

SIGNAL & NOISE

Verizon Business Techs Speak Out

March 30, 2008 – Please post and share

VZB TECHS UNITED

Welcome to our second edition of SIGNAL & NOISE! This is news by VzB techs for VzB techs. This is our voice for our union. If you would like to contribute to the conversation, even anonymously, please email TechsSpeakOut@gmail.com

FREEZE!



Two Acton police officers shook their heads in disgust when they heard why they were dispatched outside of Terry Skiest's workplace during a flag rally. Terry's flag was displayed in the same place for the past 2 ½ years until management suddenly ripped it down declaring that, "it could be considered propoganda and may be offensive to some people."

Manager Rob Pumphret, who caught wind of the rally, drove into Acton on his vacation during a winter snowstorm to spy on Terry and his coworkers until quitting time. Pumphret notified Jones Lang LaSalle, the building management firm, that "trouble" was about to take place and the police were called. When the officers arrived to discover a peaceful group of veterans waving our country's flag, they shook their heads in disgust at Verizon for initiating a false report. Verizon will be charged for a detail.

VzB TECH TESTIFIES ON UNION-BUSTING BEFORE NYC COUNCIL

Hello. My name is Virginia Arce. I have worked as an outside field technician for Verizon Business for over nine years. I have 2 kids and live in northern Manhattan.

About one year ago, an overwhelming majority of techs from NYC to Maine signed up to join the union. Senator John Kerry from Massachusetts, Congressman Jerry Nadler and Anthony Weiner from NY, and Comptroller Bill Thompson counted the cards and verified that a majority of techs wanted to join the union.



But instead of taking the high road of accepting our decision to form a union, Verizon has decided to take the low road. Verizon has spent untold thousands trying to bust our union. Verizon has made threats to union supporters, taken down pro-union literature, held dozens of mandatory meetings, and lied about the cost of union dues. Even though the Labor Board has issued several complaints against Verizon, they have not stopped their vicious anti-union behavior. We still get emails from the company that attacks our union.

Despite the threats and intimidation, we want a union to bring fairness to our jobs. We want to join together so we can receive what our unionized brothers and sisters in Verizon get: job security, a living wage, affordable health insurance, safety on the job, a decent pension.

We have discovered that the labor law in this country no longer protects people like me. And Verizon knows this. Verizon knows that the current Labor Board is wired against workers. Verizon has a long record of delaying elections for years with legal tricks and delays. They can make threats with no consequences. Verizon makes it impossible for workers to talk about the union at work. Many of my fellow techs had to sneak into the bathroom and speak about the union in hushed tones because of fear of management. Imagine doing this here in America! I had more freedom to talk about unions in Mexico than at Verizon.

Under current law, the union has no access to a list of employees until just ten days before an election. Where is the democracy in this system? Where is the fairness in this? Can you imagine if these rules applied to any of your elections? What if one political party could talk to voters, and the other could not? What if one political party had access to a list of voters and the other side didn't? How about if one party could threaten voters and lie to them? And can you imagine if the actual election took place in party headquarters? Would anyone claim that these conditions were democratic? But that is exactly what we have now.

To strengthen the middle class, we must allow workers to join unions. But first we must fix our broken labor laws. We must pass the Employee Free Choice Act which allows workers to form unions with a simple majority sign-up system. This new law would bring fairness once again to our system. It would decrease employer threats against union supporters by establishing real penalties for breaking the law. It would allow workers like me to decide for ourselves whether or not to form a union without intimidation by management. On behalf of my co-workers at Verizon Business, and my family that I struggle to support, I ask the City Council to support the Employee Free Choice Act.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"It is our sincere hope that you will work with your valued employees, and respect their decision to unionize..."
– Hillary Clinton to Verizon CEO Ivan Seidenberg

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NOTEWORTHY NEWS

Pay For Performance?

