



Federation of Social Workers IUE~CWA 81381

THE UNION REVIEW

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Sisters and Brothers,

Soon we will face a challenge like no other. Any day, the US Supreme Court will render a decision in a case that puts everything we stand for at risk. The case, Janus vs. AFSCME, challenges the right of public sector unions to collect fair share or agency fee dues. Back in 1977, another US Supreme Court decision established that, if you benefit from union representation, even if you don't join the union, it is fair and reasonable to expect to pay something for it. Your wages, benefits and retirement security all come from the union's influence over terms and conditions, even if you're not a member. Dues fund union services, including bargaining power, legal representation and much more. Loss of dues means loss of strength.

In other states the loss of the right to collective bargain caused salaries to decrease, benefits to be significantly reduced or be completely wiped out, and loss of jobs. Without the bargaining power of a union, you don't get to say, "No, don't touch my health insurance or my retirement benefits". The employer will tell you what they are willing to give and your only option is to accept it or find other employment.

Remember, wages, health insurance benefits, paid holidays, accrued time off, bereavement pay, counseling and progressive discipline procedures, and more are all subjects of negotiation and clearly delineated in our bargaining agreement. By remaining union strong we will continue to keep what we have worked hard to negotiate over the 59 years our union has been in existence.

Be assured, the Janus case is not about paying dues, it is about busting unions, which puts every employee at the mercy of their employer. The face of the case, Mark Janus, is a public sector janitor, an AFSCME member, who was manipulated into being a poster boy by wealthy corporate profiteers, whose only goal is to eradicate unions, the last bastion of defense for working people. When asked, he admitted that the protection of a union was a good thing, but the damage had already been done.

Now, more than ever, we must stand together and continue to show our collective strength.

In solidarity,

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