

June 13, 2023

Dear CWA Family,

We, the undersigned CWA Local Officers, are writing to our Union family to provide critical information about the upcoming election for CWA President. Based on alarming information that has come to our attention about the abusive conduct of District 2-13 VP Ed Mooney toward members and staff of our Union, it is our opinion that he is not fit to be our International President.

We reach this conclusion after reviewing written statements and listening directly to people in our Union who were treated disrespectfully, bullied and discriminated against by VP Mooney. The reports of disturbing behavior that we have read and heard do not show only a few isolated incidents; they reveal a pattern of unacceptable conduct. This information shook us and we feel compelled to bring this information forward. You can see a summary of some of the evidence we reviewed below.

We want to be clear. We are not saying our leaders need to be perfect. None of us are perfect. We are not against cussing. We are not demanding perfection. We are, however, demanding respect. While VP Mooney may have other attributes, we believe he is not fit to be the President of our Union. His reported behavior violates our CWA Mutual Respect Policy and cannot be swept under the rug.

We know people will have legitimate questions about our conclusions and our intentions. We would if we were you. Attached to this letter are the details of what was reported to us and some arguments and questions we considered, along with the [CWA Mutual Respect policy](#). We ask that you read the report carefully and respect that we have put a lot of thought into what we are sharing.

As we reviewed the experiences people shared with us and the written complaints submitted to CWA HQ, the members of our committee wondered how this behavior could have been allowed to happen repeatedly and to be normalized. Along with seeking to deny support for a candidate who has engaged in this reported behavior, we are asking you to pledge support for a resolution to strengthen the transparency, enforcement and accountability of our CWA Mutual Respect policy. We ask you to pledge to [publicly support a Mutual Respect resolution](#) at Convention.

Finally, we remind everyone that it is a violation of our CWA Mutual Respect policy to retaliate against people for raising mutual respect and harassment concerns in good faith. Some of the witnesses we heard from are willing to be publicly identified and others are not. We ask that you treat them – and everyone – respectfully. If you or others you know have experienced disrespectful, discriminatory, or abusive conduct from VP Mooney or any other leader in CWA, feel free to reach out to a member of our committee and/ or consider filing a Mutual Respect complaint.

We conclude this letter the way we opened it. We believe that no one with a longstanding reported pattern of bullying, bigotry, abuse, discrimination, threats of violence and harassment should be our CWA President. We do not expect perfection from our leaders, but we do demand mutual respect. We strongly call on your locals and your convention delegates to oppose VP Mooney for CWA President.

In Unity,

Members of the Emergency Mutual Respect Committee

**Belinda Aguilar**, Vice President, CWA 6222\*, member since 2014

**Alex Brown**, Retired President, IUE-CWA 81201\*, member since 1978

**Gwen Ivey**, Retired President, CWA 13301\*, member since 2012 (APWU since 1986)

**Kieran Knutson**, President, CWA 7250\*, member since 2004

**Ken McNamara**, President, CWA 1037\*, member since 1993

**Delores Phillips**, President, CWA 1089\*, member since 1999

**LaNell Piercy**, President, CWA 4252\*, member since 1975

**Dan Russell**, President, UPTC/CWA 9119\*, member since 2013

**Pam Wynn**, Retired President, CWA 4309\*, member since 1977

\* Signed as individuals. Office and locals listed for identification purposes only.

## **Questions and arguments we considered before releasing this report:**

**Isn't the way VP Mooney talks just colorful language?** A lot of us use colorful language. Some of us swear regularly. We aren't mad about profanity or even getting angry. But when witnesses told us their experiences with VP Mooney, they described slurs, screaming, and the use of words seemingly to humiliate and intimidate. The conduct we heard about was not merely colorful language but was verbal abuse, deep disrespect and even cruelty – from a person in a position of power and trust in our Union. We would never accept this treatment of our union members from an employer.

**Isn't this just hearsay / a witch hunt / one-sided?** We learned from people first-hand about their own personal experiences. Some of us didn't know anything about VP Mooney before we were on this committee and didn't have an opinion about him one way or the other. Some of us were considering supporting his bid to become CWA President.

