



The following letter was submitted to the Local 4250 "News & Views" Section by Sean Linehan, President CWA 2252.

August 10, 2009

President Cohen,

My worst fears have been realized, and my predictions have come true. Before the start of at&t bargaining, I voiced my concerns, at every available opportunity, about divided bargaining. I was assured each and every time, that we would be bargaining "in unity." I brought up what happened in Verizon bargaining a few years ago, when District 1 settled 3 days before District 2, and the debacle of the picket line in NY set up by District 2 members, that were crossed by District 1 members. Once again, I was assured, this would never happen again, and all the District VP's would be talking and we would be in this together. I voiced concerns about, at least having a National table, to discuss things that would impact all members, such as health care, a national transfer plan, and benefit packages. I was told this was not necessary, because we were all in this together, and no one district would go out on their own. Obviously all my concerns, are valid, and did in fact come true.

I realize every one has their own style. I know people do things in their own fashion, but I have to take exception with the fact that you allowed this to happen. You are the President of CWA, arguably what was once, the best Trade Union in the USA. I know you have to keep everyone happy, but that cannot be done. You are the President, not an administrator! The Vice-Presidents should have been told that there is going to be a national table for national issues, and they would have to deal with it. Leading by committee does not work in CWA. There are far too many, that put ego ahead of the membership. That is what happened in this round of so called "unity bargaining."

At&t is not suffering from economic hardship. They are profiting 13 billion dollars a year, a billion dollars a month, 33.4 million a day. To say that it is ok for retiree's to pay health care in this "tough economic time" is an insult to every at&t member that works to make this company profitable. It is an insult to all those that walked picket lines in years past, to get us our current benefits. It took 40 years to first get national bargaining at at&t, and CWA VP's couldn't put their egos aside in order to reclaim it.

Communications Workers of America Local 4250  
3055 Glenwood-Dyer Road, Lynwood, Illinois 60411  
Steve G. Tisza, President (708) 757-4065(Office)  
[stevetisza@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stevetisza@sbcglobal.net) (E-Mail)  
<http://www.cwalocal4250.org> (Website)

I have been a CWA member for all of my 29 years. I have been a Local President for over 10 years. Strike votes are overwhelming, ratification votes are not. For Seth Rosen to be allowed to put out a press release saying that the tentative agreement was "overwhelmingly ratified" while the rest of us are still in bargaining, is unconscionable. No ratification vote should ever be "overwhelmingly ratified" in a press release from any Union, much less from one that still has the majority of its members still in bargaining! To say nothing of the fact, that if the numbers I am hearing are accurate, it was not overwhelmingly ratified. In fact I would have to say it was barely ratified, and the lowest margin of ratification I have ever witnessed.

CWA used to be known as the Union that stood up for its members. Not just the future potential members, but its current dues paying members. I fear that is no longer the case. I have to think, that the reason no strike was called, was that then some money would have been paid out of the member relief fund. If that happened, then money would have been diverted from the SIF fund, and then you wouldn't have been able to use that money for organizing. Predominantly Telco members built that fund, and now when we needed it, it was not used. Not to mention, we never used SIF money to attack at&t! At&t mobility bargaining should have been dragged out and bargained with the rest of us. CWA should have called on the AFL-CIO to threaten to pull wireless service from at&t in all Unions. None of this happened. We never took the gloves off, we never took at&t on, and consequently my members, and all CWA members that work at at&t, now have to suffer the consequences.

I realize it is now too late. I am a member of the C&T group. As such, my negotiations are still going on, but I know I will be stuck with what D4 was allowed to bargain. My members, and more importantly my retirees, are now literally going to have to make a choice between health care and eating, health care and keeping their house. To force people on a fixed income to make those choices could have been avoided. Vice Presidents should have been told to sit down, shut up, and think of your members, instead of your ego. It didn't happen and the repercussions will be felt for years to come.

In true Unity,

Sean Linehan  
President CWA Local 2252