



**Local 4603 February 2023**

**Get Connected:  
Follow the latest CWA News  
On-Line: CWA-Union.org**



**Visit the AFL-CIO.org webpage to stay informed on other important union news and national issues.**

***Workers at Microsoft's ZeniMax Studios  
established the company's first union with the  
Communications Workers of America.***

A supermajority of quality assurance workers at Microsoft's ZeniMax Studios have indicated that they wish to join ZeniMax Workers United/CWA either by signing a union authorization card or voting via an online portal. In accordance with its stated labor principles, Microsoft has recognized the union.

ZeniMax is a video game production company with studios in Maryland and Texas known for its popular games such as Elder Scrolls, DOOM, Quake Champions, and Fallout. ZeniMax Workers United/CWA is the first studio at Microsoft to secure union representation, and the largest group of union-represented Quality Assurance testers at any U.S. game studio.

"We're thrilled to kick off 2023 in a workplace that's stronger and more equitable than it was last year. This is an empowering victory that allows us to protect ourselves and each other in a way we never could without a union. Our hope and belief is that this is the year in which game workers across the country exercise their power and reshape the industry as a whole," said Skylar Hinnant, Senior QA Tester II, Rockville.

"Before us is an opportunity to make big changes and bring equity to the video game industry. We want to put an end to sudden periods of crunch, unfair pay, and lack of growth opportunities within the company. Our union will push for truly competitive pay, better communication between management and workers, a clear path for those that want to progress their career, and more," said Victoria Banos, Senior QA Audio Tester, Hunt Valley.

Quality assurance workers across ZeniMax have been organizing for months to positively transform ZeniMax for the benefit of workers, the company, and the players who enjoy the studios' games. Workers began signing union authorization cards in November 2022, and started the official voting process through a confidential online portal that opened on Friday, December 2 at 8am PST and closed on December 31 at 6pm PST. The unit includes all QA employees in the U.S. across ZeniMax's various studios.

Unlike other video game and tech corporations, Microsoft  
(Continued on page 2)

## **2023 African American History Month**

To commemorate and celebrate the contributions to our nation made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week (then called "Negro History Week") nearly a century ago. The event was first celebrated during the second week of February 1926, selected because it coincides with the February birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist/writer Frederick Douglass. The second week in February would continue to be recognized for this event until 1976 when, as part of the nation's bicentennial, it's recognition was expanded to cover the entire month. Since then, U.S. presidents have proclaimed February as National African American History Month.

### **"The Founders and the Vote"**

***Reprinted from: Classroom Materials - Library of Congress***

In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed."

But how would Americans consent to be governed? Who should vote? How should they vote? The founders wrestled with these questions. They wondered about the rights of minorities. In their day, that meant worrying if the rights of property owners would be overrun by the votes of those who did not own land. James Madison described the problem this way:

The right of suffrage is a fundamental Article in Republican Constitutions. The regulation of it is, at the same time, a task of peculiar delicacy. Allow the right [to vote] exclusively to property [owners], and the rights of persons may be oppressed... Extend it equally to all, and the rights of property [owners] ...may be overruled by a majority without property....

Eventually, the framers of the Constitution left details of voting to the states.

***In Article I Section 4, the Constitution says: The times, places and manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each state by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations.***

Unfortunately, leaving election control to individual states led to unfair voting practices in the U.S. At first, white men with property were the only Americans routinely permitted to vote. President Andrew Jackson, champion of frontiersmen, helped advance the political rights of those who did not own property. By about 1860, most white men without property were enfranchised. But African Americans, women, Native Americans, non-English speakers, and citizens between the ages of 18 and 21 had to fight for the right to vote in this country.

