throughout California, Nevada and Hawaii. We cover both the private and public sectors, including airlines, health care, University of California system, law enforcement, media, telecommunications, entertainment and more. Together we are #CWAstrong, and we stand united as one union family, taking care of each other. We’re CWA!
2019 was a busy year for D9! In California we sponsored two important pieces of legislation to advance our members’ interests and to benefit the overall labor movement: AB 1066 (Unemployment Insurance for Striking Workers), and AB 1677 (California Call Center Bill). We also fought against an AT&T-sponsored bill to further weaken regulations in CA: AB 1366 (VoIP deregulation).

Regarding AB 1677, we were able to get this bill all the way to Governor Newsom’s desk, but it was unfortunately vetoed. Finally, AB 1066 wasn’t able to make it out of the Senate, but we will continue to pursue this important bill in 2020.

In Nevada, D9 and CWA Local 9413 helped push several pieces of legislation to benefit working people: SB 312 (Paid Leave, Overtime, and Minimum Wage Increase), and SB 135 (Collective Bargaining for State Workers). We are very happy to report that both bills were signed into law by Governor Sisolak, marking big legislative victories for CWA members and working families throughout Nevada!
The New Union Label: Female, Progressive and Very Anti-Trump

From Politico, 12/12/19

Sara Nelson wants to break the AFL-CIO out of its male-dominated, blue-collar rut and return the labor movement to its activist roots.

“On a clear evening in Washington this past summer, Sara Nelson was in her element, waiting to speak to a revved-up crowd of union members at Reagan National Airport. Dressed in a navy flight attendant’s uniform, she stood out against the sea of jewel-toned business suits and union T-shirts.

If it intimidated Nelson that she was slotted to speak alongside two of the nation’s most notable progressives — Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren — it didn’t show. Over the course of her seven-minute speech, Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants, excoriated American Airlines executives for outsourcing catering jobs and driving down wages.

“We’re here to call bullsh*t on that scam!” Nelson roared into the microphone. “American Airlines is responsible — is responsible — for the poverty wages in these kitchens!”

By the end, the crowd of several hundred was cheering louder for Nelson than it had for Sanders…”

Read the full Politico article about CWA’s own Sara Nelson, Vice President of the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA-CWA), here: https://politi.co/2Qs0OiK.

UPTE-CWA SECURES HUGE WINS AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA!

UPTE members at the University of California voted overwhelmingly in 2019 to ratify new contracts that cover 16,000 Healthcare, Research, and Technical workers. The agreement, which runs through 2024, once again protects the world-class pension plan that has served UC workers for decades, and provides total raises of 29% to 32%. Other victories include protections on parking and healthcare rates, daily overtime pay, and equity raises for many job titles across the UC system. Members voted in record numbers and approved the tentative agreements by 95% (TX), 96% (RX), and 96% (HX). Over two years of negotiations and mobilization, UPTE waged five powerful strikes and countless other actions in order to reach this milestone. The historic turnout for this vote completes a successful chapter in our union’s history, and it is due to the dedication and continued engagement of our members!

HEALTHCARE EDUCATION RESEARCH FOR THE MANY NOT THE FEW
The Campaign to Organize Digital Employees (CODE-CWA), a new initiative to support workers' organizing efforts in the technology and game industries, was just launched by CWA this January. CODE-CWA will provide resources for workers who are joining together to demand change and bring union representation to their workplaces.

"Companies in the technology and game industries have gotten away with avoiding accountability for far too long," said CWA President Chris Shelton. "Workers in these industries are exposing the reality behind the rhetoric. This initiative will help tech and game workers reach the next level in their efforts to exercise their right to join together and demand change."

As employees at major North American tech and game companies have grown increasingly active and outspoken about workplace issues, many have expressed interest in joining a union to build power for lasting change. Through CODE-CWA, these workers will have the support of CWA members and organizers across the U.S. and Canada. Here in D9, we have a full-time organizer dedicated to this campaign to help organize workers throughout California and the West. Check out the L.A. Times story on the launch here.

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Organizing Highlight: Big Win for T-Mobile Workers in the Bay Area!

Workers at a T-Mobile retail store in Pinole, CA, voted to join CWA in December 2019. During the election campaign, T-Mobile engaged in unlawful intimidation of the workers, holding one-on-one interrogations about their union activity and threatening to fire them. But the T-Mobile employees persisted, despite T-Mobile's threats.

"All wireless workers deserve a voice on the job to address wages, benefits, and working conditions," said D9 Vice President Frank Arce. "This is just the first step. T-Mobile has already shown their disregard for laws that protect workers. We will be keeping a close eye on the company as these workers negotiate their first contract to make sure that the talks proceed smoothly and without delay."

"I am so proud of what we've done to stand up for ourselves," said Symone Ramirez, a Mobile Expert at the Pinole T-Mobile store. "Most people are too afraid to try to make a difference at work, especially when managers threaten to fire you for speaking out. But we found out that if you stick together as a team, even a small group of people can make a big change."

(CWA D9 Campaign Assistant Rose Gonzalez, pictured on the right, with store workers)
CALL CENTER SOLIDARITY: CWA D9 STANDING UP FOR MAXIMUS WORKERS

CWA District 9 union leaders stand together in solidarity with workers at MAXIMUS call centers in their fight for better working conditions. An injury to one is an injury to all, and we support all call center workers!

Labor Champion Shout out: U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii)

Senator Schatz is the senior Senator for the state of Hawaii. Throughout his career in public service, he has worked to pass legislation that benefits workers. He recently introduced a bill that would protect workers and ensure dignity in the workplace by requiring that all workers be provided a meal and bathroom break and time to attend to their medical needs. This issue has been a major problem at companies like Maximus, where call center workers with medical conditions have their wages deducted for bathroom breaks. He is a strong supporter of workers’ rights, including the PRO Act, a vital labor reform bill, and the Raise the Wage Act.

Schatz also played a key role in passing legislation to ensure that flight attendants receive 10 hours of rest between shifts, introduced a bill that CWA supports to impose a Wall Street sales tax, and called out Alden Global Capital for their predatory tactics of buying up local media outlets, gutting them, and leaving communities devastated in the process.

Keep Pushing for the PRO Act!

The PRO Act (Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act (H.R. 2474) is federal legislation that will put power in the hands of workers and reverse decades of legislation meant to crush unions. The bill will completely change labor law as we know it and shift power away from CEOs to workers. We anticipate a vote on the bill very soon. That means we must keep pushing to make our voices heard.

>> ACTION ALERT: Sign the petition—tell Congress to support the bill and put power back in the hands of workers!

NAFTA 2.0 Is Moving Through Congress

Democrats in the House of Representatives were able to secure a few fundamental changes to the broken United States – Mexico – Canada Agreement (USMCA) or ‘NAFTA 2.0’. Adding provisions on labor and environmental rules and enforcement, and ensuring access to prescription drugs, which results in an agreement that improves on NAFTA and the broken proposal that the Trump administration put out last year. Read the rest of CWA’s official statement about the agreement here: https://bit.ly/2sUS4bL

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