Regional Bargaining Report # 60

Friday, April 15, 2016

The Mid-Atlantic Bargaining Committee met with the company in Philadelphia today. The discussion opened with the Unions' bargaining team requesting the Company withdraw several of its proposals regarding the IME (Independent Medical Examination) and Evaluative Observations. The Company refused. The meeting became heated after the Unions outlined our member's major issues that must be addressed during this round of bargaining. The Union has addressed the issue of contracting call center work at this regional table for months. The Company to date has not agreed to staff to the number of employees necessary to handle the work volume that originates in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

The Company's demand for flexibility has led to massive contracting of Outside Plant work throughout parts of our District. This is the work that will guarantee our members job security. The bargaining team described the work environment at Vz. as nothing more than sweatshop mentality. The excessive monitoring, excessive overtime and excessive discipline of our members must stop now. We know Vz. has declared war on its own employees. There is no respect for workers or the quality of life of their families at Verizon. True to their form the Company responded by refusing to move on any of the Unions' issues.

The Company also restated the issues needed in its proposal. The Company's chair restated Vz's needs for "significant" cost savings in healthcare. When challenged over the description of characterizing its proposal as "significant" after consistently calling it "modest" the Company then offered that the "Company's changes are significant but the cost to our members is modest," – You cannot make this up.

The Company went on to state its proposal on pensions should address the Union's demands for pension increases. The committee quickly pointed out that the pension increase offered is immediately lost with the restrictions the company also proposes to cap the pension at 30 years and maintain an outdated mortality table used in the cash out calculation.

The final issue the Company addressed was the need for flexibility to close rural centers and transfer employees across state lines tying the proposal to the existing job security language. Again, the Union committee blasted the company over its attempt to hold hostage job security language negotiated years ago regarding the merger of fGTE and Bell Atlantic in exchange for the unrestricted ability to force members to endure unrealistic commutes to a new work location or work assignments taking them away from their family for weeks at a time.

The Company then announced they will not be here over the next couple of days and would return on Monday. Instead of sitting at this table and trying to reach a deal, they have left Philadelphia for the weekend. This shows just how much Verizon doesn't care about the 40,000 workers on strike or the

impact on the millions of Vz. Customers. The bargaining committee has headed back to their home locals over the weekend to help with the STRIKE since there can be no meetings in Philadelphia without the Company.

While the Company continues to spout the same tired rhetoric at the bargaining table, it is clear that our members on the picket lines and through mobilization are having a significant effect on company operations. Commitment dates on installation and repairs are already pushed out weeks and the management workers who were "trained" to perform our jobs have been floundering like fish out of water. Verizon CEO Lowell McAdam has been throwing temper tantrums over negative press coverage and customer traffic at the wireless stores has reduced traffic to a trickle.

Together we will win this war. Stay Strong and Stay Informed!

Message to special mobilizers "Release the Squirrels"