### **"Voting Rights for African Americans"**

***From: Classroom Materials at the Library of Congress***

A terrible and bloody Civil War freed enslaved Americans. The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution (1868) granted African Americans the rights of citizenship. However, this did not always translate into the ability to vote. Black voters were systematically turned away from state polling places. To combat this problem, Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870. ***It says: The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.***

Yet states still found ways to circumvent the Constitution and prevent blacks from voting. Poll taxes, literacy tests, fraud and intimidation all turned African Americans away from the polls. Until the Supreme Court struck it down in 1915, many states used the "grandfather clause" to keep descendants of slaves out of elections. The clause said you could not vote unless

(Continued on page 3)

## Wisconsin Elections 2023

**"We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate."**

**Thomas Jefferson**

There are important choices to be made in 2023! Follow the plan our founders scripted where "We the People" have an opportunity to choose our public/civic problem solvers and judicial administrators.



As American citizens, it is our civic duty to participate to research and understand the policies and current issues the representatives we've elected should be addressing.

The spring elections include candidates seeking local, municipal, county or statewide offices. Their decision making responsibilities once in office will absolutely impact our path forward as citizens and our nation.

**It is your choice!** You can choose to ignore these important public concerns, but we all know what the eventual results will be if we just keep kicking the can down the road.

**Voting is your single opportunity to be heard on these decisions!** Thoroughly research and identify your concerns and the candidates. Choose the candidates whose judgement most resembles your thoughts in addressing these concerns.

We've all made important decisions this past year with a wide variety of outcomes. Good judgement is an important skill to possess. There is knowledge and wisdom to be learned from our past failed choices.

**The future marches on and choosing to neglect your duty as a citizen is a waste of your one opportunity to be heard!**

**These Decision Makers get elected whether you vote or not!** Decisions are made and legislation becomes law. Legislative and judicial representatives make decisions that affect us all. Don't be deceived by fast well funded messaging. Take your responsibility seriously and exercise diligence in thoroughly investigating to find the facts and the truth!

**You can complain about things and be angry, but if you don't vote, you are just blowing hot air!**

**DO NOTHING, AND NOTHING GETS DONE!**

### **Primary Election Tuesday February 21, 2023**

#### **On The February Ballot State Supreme Court, Municipal and County Primary Elections**

Depending upon where you live, there may be Primary Elections in your area for County and Municipal Offices: County Executive, County Supervisor, County Comptroller Municipal Offices: Mayor, Alderperson, Town and Village Board Member, Municipal Clerk, Treasurer, Municipal Judge, School District and Multi-Jurisdictional Municipal Judges. Primary elections rules for county and municipal offices differ depending upon where you are registered to vote.

### **Spring General Election Tuesday April 4, 2023**

#### **On The Ballot State office to be elected: Wisconsin State Supreme Court**

*(Continued from page 1 - CWA News)*

made a public commitment around its labor principles which included respecting its employees' right to form a union. When ZeniMax employees announced that they were organizing a union in December, Microsoft agreed to remain neutral and allow workers to make their own decision about whether or not to join the union. The company swiftly recognized ZeniMax Workers United/CWA after a neutral third party confirmed that a majority of workers favored joining the union.

"Microsoft has lived up to its commitment to its workers and let them decide for themselves whether they want a union," said Communications Workers of America President Chris Shelton. "Other video game and tech giants have made a conscious choice to attack, undermine, and demoralize their own employees when they join together to form a union. Microsoft is charting a different course which will strengthen its corporate culture and ability to serve its customers and should serve as a model for the industry and as a blueprint for regulators."

"It's difficult to express in words just how much winning our union matters to us. We've been working so hard to get here that it would be impossible not to be excited. We know this is not the end of our hard work, but reaching this milestone gives us faith that when workers stand together, we can accomplish anything we set our minds to," said Dylan Burton, Senior QA Tester, Dallas.

Zenimax Workers United/CWA joins the wave of game and tech workers at Activision, Alphabet, Apple, and dozens of other companies who have organized with CODE-CWA to build a better workplace.

#### **Follow ZeniMax Workers United/CWA at @ZeniMaxWorkers**

The Campaign to Organize Digital Employees (CODE-CWA) is a network of worker-organizers and their staff working every single day to build the voice and power necessary to ensure the future of the tech, game, and digital industries in the United States and Canada. CODE-CWA is a project of the Communications Workers of America which represents hundreds of thousands of workers throughout tech, media, telecom, and other industries who stand together to fight for justice on the job and in our communities.