Most of us earn many thousands below our unionized counterparts, with no pensions and higher health care costs. We recently received a measly 2-3% pay increase, which fails to even keep pace with inflation. However, our illustrious CEO, Ivan Seidenberg managed to give himself a 25% raise to bring his 2007 salary up to \$26.55 million. Additionally, he pocketed another \$471,467 for moonlighting on two other corporate boards.

Verizon Core Techs Stand With Us

"As shop stewards and elected local union leaders representing Verizon technicians from coast to coast, we strongly support our fellow workers who are now organizing at Verizon Business. We do the same work you do and we believe that all former MCI technicians should receive the same, pay, benefits, job security, and seniority protection that we have under our negotiated contracts with Verizon."
– IBEW and CWA Stewards & Officers at Verizon

AFL-CIO Fights With Us

"The IBEW, CWA, and the AFL-CIO will continue to support your effort and that of your fellow workers at Verizon Business to exercise their freedom to form a union. Your commitment to this campaign is not only essential to workers at Verizon Business, but it provides hope and encouragement to non-union workers across the country to show that workers have the ability to organize and form a union to bargain for a better life. Thank you for all your hard work." – John J. Sweeney, AFL-CIO President

Upcoming Arbitration

"The CWA and the IBEW have filed a grievance protesting Verizon's decision to set up a separate business unit where employees are not covered by the current collective bargaining agreement. The grievance has been submitted to an arbitrator and a hearing date has been set for May 19."
– AFL-CIO

JWJ Fights With Us

"Massachusetts Jobs with Justice would like to thank Verizon Business workers for their struggle in demanding a voice at work." – Jobs With Justice

TECHS SPEAK OUT!

MASS EXODUS FROM CHARLTON

Two more Charlton techs with over 14 years of cumulative experience and well regarded by most of their peers, have accepted positions elsewhere. That's in addition to the departure of Pete Norum (now with AT&T) and Marc Krill (now with Light Tower), and the sudden firing of Bryan Williams.

"I'm leaving because of low pay, lack of appreciation and respect, atmosphere, favoritism, nepotism, unprofessional management and unfairness in promotions. I'm leaving for a substantial salary increase. I'm amazed that the "good ol' boy" situation is alive and well in Charlton. Good luck with the fight," said Doug Pulsifer, former OSC Install Tech II.

"I was holding out for the union but I couldn't make it. I've been here 8 years with one promotion. I've been lied to. I've been mistreated, I've been degraded," said Joe Pollinger, former OSC Install Tech II.

"I hope I'm next. All I know is I have to get out of here. The stress is taking years off my life span," said an anonymous Charlton tech actively seeking another job. Another said, "I'm outta here [as soon as possible]. I'm not going to do 80% of the work."

VZB TECH ANTHONY RANDO SPEAKS OUT

I have been with the company for about nine and half years. I'm struggling to get ahead emotionally, physically, mentally and financially. I have tried so hard to maintain a positive atmosphere in the work place but it is hard. Last promotion I received was in 2001 and since then I have been trying to push ahead in the company. I finished a four year bachelor degree last year and this year I'm working on a master's degree. I can't believe I can't get promoted or pushed ahead in the company with so much effort I have put into the company.

VZB TECH MARK KLINE SPEAKS OUT

Like previous techs remarks, I work everything from DS0 to OC192 issues, as a maintenance tech. I was hired to work switch DS0, frac, T1 and T1's in the legacy MCI network. We then were told we would work DS3 circuits to 'free up' higher level, higher pay techs to work other issues. We then were told we would work across internal networks, legacy MCI, legacy MFS and legacy WCOM. We were also tasked to shore up legacy WCOM install. We are now being told we WILL be Sonet techs, at the same job title and pay scale. Training has been non-existent in both our transition to DS3 network techs, as well as our newest incarnation as Sonet Youth. This has been patently unfair to us, and would not happen in a union shop. But to be fair, this year I did get a merit pay increase of \$31 a week, before taxes. As someone of German decent, I do not hold my 1st line manager responsible, but good 'ol American Corporate GREED.

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit <http://www.freechoiceatverizon.com>

GOT SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE? Email TechsSpeakOut@gmail.com