

AN NJASAP LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISION // JANUS V. AFSCME

statement

Today, the United States Supreme Court struck down 40 years of precedent permitting public sector unions to collect a fair share fee from workers who receive the benefits of collective bargaining and representation in the workplace. The ruling in *Janus v. AFSCME*, like similar legislation and private-sector right-to-work initiatives, is the result of a multi-year campaign by corporate interests and wealthy individuals who oppose the very idea that workers should have freedom of association, economic power and a voice in our system of government.

Under the Court's decision, public sector unions must still negotiate for and represent all workers in a bargaining unit, including those who refuse to pay a fee for the benefits and services they receive from the union. The Court's decision also forces loyal union members who voluntarily pay dues to subsidize anti-union co-workers who refuse to pay while receiving the same wages, benefits and working conditions as union members. But the *Janus* decision is about more than the free-rider problem.

More than one-third of the 17.4 million state and local government workers are represented by unions. Unions provide dignity and real economic benefits to all workers regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability status or religion. *Janus* is intended to financially weaken unions and to reduce their strength as an advocate for economic and social justice. Minority workers, in particular, have the most to lose from *Janus*.

Judicial and legislative attacks on unions should be a matter of concern to everyone who fights for social justice because the goal of *Janus* and other anti-union initiatives is to turn back the clock on worker rights, and in effect, on civil rights in the United States. The stakes are very high: There is no modern example of a just society without a strong labor movement to unite working people of diverse backgrounds. It should come as no surprise that *Janus* is not the first attack on the labor movement.

In the early 20th century, employers launched the so-called open shop drive, a massive campaign intended to eliminate unions following a wave of strikes by veterans, immigrants and other workers after World War I. Union membership fell significantly, but labor was not defeated. Beginning in the 1930s, dedicated organizers and visionary leaders organized millions of workers into craft and industrial unions, forced the passage of labor laws, jobs programs and social insurance benefits, and helped lift generations of working people out of poverty and into the middle class in the decades that followed.

In the early 21st century, the labor movement will continue to organize working people and guarantee that their voices are heard and their votes are counted. NJASAP proudly stands in solidarity with public sector unions and their members across the United States.

THE NJASAP EXECUTIVE BOARD

Pedro Leroux, President
Paulette Gilbert, Vice President
Jason Layman, Treasurer
Mike Hanson, Secretary
Robert McIncrow, Trustee