



What's this all about?

Anti-labor forces funded by the wealthy elite and their well-heeled friends have launched another assault on working Americans, this time with a case before the U.S. Supreme Court known as *Janus v. AFSME*.

The *Janus* case — challenging fair-share fees and threatening public-sector unions — culminates decades of assault on working people by right-wing ideologues and wealthy special interests.

This brochure outlines briefly what is at stake in the *Janus* case. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask your local union president what it would mean if New York became a “right-to-work-for-less” state.



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**Answers to your
questions about
pending changes for
unions and union
members**



Here's what you need to know to protect your labor rights:

Q: I saw an ad that said I should give myself a raise and stop paying union dues. Why shouldn't I?

A: Because it's not true.

Pending cases before the U.S. Supreme Court might give you a chance to stop paying dues. But you won't get a raise. **It will cost you.** A weakened union would lead to long-term cuts, loss of benefits and salary stagnation for everyone. You gain myriad benefits from having a strong union representing you at the bargaining table. **If the union loses, you lose, period.**

Q: What is the motivation behind these pending cases?

A: These court cases — including *Janus v. AFSCME*, to be decided in 2018 — are backed by corporate profiteers and hedge-funders. Their goal is to weaken unions, which will hurt all workers, to the benefit of the 1 percent. That's who is spreading the bogus claim that you can give yourself a raise — the wealthy. **They will get a raise, not you.**

Q: What's at stake in this *Janus* case?

A: Back in 1977, another U.S. 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.

An adverse decision in *Janus* would overturn that decision and force cuts in resources directed toward union services. Dues and fair-share revenues fund union services, including bargaining power, legal representation and much more.

Loss of revenue means loss of strength, and there's no question that a weaker union would have an adverse effect on terms and conditions.

Q: What would happen?

A: We've already seen what happens to union strength in states like Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana, three states that lost the right to collective bargaining in the past several years. Compared to union workers in neighboring Illinois, Minnesota and Ohio, the workers in the right-to-work states earn 8 percent less annually, according to research from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute. **Salaries go down, benefits evaporate, jobs disappear and the economy stagnates.**

Q: A law firm advertises that it can provide me with protection for a fraction of what we pay in dues.

A: Don't be misled. No slick, hourly billed law firm can match the range of benefits, rights and opportunities your union card guarantees. Your union gives you access to member benefits, discounts, professional development, help with certification and licensing, a contract that protects your salary, benefits and working conditions and a strong voice in determining what those are. For-profit opportunists use misleading advertising in an attempt to make a buck — **there's no comparison.**

Q: What does NYSUT's legal team do?

A: NYSUT has the largest labor legal team in the country with unmatched expertise. It represents hundreds of NYSUT members every year, protecting their rights to due process and ensuring enforcement of the provisions in their hard-earned contracts. NYSUT legal also represents the total membership — more than 600,000 people — in legal challenges that affect

our professions, our public institutions and our rights to represent the best interests of those we serve. NYSUT has litigated, and won, on historic issues such as equitable school funding, unfair evaluation and testing schemes, threats to struggling schools, the education department's "gag order" on educators and much more.

Q: Bottom line: Why should I stay with the union?

A: Our local union negotiates for competitive pay and better benefits, and makes sure our contract is honored. NYSUT, our state affiliate, fights to protect our labor rights, retirement security and our professions.

Together, we have the power to exercise and protect our rights, to defend the things we value and to give our members a voice.

Defending our union means preserving our voice, defending our values, and protecting what we need to succeed in our professional lives.

If our voice is diminished, our students, our schools and the people we serve lose.

We have the will and the power to fight this threat and protect what is ours. When we all commit to our union, we can protect what's ours and defend what we have earned.

Signing a re-enrollment form is the best way to defend our voice, our values and our union.