We have reviewed statements from people who have experienced mistreatment from VP Mooney. This is not a court of law or an arbitration hearing that requires a certain standard of evidence but rather an effort in good faith to bring forward what we were told (We did not talk to VP Mooney, but we would welcome a response and accountability.). Although a formal charge for violating the CWA Mutual Respect Policy can be brought under our Constitution, that is not what we are doing here. We are local leaders who, based on what we learned and in our own judgment, do not think VP Mooney should become CWA President.

**Is this just one or two bitter people with an ax to grind?** No. We heard directly from seven (7) people who were CWA members, CWA local leaders, retired local leaders, District 2-13 staff and national CWA staff. We know there are other people with stories who did not feel safe to come forward. In our opinion, the witnesses we heard from were highly credible. Their reported negative experiences with VP Mooney spanned more than a decade, with incidents as recent as within the last few months. We reviewed documents from the NLRB from more than ten years ago and two written complaints submitted to CWA HQ in 2020 and 2021. We believe all this evidence shows a pattern of abusive and unacceptable behavior over a period of years.

**Isn't this just a politically motivated hit job?** No. A hit job is an unfair attack. In our opinion, this is not an unfair attack because it's based on credible first-hand information. Some members of our committee considered VP Mooney a qualified candidate they might support prior to hearing the witnesses' statements.

**VP Mooney has always been so nice to me, why should I believe you?** If he has never yelled or cussed at you in anger or used a slur or insult against you or around you, we are glad to hear it. We are not saying that your genuinely positive experiences with VP Mooney are not real. We are not saying he has never made positive contributions to the Union or the community. We *are* saying that we found the people who talked to us about their very negative experiences with VP Mooney were credible. We believe them. And we are saying that someone who has a

reported pattern of bullying, threats of violence, verbal abuse, and bigotry over many years should not be our CWA President.

**Isn't everyone an a\*\*hole once in a while?** Sure, and again we are not demanding perfection but VP Mooney took a\*\*hole to a whole other level in some of these reported incidents. Speaking for ourselves as a group of local leaders, we do not treat people this way. It's unacceptable, especially for our CWA President. We can sharply, passionately disagree with our union family members without being abusive. If a manager did any of these reported incidents, we would consider them an abusive boss and take action against them.

**Aren't you all just supporters of one of the other candidates?** We are asking you not to vote for VP Mooney but we are *not* making a positive endorsement of any other specific candidate. Some of us support D6 VP Claude Cummings; some of us support Secretary-Treasurer Sara Steffens. Some of us don't know how we will vote at Convention.

**You didn't use names, so how can we know you're not making this up?** Some of the witnesses are public about their experiences and others are not, but we found them all to be very credible. Some of them are taking significant risks by sharing their experiences and we want to protect them. We also want to protect the other people who were party to these incidents. Anonymizing the reports allows the witnesses to make their own decisions about who to trust with their own stories and when or if to speak publicly. They trusted us and we made a commitment to bring their experiences forward while protecting their privacy.

# Report of the Emergency Mutual Respect Committee

Emergency Mutual Respect Committee (EMRC) members heard from **seven (7) witnesses** who directly shared their personal experiences with us over Zoom. Total testimony was approximately 100 minutes. We also reviewed a number of documents, some of which we are able to share. Those documents are attached at the bottom of this report.

## Reported violations of the CWA Mutual Respect policy by VP Mooney:

The experiences people reported took place over more than a decade, from 2010 to 2023. Here are some of the specific incidents people cited, in no special order.

- An openly gay witness reported that VP Mooney yelled at him and called him a “c\*\*ksucking f\*\*\*\*t”. VP Mooney never apologized for the incident. The witness reported that VP Mooney continues to regularly use “c\*\*ksucker” as an insult in reference to other people.
- It was reported by multiple witnesses that VP Mooney regularly used the term “c\*nt” to refer to women in the Union and beyond, including women on the Executive Board, local elected officers, and publicly elected officials.
- Witnesses used the following terms to describe the tone VP Mooney repeatedly used with them: abusive, belittling, abrupt, sarcastic, insulting, hyper-aggressive, humiliating, unpredictable, contemptuous, hostile, demeaning, condescending, toxic, and disparaging.
- It was reported that VP Mooney put a local into receivership in 2022 after the local president filed a formal Mutual Respect complaint with President Shelton in 2020. The witness reported that he threatened the local president to accept the receivership, saying “we can do this the hard way or we can do this the easy way.” The local president reported that VP Mooney did not have adequate factual grounds for the receivership.
- It was reported by multiple local officers in multiple conversations that VP Mooney repeatedly suggested they punch their Union members in the face to resolve conflicts.
- Two former staff members who worked under VP Mooney said he made disparaging or racist comments about their appearance.
- A former employee stated that VP Mooney made fun of her physical disability in front of other people multiple times by making an exaggerated limp.

