

THE LOCAL 34 BANNER

Joint Statement on Nationwide Mobilizations, Janus v. AFSCME Council 31 Oral Arguments

Washington, D.C. — February 26, 2018

Throughout the month of February, working people have been more energized and organized than any time in recent memory. There have been nationwide moments of silence and fast food strikes to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers strike. Tens of thousands took to the streets in at least 30 cities this weekend to demand an end to a rigged economy. Today, there are more than 500 worksite actions. Working people are speaking out with pride and passion, even as [billionaires and corporate interests tried to use the United States Supreme Court](#) today to attack public service workers, good union jobs, and the health and safety of communities across America.

The presidents of the four largest public service unions in America issued the following statements about the collective power of these nationwide mobilizations, and about oral arguments in *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31*. They are available for further comment today:

“If the Supreme Court’s decision is based on merit, on facts and on the law, there’s no doubt they will rule in favor of working people. In the face of ruthless, dishonest attacks against their freedom to come together in strong unions, working people are drawing the line. We stand united in fighting a rigged system that rewards the super-wealthy at everyone else’s expense. And we will not rest until we build an economy where everyone has a voice on the job, a seat at the table and a chance to succeed.”

– *Lee Saunders, President, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)*

“This case isn’t about Mark Janus—it’s a ruse funded by the Kochs, the Bradleys, the DeVoses and other anti-union oligarchs to deny working folks the opportunity for a better life. Unions help make possible what would be impossible for individuals acting alone: living wages and a decent retirement, safe and welcoming public schools, affordable college and healthcare, and a voice in our democracy. They’re attacking us because they see a strong labor movement as a threat to their wealth and power.

– *Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers (AFT)*

“Today, thousands of working people rallied outside the U.S. Supreme Court and around the country to send a message that, whatever the decision in this case, these oligarchs won’t stop working families from realizing our American dream. Make no mistake about it, we are living in a system that is rigged to benefit special interests and billionaires at the expense of American working people. It is no shock to most that it has become harder and harder for working people to get ahead and provide stability for their families. The corporate special interests behind this case are dead set on eliminating the rights and freedoms of working people to organize, to negotiate collectively and to have any voice in working to better their lives. This is a blatant slap in the face of educators, nurses, firefighters, police officers and all public servants who make our communities strong and safe.

– *Lily Eskelsen García, President, National Education Association (NEA)*

“Tens of thousands of working people have hit the streets to show that we won’t let any court case stop us from sticking together for the good, union jobs our communities need. Today we call on America’s elected leaders to take action to help more working people join together in unions to turn poverty-wage jobs into good, union jobs that provide financial security to families and strengthen communities.”

– *Mary Kay Henry, President, Service Employees International Union (SEIU)*

AFSCME’s 1.6 million members provide the vital services that make America happen. With members in hundreds of different occupations — from nurses to corrections officers, child care providers to sanitation workers — AFSCME advocates for fairness in the workplace, excellence in public services and prosperity and opportunity for all working families.

Commentary by Eliot Seide (former Council 5 Executive Director) – September 28, 2017

Minnesotans are working longer hours for less money and fewer benefits, despite being more productive. No matter how hard we work, many of us are struggling to get by and provide for our families. Meanwhile, a handful of CEOs and those who are already rich have seen their salaries and wealth skyrocket.

This is not by accident.

Big corporations and the wealthy – along with politicians who do their bidding – have rigged our economy and our political system against working people.

We need to confront this rigged system head on. We need to redefine what it means to work in Minnesota. Call it a Bill of Rights for Working People.

If you work full-time, you should earn enough to support your family and never go to bed hungry. You should earn decent benefits, including health insurance and retirement security you can count on.

You have a right to a safe workplace. If you get hurt on the job, or become disabled or unemployed, you should be able to keep food on the table.

You should be able to take care of those you love, which means having sick leave, parental leave, affordable child care, and a predictable schedule to give your family some stability.

You should have a path to the education and training you need to grow your skills and earn raises and promotions as the labor market evolves.

Most importantly, you should have the freedom to decide if you want to unite with others to secure good pay, better benefits, a safe workplace, work-family balance and skills training.

The Labor Movement believes all working people deserve the same freedom corporate CEOs have: the freedom to negotiate a fair return on our work so we can provide for our families.

It will take a lot to fix the rigged economy. We can start by protecting and strengthening the freedom of workers to join together in strong unions. When workers have the opportunity to speak up together through their unions, we make progress that benefits everyone.

