

NEWS RELEASE

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers® AFL-CIO-CLC

1125 Fifteenth St. N.W.
Washington DC 20005



www.ibew.org

Edwin D. Hill, International President

Jeremiah J. O'Connor, International Secretary-Treasurer

For Immediate Release

March 5, 2004

Contact: **Jim Spellane**

(202) 728-6014

CWA and IBEW Will Have AFL-CIO's Backing In Strategic Campaigns at Comcast and Verizon Wireless

The AFL-CIO has agreed to mount long-term strategic campaigns in support of joint organizing drives by the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) at Comcast Cable and Verizon Wireless.

Both unions have helped workers unionize at the two companies for several years, but have encountered systematic employer campaigns to intimidate workers, avoid negotiating contracts, and – in the case of some Comcast units – oust the unions entirely through decertification drives.

The AFL-CIO will help develop and coordinate a comprehensive corporate campaign strategy with the two unions, including political, regulatory, legal, public relations and shareholder activities, to compel the companies to respect workers' organizing and collective bargaining rights.

"It's tragic that Verizon, where we have represented workers for more than 50 years, has sunk to the Wal-Mart level of worker abuse and aggressive anti-union behavior at its Wireless business," said CWA President Morton Bahr.

"As for Comcast," he said, "this is a company that has no respect for shareholder democracy and even less respect for workers rights." He noted that CEO Brian Roberts retains one-third voting control over the company even though he owns less than a one-percent stake in the company.

IBEW President Edwin D. Hill asserted that the issue of organizing rights at Verizon Wireless was supposed to be settled following the negotiation of the collective bargaining agreement with the parent company in 2000. "Four years and another contract later," Hill said, "Verizon Wireless continues to throw every conceivable obstacle in our way and deny their workers a voice on the job."

Hill also noted that Comcast has treated its workers fairly at some of its original units, but that the media conglomerate has absorbed the anti-union culture of many of the cable companies it has bought. "We had hoped that better instincts would prevail," Hill said, "but we are prepared to meet them on their own terms."

###