

The Facts: Janus v. AFSCME, Council 31

Real freedom is having your hard work result in a decent living, having time to take a loved one to the doctor or attend a parent-teacher conference, and the ability to retire with dignity. But for decades, working people have been falling behind. Today, despite being more productive than ever, we are working longer hours for less money and fewer benefits. And despite promising to make things better, some politicians seem obsessed with making things worse – most recently by trying to take away our health care and vital public services.

It is no accident that working people are struggling. Corporate CEOs have used their wealth to influence politicians to rig the economic rules to benefit the wealthy and powerful at the expense of everyone else. Now, the same corporate CEOs and special interests are behind a Supreme Court case called *Janus v. AFSCME, Council 31* that threatens to make things even worse for working people.

What is this case really about? The Supreme Court case *Janus v. AFSCME, Council 31* aims to take away the freedom of – and opportunity for – working people to join together in strong unions to speak up for themselves, their families and their communities. When teachers, nurses, police officers, firefighters and other public service workers are free to come together in strong unions, they win benefits like better working conditions, better wages, health care, clean and safe environments and retirement security that benefit non-union members as well. But the CEOs and corporate special interests behind this case simply do not believe that working people should have the same freedoms and opportunities as they do: to negotiate a fair return on our work so that we can provide for ourselves and our families. They are funding this case through the National Right to Work Foundation, because they see strong unions as a threat to their power and greed.

What is the real impact of this case? When working people have the freedom and opportunity to speak up together through unions, we make progress together that benefits everyone. If the billionaires and corporate CEOs behind this case get their way, however, they will take away the freedom of working people to come together and build power to fight for the things our communities need: everything from affordable health care and retirement security to quicker medical emergency response times. The CEOs and billionaires want to use the highest court in the land to take away our freedom to create the power in numbers to win better lives for ourselves, our families, our communities and our country.

What have people in unions won for all of us? People in unions continue to win rights, benefits and protections not only for union members, but for all working people and their communities in and outside of the workplace. When nurses, firefighters, 911 dispatchers and EMS workers belong to strong unions, they fight for staffing levels, equipment and training that save lives. And when union membership is high, entire communities enjoy wages that represent a fair return on their work and greater social and economic mobility. Without the freedom to come together, working people would not have the power in numbers they need to make our communities safer, stronger and more prosperous.

Who is behind this case? The National Right to Work Foundation is part of a network funded by corporate billionaires to use the courts to rig the rules against everyday working

people. For decades, the corporate CEOs and billionaires funding this case have used their massive fortunes to pay politicians and corporate lobbyists to chip away at the freedoms people in unions have won for every single one of us. Now they want the highest court in the land to take away our freedom to come together to protect things our families need: a living wage, retirement security, health benefits, the ability to care for loved ones and more.

Where did this case come from? This case originated from a political scheme by billionaire Bruce Rauner, governor of Illinois, to advance an agenda benefiting corporations and the wealthy. Rauner launched a political attack on public service workers immediately after taking office, filing a lawsuit on his own behalf to bar the collection of fair share fees by public service unions. A federal judge ruled that Rauner could not bring this action because he was not himself an employee paying fair share fees. But the legal arms of the National Right to Work Committee and the Liberty Justice Center were able to carry the case forward by finding plaintiffs as stand-ins for Rauner in the federal lawsuit. The district court dismissed the case, based on long-standing precedent. The plaintiffs asked the lower court to fast-track their appeal and rule against them in order to more quickly get the case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

What are fair share fees and why are they important? Unions work because we all pay our fair share and we all benefit from what we negotiate together. Fair share fees provide public service workers with the power in numbers they need to negotiate better wages, benefits and protections that improve work conditions and set standards for everyone. Each individual public service worker chooses whether or not to join a union, but the union is still required by law to represent and negotiate on behalf of *all* public service workers – members and non-members alike. The corporate special interests behind this case want to take away the freedom of public service workers to have the power in numbers to provide for their families and make their communities stronger. That is why they want the Supreme Court to rule that workers can receive all the benefits of a union contract without contributing anything in return. Look at it this way: If you go out to dinner with a group of friends, you still pay your fair share of the check even if you didn't get to choose the restaurant.

Is anyone ever forced to join a union or pay for politics? No. The simple truth is that **no one** is forced to join a union and **no one** is forced to pay any fees that go to politics or political candidates. That is already the law of the land. Nothing in this case will change that. This case is about taking away the freedom of working people to come together, speak up for each other and build a better life for themselves and their families.