

AT&T LAYOFFS PROTESTED BY OCCUPY ATLANTA



It looks like the protestors of Occupy Atlanta have found a new injustice to fight. The protestors are currently camped outside of a local AT&T office that is getting ready to layoff workers under some very unusual terms. The protestors, who number about 30 currently are protesting for the workers. The workers are protesting the layoffs of more than 700 workers. Right now, you are probably wondering why they chose to protest these layoffs. After all, in the current economy people are literally getting laid off every day. What makes these layoffs so special? The fact that AT&T is not actually cutting back on the jobs. After the workers are let go the jobs will be reoffered to the market. The company is looking to replace a significant number of workers on their payroll with non-union counterparts. The protestors say that these jobs will pay less than the previous ones have no benefits. One protestor, Matt Magnuson, told a local [reporter for WSBTV](#) the following about the layoffs, "To tell these 740 workers that we're going to fire you, but we'll hire you at half the pay with no benefits, those are your options, you can either have no job or you can have a job at half the pay with no benefits in this current situation, and no one's there to tell the corporations that that's not OK." Interestingly enough the company refuted the claim, partially. A spokes person for the company said the following about the layoffs to the same reporter, "It's just not accurate. They are indeed union jobs. They're advertised as such on our website. Anyone's free to go look at them, apply for them if they want." The company did not refute claims that the jobs would be at a lower rate of pay, or that the jobs would have any benefits attached to them. Those kind of cuts would, even if the positions remained within the bounds of a union, deal a significant blow to their workers. 12 of the protestors were arrested on the first days of the campaign because they would not leave the company lobby. This is not the first time that AT&T has laid off workers in the last couple of years. Some of you may recall our [earlier coverage](#) of a 5,900-person staff reduction the company made. For those of you who missed it here is an excerpt: "AT&T announced on April 20 that it reduced its workforce by 5,900 in the first quarter of 2011. The layoffs came in part because of a 3.2% drop in the company's landline business. According to company spokesman, Marty Richter, "Reduction in headcount was due to a number of factors including normal attrition and surpluses in our shrinking wireline business." Richter also said that the company is adding jobs and growing in other places, including U-verse installation and in retail stores. According to Joe Bonner, who is a telecom securities analyst at Argus Research Company, AT&T loses around 12% of its landline income each year, so these recent job cuts are nothing new for the company."

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