

President's Report – October, 2017



10/17/2017

This President's report does not bring good news with it. Judgement day is on the horizon for public sector unions in this country as the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear a case that could deal a serious blow to American organized labor.

The Supreme Court announced last Thursday that it will hear *Janus v. AFSCME (American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Union)*. This case seeks to defund public sector unions by making illegal, the requirement that members under a collective bargaining agreement pay agency fees which are design exclusively to support and service that agreement. The case presents an issue that was recently before the Court, and where the justices split 4-4 along party lines after the sudden death of Antonin Scalia. Neil Gorsuch will now have the deciding vote and is widely expected to side with the anti-union position.

If *Janus* prevails, the Court's ruling could effectively act as a nationwide right-to-work law for the country's public-sector workers, with potentially crushing implications for the funding and resources of the unions that represent them. AFSCME officials told *Bloomberg* that they estimated in 2015 that only about a third of the workers they represent would pay fees "no matter what,". In other words, if given the option to leave the union and avoid paying dues, many would

take it. This would be a fatal blow to public sector unions.

So why am I sharing this with you since none of us are in a public-sector union? Well let me ask you this. Who do you think will be next after the anti-union forces in this country bring about the demise public sector unions? There is only one answer. Us. Private sector unions. You and me.

So, what can we do? Well, it starts with solidarity. Not just solidarity within our Local Lodge, not just solidarity within our union, but solidarity with every local lodge and solidarity with every union in this country. We must come together as never before because our unions survival depends on it. We must become engaged and educated in the political labor issues that affect us and our families directly every day. 2018 is coming and will be our first opportunity to try and turn the anti-union movement around. I am asking you to join this fight by supporting solidarity with all our union brothers and sisters in this country. I am asking you to join this fight by getting engaged by doing things like getting involved with our legislative and MNPL committees. Help to get out the vote for candidates that support our right to bargain for the wages, benefits, and working conditions that we deserve, that everyone deserves for that matter. These are just a couple of the many things that can and must be done. Apathy and complacency will bring nothing but defeat and with that defeat an end to the standard of living and workplace rights that we have all enjoyed for so long. We cannot and will not stand by and let this happen.