Despite so-called “right-to-work” attacks and other political scams, people in unions continue to win rights, benefits and protections for all workers. Here in Minnesota, unions used our collective voice to win increases to the minimum wage, affordable health care, earned sick leave and vital public services.

This is why working people are calling on elected leaders and candidates to publicly support our freedom to join together in unions and make our communities better. Students are smarter, families are healthier and neighborhoods are safer in states where working people have a voice in the halls of power.

Unions like mine fight for freedom for everyone, and that’s why we are the target of the CEOs who have used their wealth and power to rig our country’s economic rules against working people. This week they convinced the U.S. Supreme Court to take up a case, *Janus v. AFSCME*, to strike down the freedom of working people to join together in strong unions, threatening to rig the economy even further.

If corporations and politicians wipe out our freedom to form unions, nothing will stop them from driving down wages, killing jobs, defunding our public services, silencing working people at the ballot box, and crippling the fundamental values we celebrate today.

Labor unions are critical to America’s success. Union members know that freedom is not given, it’s fought for, and it must be protected. We’re going to keep fighting to protect our freedom and fix this rigged system once and for all.

Eliot Seide is the former Executive Director of AFSCME Council 5, a union of 43,000 Minnesota workers.

Saturday, January 20, 2018

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AFSCME Amicus Briefs Argue SCOTUS Should Rule for Working People

Washington, DC —

Over 35 amicus briefs filed with the United States Supreme Court in *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31* make compelling arguments for upholding *Abood*. Collectively, the briefs ask a clear question of the justices: Does merit still matter in America in 2018?

The authors of these briefs include conservative [First Amendment originalists](#), Nobel prize-winning [economists](#), state and local [public employers](#) from across the country, [Republican lawmakers](#), [child protective service workers](#), more than 85 [civil rights groups](#) including the [Human Rights Campaign](#), [ecumenical communities](#) and the [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#), mayors of [major U.S. cities](#), as well as [U.S. senators](#) who examine the political intent behind this case. Taken together, they make a compelling argument that the Supreme Court's unanimous ruling of more than 40 years ago was correct: Fair-share fees are permissible under the First Amendment.

Compare these to the briefs filed by the other side in this case, which were mostly authored by political interest groups funded by a small cadre of right-wing interests. It is apparent that *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31* is a political attack on the freedoms of working people by the same corporate billionaires and corporate interests that have for years rigged our economy and politics in their own favor.

At a time when America desperately needs to regain its faith in our government institutions, we hope the Supreme Court will see this ruse for what it is and decide the case on the merits, on precedent and on the principle that state and local governments should be allowed to decide for themselves how to handle their own labor relations.

[Read the Amicus Briefs at SCOTUSblog \(scroll to bottom\).](http://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/janus-v-american-federation-state-county-municipal-employees-council-31/) <http://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/janus-v-american-federation-state-county-municipal-employees-council-31/>

[Read AFSCME's opening brief.](https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/16/16-1466/27640/20180112104519993_Resp%20Merits%20Brief%20Janus%20v%20AFSCME.pdf) https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/16/16-1466/27640/20180112104519993_Resp%20Merits%20Brief%20Janus%20v%20AFSCME.pdf

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You can follow the Janus case on the Supreme Court blog, <http://www.scotusblog.com/>

It is expected that the ruling of the Court will be rendered any time between March and June. We will keep you informed on that decision. What this boils down to is an attack by anti-working entities as they believe that if our right to ask fee payers to contribute their "fair share" is taken away, it will kill our ability to be a union and represent our members.

Local 34 has been a union since before it was legal to organize public employees and we believe that we will continue to be a union regardless of what the anti-working forces choose to throw at us. We are strong, we are united, we stand with our fellow workers.

Jean Diederich, President, Local 34

Special Edition—Janus February 26, 2018

Nuts and Bolts

A brief guide to your Local 34

STEWARDS

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
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| Julio Blee Alarcon | Thomas Moore |
| Teisha Broomfield | David Paurus |
| Dawn Coburn-Paden | Rita Phelps |
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| Cassandra Dutrieuille | Lindsay Schwab |
| James Edin | Mara Ssengendo |
| Katherine Folta | Sean Watkins |
| Emily Frazier | Karen Womack |
| Sarah Haigh | All Stewards serve a year long appointment beginning in May and lasting until April the following year. |
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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Local34/>

Closed group: email [Amanda Abell](mailto:AmandaAbell) for an invite



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We make America Happen

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Union: an organization of workers formed to protect the rights and interests of its members

Merriam -Webster online

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