

**We need the**

**Employee  
FREE  
CHOICE ACT  
NOW!**

## ‘I Wish All Workers Who Want to Join a Union Had the Chance I Had’

**M**y name is George West and today I have a good job backed by a good union contract. But it wasn't always this way.

From November 1991 to August 1996, I was employed by Arkansas Sound Corporation. Arkansas Sound was a contractor for low-voltage communications systems, i.e. nurse call systems, audio systems, fire alarm systems, etc. Prior to my employment, the company had a union. The owner at the time wanted to be a unionized company for one purpose only: landing several contracts for the John L. McClellan V.A. Hospital in Little Rock. When the contracts were up, so was the company's need for a union.

After the owner managed to get rid of the union, some employees were forced out or left on their own because they didn't like how things had changed without union representation. Some of the workers who stayed would talk from

time to time about having a union, and how things had been better for employees then. At one point, I learned that a project I was assigned was a “wage scale” project. At the time we were not being paid according to the prevailing scale or compensated as required for travel expenses.

When I brought this to owner's attention, he was angry at me for bringing it up. He hinted that we needed to keep this quiet and that he could not afford the hourly rates and the per diems. My helper and I decided to begin looking for employment elsewhere.

Today I work for AT&T and I am backed up by a contract negotiated by the Communications Workers of America. It's helped me earn fair wages and



*George West*

benefits and protects my rights at work, but that's only part of it. Without CWA, I wouldn't have the training the union has negotiated for us. My coworkers and I wouldn't have the educational opportunities that CWA has bargained to help us achieve personal goals.

Being a part of CWA is one of the highlights of my life and the lives of my

family members, and I am proud today to be president of my local. I wish all workers who want to join a union had the chance I had. But unless the Employee Free Choice Act becomes law, most workers will never have the opportunity — not without daily harassment and threats from their bosses, and even the risk of being fired for standing up for their rights. That is not just unfair, it's un-American.