### **CWA Urges Swift Action on Sohn's Nomination to the FCC**

We fully support the nomination of Gigi Sohn as Commissioner at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and urge swift action on her nomination.

We are in a critical period of increased federal investment in broadband networks and digital equity initiatives, and the FCC has gone for too long without a fully seated commission. Continued delay on this nomination is inexcusable and only benefits large corporations who wish to avoid oversight and accountability.

Gigi Sohn has over 30 years of experience working on communications policy. Her meaningful leadership, dedication, and contributions cannot be overstated, as she has been instrumental in the success of many FCC programs, including on the issues of affordability, competition, open internet, modernization of the Lifeline program, and adoption of strong privacy rules for broadband providers. Sohn has also ensured that working people and underrepresented communities are front and center in charting the course for an equitable communications and media ecosystem. During the T-Mobile/Sprint merger, Sohn was a key ally in the fight to protect the jobs of the working families who ultimately ended up being

**(Continued from page 2 - CWA Urges Swift Action)**

harmful by the merger. Additionally, Sohn supports constructive collaboration with states to ensure effective mapping and oversight of broadband services and infrastructure.

Gigi Sohn is a highly qualified nominee. Her voice, experience, and expertise are just what the FCC and our country need to protect workers and consumers in our complex telecommunications and media landscape. The U.S. Senate majority must do what it should have done last year and end the needless delay tactics by a minority of Senate Republicans beholden to industry actors and swiftly confirm Gigi Sohn to the FCC.

## **Problem Solving**

Our lives are riddled with making decisions in finding proper solutions for a future that is always unpredictable and uncertain. Compromise is often a major factor in decision making and finding reliable information to distinguish fact from fiction is vital to quality problem resolution.

When two or more parties are involved in decision making, the process becomes even more involved and challenging. Negotiations between the parties becomes necessary in finding a path forward to a decision and resolution.

We are living this situation every day with the opinions and views held by our legislators and their problem solving skills. The exclusive option in this process and the only way to get things done is by compromise to build a consensus.

May we suggest watching a few episodes of *Pawn Stars* or *American Pickers*? These programs provide excellent examples for this process. The "Buyers" and "Sellers" rarely agree on the value of the items they are discussing. Both programs resort to experts for research if they are uncertain about an item's authenticity or value and then negotiations begin. If they can't agree, the transaction doesn't happen.

State and Federal legislative problem solving holds greater consequences if a compromised solution can not be negotiated. Sometimes you can kick the can down the road, but often times solutions can't wait.

**(Continued from page 1 - African American History Month)**

your grandfather had voted -- an impossibility for most people whose ancestors were slaves.

This unfair treatment was debated on the street, in the Congress and in the press. Fifty years after the Fifteenth Amendment passed in 1870, black Americans still found it difficult to vote, especially in the South." What a Colored Man Should Do to Vote", lists many of the barriers African American voters faced.

The fight for African American suffrage raged on for decades. In the 1930s one Georgia man described the situation this way: "Do you know I've never voted in my life, never been able to exercise my right as a citizen because of the poll tax? ... I can't pay a poll tax, can't have a voice in my own government."

Many brave and impassioned Americans have protested, marched, have been arrested and even died working toward voting equality. In 1963 and 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. brought hundreds of black people to the courthouse in Selma, Alabama to register. When they were turned away, Dr. King organized and led protests that finally turned the tide of American political opinion. In 1964 the Twenty-fourth Amendment prohibited the use of poll taxes. In 1965, the Voting Rights Act directed the Attorney General to enforce the right to vote for African Americans.

The 1965 Voting Rights Act created a significant change in the status of African Americans throughout the South. The

Voting Rights Act prohibited the states from using literacy tests and other methods of excluding African Americans from voting. Prior to this, only an estimated twenty-three percent of voting-age blacks were registered nationally, but by 1969 the number had jumped to sixty-one percent.

