



## What's this all about?

Anti-labor forces funded by the wealthy elite and their well-heeled friends launched a major assault on working Americans, last year with a case before the U.S. Supreme Court known as *Janus v. AFSCME*.

The *Janus* case — which challenged fair-share fees and threatened public-sector unions — capped decades of assaults on working people by right-wing ideologues and wealthy special interests.

This brochure outlines briefly what happened in the *Janus* case. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask your local union president what it means now that U.S. workers labor under the “right-to-work-for-less”.



## Answers to your questions about federal changes for unions and union members



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## 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.**

The U.S. Supreme Court might have given 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 anti-union cases?**

**A:** These court cases — including *Janus v. AFSCME*, which was 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 happened 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 was fair and reasonable to expect to pay something for it. Your wages, benefits and retirement security all came from the union's influence over terms and conditions, even if you were not a member.

The adverse decision in *Janus* overturned that decision and forced cuts in resources directed toward union services. Member dues — with no fair-share revenues — fund union services, including bargaining power, legal representation

and much more. **Loss of revenue means loss of strength**, but there's no question that through organizing our union has actually grown stronger! Since *Janus*, NYSUT has lost only 2 percent of dues revenue.

**Q: What happened here?**

**A:** Union strength lagged in states like Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana, three states that lost the right to collective bargaining in the past several years. **Salaries went down, benefits evaporated, jobs disappeared and the economy stagnated.** That hasn't happened in New York State, where NYSUT and other AFL-CIO unions have done their work — face-to-face and door-to-door — to make personal connections and grow the union.

**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 organize 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.