- A witness reported that a Korean-American local elected official told them that when they first met VP Mooney he said "Well of course you are a crazy progressive. Aren't all your people communists?"
- A witness reported being part of an acrimonious group conversation in July 2021, in which VP Mooney was hostile, shouting, and made frequent interruptions. He aggressively questioned why our Union would be organizing non-telecom workers like public higher education workers and "janitors in the south." A separate witness reported that he had heard VP Mooney say he "didn't know why we were organizing lunch ladies."
- Multiple witnesses reported that VP Mooney repeatedly disparaged passenger service agent members. One witness reported he said that passenger service agents were "retarded and so I gave them the retarded staff rep." It was reported by another witness that VP Mooney stated in a different meeting that passenger service agents were "the worst and so I gave them the worst staff rep." A former local officer stated that VP Mooney called the passenger service agents members in her local "horrible," "crooks and thieves," "whack jobs," and "lazy and worthless". It is important to note that the majority of the passenger service members referred to in this way by VP Mooney are people of color.
- A witness reported fielding a complaint from a Pennsylvania Member of Congress. Reportedly VP Mooney called the MOC's office and demanded that the intern receptionist get the MOC on the phone immediately. When the staffer explained that was not possible, VP Mooney berated the receptionist as an "idiot", a "c\*cksucker", "a piece of sh\*t whose parents should be ashamed of him", along with other abusive obscenities, and threatened physical violence . Reportedly, the receptionist – who had been trained to handle abusive callers – broke down crying. The MOC said VP Mooney should never under any circumstances speak that way again to his staff.
- A former staff member gave us a copy of her written complaint of abusive treatment by VP Mooney. She submitted this written statement in 2021 to CWA Human Resources. It included a list of more than 20 separate incidents of racist stereotypes, threats of violence and abusive language.
- A partial list of examples under the category of abusive language reported by the former employee of VP Mooney:
  - "Shut the f\*\*\* up and listen to what I am telling you."
  - "Stop getting all these useless ideas in your head and do exactly what I am f\*\*\*ing telling you to do."
  - "I don't want to hear another f\*\*\*ing word from you. Stop talking. Just stop talking."
  - "Do you have a wish to be unemployed? Go jump up and down in your red shirts and do not f\*\*\*ing ask me about this."

- “I swear to God - if you ask me about this one more f\*\*\*ing time you will be unemployed.”
  - “I swear if you can do one f\*\*\*ing thing right I will be shocked right now”
  - “Why the f\*\*\* do you think I have nothing better to do than read these useless emails you send. Believe it or not I have a job to do so stop f\*\*\*ing sending me these. Do not email me again.”
- A former employee reported VP Mooney making reference to his gun and warning her to be careful.
  - A former employee reported that VP Mooney told a local officer in a serious tone to “take her (the employee) out back and shoot her in the head.”
  - A witness reported that VP Mooney threatened to punch a member of his staff in the face if she used a space heater again in the office
  - It was reported that VP Mooney told a staff member he wanted to execute her and, in a separate incident, that she would be lucky if he put one flower on her grave if she died.
  - A former employee reported that she brought a ULP charge against VP Mooney for threatening reprisals, making implied threats, accusing her of disloyalty and dishonesty, and interrogating her and others on union activity. VP Mooney agreed to and signed an NLRB settlement that required a posting for his staff regarding their union rights.
  - A former employee reported that VP Mooney hung up on her and then called her back later in the afternoon to apologize and said “sorry I got angry,” and then lost his temper again and proceeded to shout at her again and hung up on her a second time. She reported that the next time she saw VP Mooney in the office he said sorry and opened his arms up for a hug and said “come here.” The witness felt obligated to hug him so she did.
  - Multiple witnesses reported an incident in which VP Mooney said, “I’ve never hit a woman BEFORE”, emphasis on “before”. The witnesses reported perceiving that this could and may possibly happen.
  - Local leaders reported hearing VP Mooney directly call one of his employees “stupid” and “incompetent” to the employee’s face.
  - It was reported that it is widely known that VP Mooney threw a phone in anger at a secretary in the D2-13 office. *[Note: This was the only hearsay we are including in this report. We include it because of the assertion that it was widely known.]*
  - Multiple witnesses reported experiencing stress, anxiety and long-lasting mental health impacts as a result of VP Mooney’s treatment of them.

