

How to Respond to *Janus v. AFSCME*

The Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in *Janus v. AFSCME* on February 26, 2018. This aims to make the entire public sector “right-to-work”. *JANUS* is the culmination of decades of attacks on working people by corporate CEOs, the wealthiest 1% and politicians who work for them to rig the economy in their favor. The same forces who have worked to dismantle voting rights, attacked immigrants, and undermined civil rights protections.

Their goal with *JANUS* (as it was in *Friedrichs v. CTA*) is to use the Supreme Court to take away the freedom of workers to join together in strong unions. Unions play a critical role in building and protecting the American middle class and are the best way to level the economic playing field for all Americans. We urge you to battle against this campaign to “defund and defang” unions.

We Need Your Help To Fight Back This Attack. Spread the word on the threat this case poses to workers, their families, and the public services that affect all of our communities. Help us shed light on what this case is about.

1. Use these Talking Points to respond to questions about this case and what it means for CTA.
2. Share your voice on social media by using the sample posts and digital graphics in this toolkit.
3. Draft op-eds, blog posts and letters to the editor using the talking points below.

We must stand together to ensure that America has an economy that works for everyone.

TALKING POINTS.

***JANUS* is a political scheme to weaken unions by defunding them.**

- The Supreme Court case *Janus v. AFSCME* aims to take away the freedom of – and opportunity for – working people to join together in strong unions. .
- Unions play a critical role to create and protect the American middle class by providing economic and workplace stability for workers and their families.
- The CEOs and corporate special interests do not believe workers should have the right to negotiate fair wages, benefits or working conditions.
- This case was brought to manipulate the Supreme Court to satisfy blatant political goals. In a 10-page State Policy Network (SPN) fundraising letter reported on in [The Guardian](#), SPN President and CEO Tracie Sharp wrote that the goal of their Koch-backed network’s \$80 million campaign was to “defund and defang” unions.
- Point out the original plaintiff in this case was Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner, who launched a political attack on public employees. A U.S. District Court ruled in 2015 that Rauner had “no standing” to bring suit this suit. The legal arm of National Right to Work Committee and the Liberty Justice Center searched for plaintiffs to serve as stand-ins for Rauner in the federal lawsuit.

We believe Unions are the key to improving communities and the workplace opportunities of union and nonunion members alike.

- Unions [raise wages](#), benefits and workplace conditions for both union and nonunion workers.
- When union membership is high, entire communities benefit from these higher wages as they represent a fair return on their work and [greater social and economic mobility](#). Unions use their collective voice to advocate for policies to the benefit of all people, including minimum wage increases, healthcare and improving public schools.
- Unions provide a path to the middle class by advocating for fair wages. As union membership has decreased, income inequality has risen in the U.S.
- With collective bargaining, members achieve victories that benefit entire communities - through workplace conditions like smaller nurse-patient ratios and classroom sizes to help students.

Unions advocate for equal opportunity for women and communities of color who have been systematically disadvantaged due to discrimination and prejudice

- Across the country, more than half of African-American workers and almost 60 percent of Latino workers are paid less than \$15 per hour.
- Union jobs continue to be a path to the middle class for people who often face low wages in their professions. African-American union members today earn 14.7% more – and Latino union workers 21.8% more – than their nonunion counterparts.
- African-American women in unions earn an average of \$21.90 an hour while nonunion women earn \$17.04. In addition, more than 72% of women in unions have health insurance, while less than 50% of nonunion African-American women do. [Source](#).
- When Latinos are members of a union, their median weekly income increases by more than 38% and are more likely to have employer-provided health insurance. [Source](#).
- Because unions allow all workers to join together to negotiate with their employers for fair wages and benefits, the wage gap between women and men in unions is dramatically lower than in nonunion workplaces – about 9 cents and shrinking. Most nonunion women still earn 78 cents for every dollar a man makes. [Source](#).

Social Media

Twitter and Facebook:

Right-wing groups behind #SCOTUS case admit they're spending tens of millions to "defund and defang" #unions:

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/30/rightwing-alliance-unions-defund-defang>

Use the hashtags #SCOTUS #DefendUnions and reference the Janus Case. Tweet about how this case...

- Rigs our economy against workers in favor of the wealthy and powerful
- Threatens to make entire public sector "right-to-work."
- Is a political attack on freedom of working people to join together in strong #unions.
- This is a blatant political attempt by right-wing corporate interests to take away the freedom of working people to join a union.
- When people come together in a union, we have the power in numbers to advocate for better wages, benefits, protections and standards for all workers, their families and their communities.