## **Returning WWII Veterans**

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 known as the G.I. Bill. The law provided benefits for returning World War II veterans however the G.I. Bill was designed to be racially discriminatory.

A key sponsor of the bill was Rep. John Rankin, a notorious Southern Democrat racist from Mississippi. Rankin ensured language was included in the bill that would allow race to be a factor in the administration of the bill's benefits. Rankin knew that in the South, the GI Bill's education benefits would be filtered through state agencies that were governed by both the formal and informal rules of Jim Crow. He also relied on the banks and the Federal Housing Administration to help ensure that the home loans would also be restricted.

In the South, blacks were barred completely from most colleges and universities, and in the North their options were extremely limited. According to a paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research, black residents of the South were restricted to about 100 public and private institutions labeled in the Office of Education publications as "Colleges for Negroes," and 28 of the institutions in 1949 and 1950 were classified as sub-baccalaureate colleges. In 1945, 45 percent of these schools enrolled fewer than 250 students, and 92 percent of the institutions enrolled fewer than 1,000 students. As a result, about 95 percent of black veterans could only attend historically black colleges, which were overwhelmed by the influx of veterans and woefully underfunded. Ultimately the paper concluded that for blacks in the South, where two-thirds of the black veterans were from, "The G.I. Bill exacerbated rather than narrowed the economic and educational differences between blacks and whites."

**Editor's Note:** The decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* on May 17, 1954 is perhaps the most famous of all Supreme Court cases, as it started the process to end segregation. It overturned the equally far-reaching decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson* issued in 1896.

In the *Plessy* case, the Supreme Court decided by a 7-1 margin that "separate but equal" public facilities could be provided to different racial groups.

Debate and actions regarding equality of treatment, discrimination and justice still widely persists in our society today.

Please consider further researching this important topic on line. Material on this subject is readily available and recent events and debate proves the facts to be very relevant.

**[https://constitutioncenter.org/Brown v. Board: When the Supreme Court ruled against segregation | Constitution Center](https://constitutioncenter.org/Brown_v._Board)**

**Visit this website  
provides answers to  
your voting questions:  
<https://myvote.wi.gov>**



**A resource for answers and to find your Voter info, identify your Polling Place, What's on your Ballot, Update your Name or Address, Register to Vote, submit a request to Vote Absentee by Mail, Track your Ballot, or do search for In-Person Absentee voting options.**

**Qualification for self-government is Vote!**



## UNION CALENDAR

### February

- 14 **Executive Board Mtg.**  
6:30 pm  
Union Office
- 15 **Membership Mtg.**  
7:00 pm  
Pallas Restaurant  
1657 S. 108<sup>th</sup> St.  
West Allis, WI 53214

### March

- 14 **Executive Board Mtg.**  
6:30 pm  
Union Office
- 15 **Membership Mtg.**  
7:00 pm  
Pallas Restaurant  
1657 S. 108<sup>th</sup> St.  
West Allis, WI 53214

**Please be safe!  
For information  
and  
updates,  
please visit the  
CWA 4603  
web page at:  
[cwa4603.org](http://cwa4603.org)**

**To learn more about  
the Communications  
Workers of America,  
we recommend that  
you visit this link:  
[https://cwa-union.org/  
about/cwa-history](https://cwa-union.org/about/cwa-history)**

**This link and others  
can be found on the  
[cwa4603.org](http://cwa4603.org) webpage!**

## CWA Local 4603 LAS SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA

1. \$1,000.00 scholarship will be awarded one time only to an individual.
2. Must be a child, stepchild or grandchild of a member (active or RMO members only).
3. The member must be in good standing with CWA 4603 for a minimum of one year.
4. Acceptance into an accredited college, university, community college or technical or trade school at the time of the award. (First 4 years of college only—graduate students are not eligible.)
5. Awards must be for the following fall school year tuition (2023-2024).
6. Applications must be received by April 1, 2023.
7. All requirements must be met and information on the application must be completed to be considered.
8. Applications can be hand written; the essay must be typed.
9. *A letter of reference from a teacher on school letterhead must be included as well as an essay of a maximum of 500 words entitled "What impact has the union had on my life?"*

