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Barry Allen
file

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Mr. Notebaert,

I want to express my disappointment with what I have perceived as a deliberate strategy by Qwest to communicate selectively with myself and the association's board. When I first met with you and Barry Allen I was optimistic about our future, based upon openness and mutual respect. I have, until two weeks ago, held up my end of our agreement. At that time in a meeting with Allen and his staff, we were blind sided. I thought we had agreed to full and open communications and yet I have learned the hard way that Mr. Allen is going to "play" by his own rules. To give you some background, I called Mr. Allen several months ago to ask him what impact the labor contract would have on retirees. He responded that post 90 retirees would be impacted per the contract, never mentioning Qwest's intent to have post 90 management retirees pay a portion of their health care premium. I learned of this decision in a luncheon meeting with Ms. Sanford over a month latter. When I confronted Mr. Allen he responded that he knew that I would be having lunch with Ms. Sanford and he assumed she would tell me. I've gone back and checked my calendar, I didn't make the luncheon engagement until two weeks after Allen and I spoke.

In January of last year, Mr. Allen and Pat Quinn attended a portion of our AUSWR board meeting in Arizona. During that meeting Allen made the following statement, which I have taken word for word from the minutes of that meeting: "Recently, Lucent took away the death benefit from its retirees. Will Qwest do the same?" Mr. Allen said that he, (management) is not looking at taking away any benefits from retirees. Mr. Allen also said that he did not know what Lucent was thinking of when they removed this benefit. When I pointed this out to Allen after he announced the pension death benefit take away, his response to us was, "I don't recollect that discussion."

Earlier this year you called me and asked me to work with you on the proxies. I worked hard with your legal staff to make that happen. It seems to me we could have approached the benefit issue in much the same way; however the way in which this has been handled is all to reminiscent of what we have been through before.

In the next few weeks I will be visiting retirees from across our fourteen states. Those meetings will not be pleasant, if the phone calls, e-mails and letters from our members are any indication. Retirees will want a definitive response from me and our leadership. I guess Mr. Allen's comment to me, "You do what you gotta do" is the direction I will have to take..

Nelson L Phelps