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## ‘Once the Company Finds Out You Want A Union, It Takes a Real Interest in You’



*Technician John Pezzana and his co-workers at Comcast endured a long hard fight but finally won their union and contract.*

**W**hen it comes to union-busting, few people have more on-the-job experience than Comcast workers in Pittsburgh.

Technician John Pezzana helped organize co-workers at his Pittsburgh workplace beginning in 2000. He and his co-workers were forced to go through four union elections in five years — three of them decertification attempts orchestrated by the company — before they finally won their union voice.

Getting a contract, which workers finally won in 2006, took more solidarity, persistence and community support. There were seven different company attorneys involved along the way, in addition to the four elections, layoffs and numerous unfair labor practice charges.

The members of CWA Local 13000 prevailed. But along the bumpy path to victory, Pezzana says he became a “poster boy” for why the Employee Free Choice Act is so important.

“Once the company finds out you want a union, it takes a real interest in you,” he says. “They increase their Human Resources department by 200 percent, they hold one-on-one meetings and small and large group meetings. And then they use what I call psych-op tactics.”

That’s when managers identify and target who’s for the union and who’s against, and create group meetings in which a pro-union worker is “made to feel out of place,” says Pezzana, now a

Local 13000 steward and a former vice president.

At Comcast, managers also warned workers about layoffs. While the company was careful not to come right and say that’s what would happen if the union won, the message was clear. “We’d never heard anything about layoffs until we started organizing,” Pezzana said.

When Pezzana explains the Employee Free Choice Act to people, especially younger people, he tells them that America passed strong organizing and bargaining laws in the 1930s that helped the country bounce back from the Great Depression and build a middle class that became the envy of the world. But for the last 30 years, in court cases and legislation, corporate greed has trumped workers’ rights — and now America is as close as it’s ever come since the 1930s to another depression.

“It’s come full circle,” Pezzana says. “Just like the industrialists took advantage of workers before labor laws were passed, today we see huge corporations running away with all the money. Now some of them are getting billions of dollars from taxpayers. All we’re asking for now is a simple bill that restores our rights as workers to organize a union and bargain collectively. You can bet that every last one of those CEOs getting a bailout has a contract — so why do they fight so hard to keep workers from having one, too?”