

Dear CWA Member:

Verizon recently distributed a message from its General Counsel, Randy Milch, setting out the Company's position on the disciplinary actions taken by Verizon following the strike after the old contracts expired. This message does not give an accurate picture of what happened or of the legal proceedings that are now going on as a result of unfair labor practice charges filed against the company by CWA. CWA wants to set the record straight.

The National Labor Relations Board issued a complaint against Verizon on January 31, 2012 involving the suspension and termination of 13 IBEW-represented employees in New Jersey for actions that took place during the strike. The NLRB's complaint states that Verizon's actions were intended to "discourage employees from engaging in [protected] activities" in violation of the law. The NLRB is actively investigating Verizon's suspension and discharge of other individuals in Districts 1 and 2-13 and in New England and we believe that the NLRB will soon be issuing more complaints against Verizon in these cases as well.

The issuance of a complaint means that the NLRB has cause to believe that an employer has violated the National Labor Relations Act. This is far more than simply a routine decision to hold an "administrative hearing" as Verizon's General Counsel well knows – this means that the federal agency charged with upholding the law that governs your workplace has concluded that it is more likely than not that what Verizon did in these cases was unlawful.

Verizon's disciplinary process here was profoundly unfair. First, it made decisions to discipline employees before interviewing them or getting the full facts about what actually happened. Second, the discipline imposed was very different and far more severe than in past contract disputes and earlier strikes. The NLRB is taking these charges very seriously because it has concluded that Verizon's actions were intended to discourage employees from engaging in conduct that is protected by law. We will keep you posted about future developments as these proceedings go forward.


Mary K. O'Melveny, CWA General Counsel