You can request an application by contacting your CWA union steward, the CWA 4603 union office at 414-258-4010 or print a form by visiting:

**CWA4603.org**

Applications should be mailed to:

Wendy Fonseca  
CWA 4603  
6511 W. Blue Mound Rd.  
Milwaukee, WI 53213

## THE CWA WIRETAP

MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF  
THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA  
LOCAL 4603  
6511 WEST BLUE MOUND ROAD  
MILWAUKEE, WI 53213

PRESIDENT ..... GREG TENNYSON  
EXEC. VICE PRESIDENT ..... KIM WARD  
SECRETARY/TREASURER ..... WENDY FONSECA

### Wiretap Staff

Rich Hinderholtz, Editor  
Gary Kierzek

## Submissions Always Welcome

If you are interested in submitting an article, cartoon or photograph for the newsletter, please forward it to the CWA 4603 Union Office or e-mail it to: [wiretap@cwa4603.com](mailto:wiretap@cwa4603.com)

## To contact the RMO Report

Write c/o RMO Report  
6511 West Bluemound Rd.  
Milwaukee, WI 53213  
414-258-4010

# Wisconsin voting groups criticize GOP election commissioner who celebrated reduced Milwaukee turnout

by Harm Venhuizen / Associated Press

**Wisconsin Watch.org** is a nonprofit and nonpartisan newsroom. This story is published in partnership with The Associated Press.

Black and Hispanic voters in Wisconsin's largest city say a Republican election commissioner publicly applauding GOP strategies he credits with depressing minority turnout are a public admission of a conservative strategy in place for years.

"He's proudly telling Hispanic and Latino voters, 'I'm your enemy, and I'm actively using my position of power to undermine your voting rights,'" said Christine Neumann-Ortiz, executive director of Voces de la Frontera, an advocacy group for immigrants.

Robert Spindell, the election commissioner who also served as a fake Republican elector for former President Donald Trump, did not back down. He rejected calls from liberals and a fellow Democratic commissioner to resign, and said he does not support suppressing turnout.

Spindell said he was merely touting efforts by the GOP to counter liberal messaging in the Democratic stronghold of Milwaukee. High turnout there is key to Democrats winning statewide.

Spindell, a former Milwaukee election official, said in an email newsletter that Republicans "can be especially proud" of lowered turnout in Milwaukee during the 2022 election, "with the major reduction happening in the overwhelming Black and Hispanic areas."

Spindell, who is white, cited midterm results by precinct that showed lower overall turnout in predominantly Black and Hispanic Milwaukee neighborhoods compared with the last midterm election in 2018.

It's not clear what effect Republican efforts in Milwaukee had on the behaviors of Black and Hispanic voters, even as Spindell's email detailed a number of those strategies targeting those communities. Among them: "Negative Black Radio Commercials."

Two of the ads paid for by the Republican Party of Wisconsin, and obtained by The Associated Press, hit Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers and Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, who ran for U.S. Senate.

In one ad, a stern-sounding narrator alleges that Evers and Barnes "failed miserably" in protecting families from "violence, mayhem and death." In another spot, the same narrator says Evers did not help students of color do better in school or support allowing public school students to use a taxpayer-funded voucher to attend private schools.

Wisconsin has long faced the nation's largest achievement gap between white and Black students, the vast majority of whom live in Milwaukee.

Evers won reelection but Barnes narrowly lost to Republican U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson. Spindell said in his email that turnout in Milwaukee was down by 37,000 voters compared to 2018. Barnes lost his Senate race by just under 27,000 votes.

Barnes, who is Black and from Milwaukee, declined to comment on Spindell's remarks.

Wisconsin does not record the race or ethnicity of voters, and John Johnson, a researcher at Marquette University Law School, cautioned against drawing conclusions about racial voting patterns from such limited information. Johnson's own analysis

of election results also indicated a decline in voter turnout in majority-Black and majority-Hispanic wards in 2022, but the most recently available demographic data comes from the 2020 census, which the city of Milwaukee has contested amid claims that it gives outdated information on the voting-age population.