The members of the Emergency Mutual Respect Committee attest that these are the details that were reported to us in direct testimony and written statements from impacted CWA members, local leaders, and current and former CWA staff. All the reported incidents occurred after the 2002 passage of the CWA Policy on Mutual Respect and the 2009 revision of that policy.

**Excerpts of CWA POLICY ON MUTUAL RESPECT ([entire policy available here](#)):**

1. The Communications Workers of America reaffirms its commitment as a matter of principle and policy that all forms of discrimination, for whatever reason, be vigorously opposed until all vestiges of discrimination are eliminated from society.
2. Freedom from discrimination within our Union is a right and privilege of all CWA members. Any abridgement of this right and privilege shall be subject to a complaint under the CWA Internal Appeals Procedures and should be investigated immediately without fear of reprisal and retaliation.
3. In restating our policy for conduct within our Union, it is equally important that our employers reflect this policy so that neither the Company nor the Union shall unlawfully discriminate against a person on account of race, color, gender, religion, age, marital/parental status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, or because a person is handicapped, a disabled veteran, or a veteran of the military service. **This means what it says: "No form of Discrimination will be tolerated at any level of CWA." (emphasis added)**
4. Any matter which relates to the field of discrimination should be immediately and appropriately handled by the appropriate level of the Union that comes across the allegation of discrimination. It should be handled thoroughly in an honest and positive manner.
5. It is a matter of principle that no one member is more equal than another. The handling of the representation of our members at all levels of CWA should be done in an evenhanded way with no fear; no preference; no favorites.

**Mutual Respect in the CWA Constitution:**

The principle of Mutual Respect – freedom from harassment and discrimination – is written into the CWA Constitution. It first appears as one of the six explicitly listed objects of CWA (relevant language only; see the [whole CWA Constitution here](#)) :

*“Article III—Objects.* The objects of the Union shall be:

(f) To fight discrimination and harassment in all its forms, through the incorporation of the **CWA Policy on Mutual Respect** into this Constitution.” (*emphasis added*)

Later, violations of the Mutual Respect policy are listed as grounds for removal of union membership:

*“Article XIX—Charges Against Members*

*Section 1—Specifications of Offenses—Locals*

Members may be fined, suspended and/or expelled by Locals in the manner provided in the Constitution for any of the following acts:

(i) Violating the **CWA Policy on Mutual Respect** by acting in a discriminatory or harassing way;” (*emphasis added*)

### **Evidence of Violations of Mutual Respect, Failure to Abide by CWA Constitution:**

Based on the many incidents reported to us directly and the language in the CWA Policy on Mutual Respect and the CWA Constitution, we believe there is overwhelming evidence that VP Mooney has a long-standing pattern of violations of Mutual Respect and a failure to abide by the CWA Constitution.

As current and former Local Officers, we have all taken the oath of office in CWA. We attempt to abide by the oath we took which includes the following line: “I promise to faithfully discharge my duties according to the bylaws and rules of the Local and the **Constitution and policies of the Union.**” (*emphasis added*). Based on our own understanding of the role and responsibility of elected union leaders, it is our opinion that VP Mooney has violated the oath of office.

The members of the EMRC voted unanimously to finalize this report on June 8, 2023. The EMRC is comprised of the following current and retired CWA Local Officers::

**Belinda Aguilar**, Vice President, CWA 6222\*, member since 2014

**Alex Brown**, Retired President, IUE/ CWA 81201\*, member since 1978

**Gwen Ivey**, Retired President, CWA 13301\*, member since 2012 (APWU since 1986)

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**Documents:** D2-13 Local officer’s [Mutual Respect Complaint 2020](#); D2-13 Staff’s NLRB [ULP Settlement](#) and associated [Notice to Employees](#)