

WEALTHY ATTACK WORKER FREEDOM

Newest Supreme Court Case Could Ban Fair Share Fees

Janus v. AFSCME Council 31 is a lawsuit that aims to take away the freedom of working people to join together in strong unions to speak up for themselves and their communities. The billionaires and corporate special interests funding this case view unions as a threat to their power, so they are trying to get the U.S. Supreme Court to rig the system even more in favor of those already at the top.

What is this case really about? This case is really about taking away the freedom of working people to join together in strong unions to improve our lives and sustain our families. Real freedom is about more than making a living; it's also about safety on the job, affordable health benefits, having time to care for a loved one who's ill and dignity in retirement. The wealthy corporate special interests behind this case want to take away our freedom to join together in a union because they simply do not believe that working people should have the same freedoms as they do to negotiate a fair return on our work.

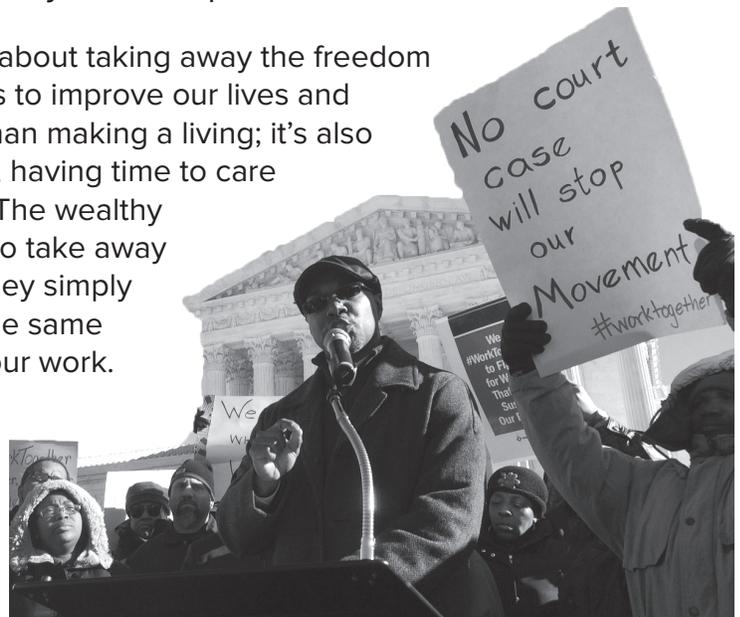
Who is behind this case? Bruce Rauner originated this case in a lawsuit he filed against AFSCME Council 31 to try to weaken our union by banning fair share fees in state government. When the federal court said Rauner didn't have standing to bring such a suit, he found a lone state employee—Mark Janus—to allow the legal challenge to proceed in his name. The suit

is backed by the Liberty Justice Center (an arm of the Illinois Policy Institute) and the National Right to Work Foundation, part of a network funded by corporate billionaires to rig the rules against the rights of everyday working people.

What are fair share fees? When employees in a legally defined bargaining unit at a particular workplace have chosen to be represented by a union, the union is required by law to represent and negotiate on behalf of all of these workers—and all the workers receive the wage increases, benefits and workplace rights that the union is able to achieve. Some workers may not want to be a member of the union, but all workers are required to contribute to the cost of representation—whether through membership dues or a “fair share” fee, which is calculated to exclude any political expenditures.

Is anyone ever forced to join a union or pay dues or fees that go to political candidates? No. No one is required to join a union and no one is required to pay any fees that go to political candidates. A bargaining unit employee who does not want to be a union member or does not want to contribute toward electing candidates who support working families can choose to be a fair share fee payer.

What is the real impact of the Janus case? By outlawing fair share fees, employees who refuse to join the union can still benefit from the gains that the union makes but will not pay anything toward the cost of union representation. If the billionaires and corporate CEOs behind this case get their way, they will take away the freedom of working people to come together in a strong union and build power to fight for a better future for ourselves, our families, our communities and our country.



WHY THE JANUS CASE MATTERS TO ALL WORKING PEOPLE

Big corporations, politicians and wealthy interests have rigged our economy and our politics against working people for decades.

They have robbed Americans of the freedom to earn a decent living, have work-life balance, take a loved one to the doctor or attend a parent-teacher conference without fear of losing their job, and retire with dignity.

But workers are confronting the rigged system – and the politicians and corporations who prop it up – and putting unions front and center in the national conversation.

As corporations and the wealthy continue to benefit from record wealth while working people find it harder and harder to make ends meet and provide for their families, joining together in unions gives workers a voice.

When working people have the freedom to join strong unions and negotiate a fair return for their work, they win the power and voice they need to level the economic and political playing field.

Unions are the most effective way for workers to come together and counter the influence big money and big corporations have on our democracy. By forming strong unions, workers are able to negotiate wages and benefits that support their families and better working conditions, like safe staffing ratios in hospitals and safe and secure schools or smaller class sizes that help students to succeed.



And we use our collective voice to advocate for policies that benefit all working people – like increases to the minimum wage, affordable health care, and great public schools for students – and elect politicians who will stand up for working people, not the wealthy and corporate interests.

Unions are critically important to fix a rigged economy that disproportionately hurts workers of color.

Across the country, more than half of black workers and nearly 60 percent of Latino workers are paid less than \$15 per hour.

If corporations and politicians eliminate our freedom to form unions, they'll continue to drive down wages, kill jobs, defund our public schools and services, silence working people at the ballot box, and cripple the fundamental values of freedom and opportunity we hold dear as Americans.