Regardless of the actual turnout levels, Neumann-Ortiz said she has seen a lack of enthusiasm among Hispanic voters, who say they don't feel represented. She attributed the problem to Wisconsin's state legislative maps, which give Republican lawmakers a strong majority in both chambers in a state where voters elected Democrats as governor, attorney general and secretary of state.

"Disenchantment has produced lower levels of participation," Neumann-Ortiz said. "If they genuinely wanted to make inroads, they would stop trying to undermine the ability of Latinos to vote."

Organizers in Milwaukee's Black community echoed that sentiment on the campaign trail in 2022, describing young Black voters as disaffected and tough to mobilize while working to elect Barnes as the state's first Black U.S. senator.

Polling also shows there was a national increase in Black support for Republicans in the midterm.

Still, advocates in Milwaukee say years of Republican-led efforts to make it more difficult to vote were really thinly veiled attempts to silence voters in Democrat-heavy Milwaukee, where Black and Hispanic residents account for about 60% of the population.

Under former Republican Gov. Scott Walker, Republicans in Wisconsin flexed their muscle to implement a voter ID proposal and limit the days and hours of early voting. The conservative-controlled Wisconsin Supreme Court last year enacted other GOP priorities when it outlawed ballot drop boxes and said voters cannot have someone else return a ballot on their behalf. Courts also have limited clerks' abilities to fill in missing ballot information, such as incomplete addresses.

Neumann-Ortiz called the efforts "death by 1,000 cuts to create barriers."

"Election after election, we are left as a Black organization to have to explain why Black turnout decreases in some areas," Kyle Johnson, political director of the Milwaukee-based Black Leaders Organizing for Communities, said in a statement. "Many of us have been sounding the alarm about how sinister voter suppression tactics have become, and Spindell's comments reinforce what we already knew."

## Martin Luther King Quotes:

"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."

"Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable...Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals."

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

"I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality...I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."

## CWA Local 4603's Adult Christmas Party

CWA 4603 hosted their membership Christmas Party at the Radisson on Mayfair Rd., on Saturday, January 7, 2023. This was the first party held since pre-covid in 2019. Considering we are still not fully back to normal socializing just yet, the turnout was considerable.

Those that came to the party had a great time dancing and socializing with friends and coworkers. The group's holiday generosity was strong as there was \$471.00 in cash donations and they filled 5 large bags with coats, hats and scarves to be distributed to several local charities. Well done!!! Thanks

**We are hoping to fill CWA 4603's 2023 Social Activity Calendar with greater events as the New Year plays on!**



### Just Watching the River Flow

"We are not all in the same boat. We are in the same storm. Some of us are on superyachts. Some of us have just the one oar."  
— Quote by Damian Barr

Worker solidarity is strongest when we work in unison for to gain fair treatment from wealthy corporate interests.

**An injury to one is an injury to all**

### UAW 180 Strike Continues

#### One of the largest and longest strikes in the country

UAW 180 workers began their strike against Case New Holland Industrial in May 2022.

A recent company contract offer was put before the UAW 180 membership on January 7, 2023 that the membership overwhelmingly voted to reject. The strike now runs on into its 9<sup>th</sup> month as the company continues to refuse to offer a fair settlement.

For the record, the UAW 180 retirees have had no improvements in their pension or benefits in any contracts since 1999.

**UAW Local 180 is still accepting donations of support.**

**For more information about supporting the UAW 180 in Racine call:  
(262) 631-5980**



### Attn: Wisconsin High School Students

The Wisconsin Labor History Society announces its Kenneth A. Germanson Essay Contest for the 2022-2023 School Year for Wisconsin high school students (grades 9-12).

**"Unions have been important to my family and my community because . . ."**

Ask to interview family members, neighbors, friends or others for their stories about work and unions. Teachers are urged to assist students in their efforts.

**Students could win cash prizes:**

**First Place, \$500; Second Place \$300; Third Place \$200; Honorable Mention (Up to 5 awarded) \$100.**

#### Contest Rules

Essays should be approximately 750 words in length. They will be judged on understanding, evidence of original research, writing style and significance. Essays must be submitted by email in Microsoft Word or as PDF file. Submissions must include a cover sheet with the following information: Your name, address, home telephone number, your email address, your grade in school, name and address of your school, and, if you were encouraged or assisted by a teacher, the teacher's name. (Also, list your family's union membership, if applicable.)

**If you have any questions, contact: Harvey J. Kaye at [kayeh@uwgb.edu](mailto:kayeh@uwgb.edu).**

**Deadline for submissions is  
Feb. 15, 2023**

**Send your essays to the following email address:  
[info@wisconsinlaborhistory.org](mailto:info@wisconsinlaborhistory.org).  
Put "essay contest" in subject line.**

**Sponsored By:  
Wisconsin Labor History Society  
(Affiliated with the Wisconsin Historical Society;  
endorsed by Wisconsin State AFL-CIO)  
6333 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee WI 53213  
Email: [info@wisconsinlaborhistory.org](mailto:info@wisconsinlaborhistory.org)  
Website: [www.wisconsinlaborhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinlaborhistory.org)**





## 4603 Retired Members Organization

### President

George Walls  
262-377-7744

### Vice President

Jim Courchane  
262-893-3068

### Secretary/Treasurer

Rich Hinderholtz  
262-886-9408

## February 2023 RMO Report

From RMO Secretary/Treasurer Rich Hinderholtz:

### RMO Luncheon Schedule for 2023

March 15 May 17 September 20 November 15

**Our next RMO luncheon will be held on March 15, 2023 at Meyer's Restaurant and Bar, 4260 S 76th, Greenfield, WI.**

RMO business meeting begins at 11am

Lunch scheduled to be served at 12:15

**Lunch is \$10.00 per person. Please send a check payable to CWA 4603 RMO**  
**Mail checks to: CWA 4603 RMO - 6511 W Bluemound, Milwaukee, WI 53213**  
**Please mail payments by February 28, 2023 so they are received by the March 7, 2023 deadline!**

### Changes for Required Minimum Distributions (RMD's)

The old rules mandated required withdrawals from your IRA or employer-sponsored retirement plan when you reached age 70.5. The **2019 SECURE Act** adjusted the age requirement to when Required Minimum Distributions become mandatory to begin.

If you reached age 70.5 in 2019, the old rule applied and you had to take your first RMD by April 1, 2020. **If you reached age 70.5 in 2020 or later you must now take your first RMD by April 1 of the year after you reach 72.**

## The Kierzek Chronicles

Ever since I was a young boy, I enjoyed watching movies and television about navy warships. One of my favorite television programs was called "Victory at Sea". Usually after a ship would take a hit by a torpedo the captain would get on the intercom system and call out the phrase, "DAMAGE CONTROL". After thinking about that phrase it brought back some memories about my working days at Ma Bell. One night after working the late shift at my West Allis company garage location with another technician, we returned to the garage at about 10PM and I noticed the front overhead door was open so I drove my truck right into the garage. When the garage mechanic on duty saw me pull in, he immediately pressed the button to close the door, unaware that another truck was right behind me. I then heard a loud crash as the door closed, and ripped the ladder and ladder rack clean off the truck behind me and punched two holes in the door from the ladder rails.--"DAMAGE CONTROL".

Another time one of the guys on my crew had a job at a nice home in Wauwatosa. He was backing his truck into the side driveway next to the house and veered to the left and hit the central air conditioning unit ripping the electrical lines, and refrigerant lines, off the house, and pushing the unit back about eight feet. He was a large man so he picked it up and put it back on the concrete slab thinking nobody would notice. Later that day the customer called my boss.--"DAMAGE CONTROL".

One time I was assigned a job at a West Allis foundry along with another tech to install a loudspeaker paging system. The job required a mobile lift truck the company rented for our us to run several wires at the top of the ceiling. Due to safety concerns, we were assigned to work from 3:30 PM until 12:00AM. Not sure if it was for our safety, or the safety of the foundry workers. Anyway after working there and going home to bed. My wife woke me up in the morning at 7:30 and told me my boss was on the phone and he sounded very upset. So I picked up the phone and he told me I really did it this time. He went on and told me I could lose my job over this one. When I asked him what he was talking about, he claimed we must have been drinking on the job and drove the lift truck through a cyclone fence into the next door neighbor's yard and into their garage.--"DAMAGE CONTROL". Well upon further investigation it was found that anyone could have started the machine and done the damage. Don't know who had to pay for that one. Till next time.

## Join the CWA Local 4603



**Ronald McDonald House Charities'**  
**Eastern Wisconsin**

**Community Services Committee and**  
**For the 2023 Pop Tab Collection**

**All pop tabs will be donated to the**  
**Ronald McDonald House**

**They recycle them and use the proceeds to help the Children**  
**undergoing treatment at local hospitals.**

**You can drop your pop tabs off at the Local Office at**  
**6511 W. Bluemound Rd.**

**You can also bring your collected tabs to the Membership**  
**Meetings or just bring them to the Union Steward in your**  
**work area. We will be collecting Pop Tabs year round!**

## Retiree Benefit Issues

**Benefit Specialists are unable to help with**  
**Medicare Supplemental Issues.**

**All other issues: First call your company's Benefits Office.**  
If your issue is not resolved, then refer all problems to the appropriate CWA Benefit Representative:

**AT&T Legacy Midwest SBC**

Carrie Dercola - Local 4603 Office 258-4010

**Alcatel-Lucent-Nokia**

Brian Sawyer - 984-389-7610

**bsawyer@cwa-union.org**

**[Legacy] AT&T**

Kim Wilburn - 614-868-2215

**kwilburn@ems.att.com**

**RMO Dues: \$100 for Lifetime. Checks payable to: CWA Local 4603 RMO.**  
**Mail to CWA Local 4603 RMO, 6511 West Blue Mound Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53213**

**Bureau of Labor Statistics - U.S. Department of Labor****UNION MEMBERS — 2022 (Report Released 01/19/2023)**

**For 2022, the percent of wage and salary workers who were members of unions— was 10.1 percent, down from 10.3 percent in 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today.** The number of wage and salary workers belonging to unions, at 14.3 million in 2022, increased by 273,000, or 1.9 percent, from 2021. However, the total number of wage and salary workers grew by 5.3 million (mostly among nonunion workers), or 3.9 percent. This disproportionately large increase in the number of total wage and salary employment compared with the increase in the number of union members led to a decrease in the union membership rate. The 2022 unionization rate (10.1 percent) is the lowest on record. ***In 1983, the first year where comparable union data are available, the union membership rate was 20.1 percent and there were 17.7 million union workers.***

The data on union membership are collected as part of the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly sample survey of about 60,000 eligible households that obtains information on employment and unemployment among the nation's civilian noninstitutional population age 16 and over.

**Highlights from the 2022 data:**

- The union membership rate of public-sector workers (33.1 percent) continued to be more than five times higher than the rate of private-sector workers (6.0 percent).
- The highest unionization rates were among workers in protective service occupations (34.6 percent) and in education, training, and library occupations (33.7 percent).
- Men continued to have a higher union membership rate (10.5 percent) than women (9.6 percent). The gap between union membership rates for men and women has narrowed considerably since 1983 (the earliest year for which comparable data are available), when rates for men and women were 24.7 percent and 14.6 percent, respectively.
- Black workers remained more likely to be union members than White, Asian, or Hispanic workers.
- **Nonunion workers had median weekly earnings that were 85 percent of earnings for workers who were union members (\$1,029 versus \$1,216). (The comparisons of earnings in this news release are on a broad level and do not control for many factors that can be important in explaining earnings differences.) *Union benefits have REAL VALUE!!!***
- Among states, Hawaii and New York had the highest union membership rates (21.9 percent and 20.7 percent, respectively), while South Carolina and North Carolina had the lowest (1.7 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively).

**To read the full report visit: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf>**