



PRESS RELEASE
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Contact: Hannah Halbert
hhalbert@policymattersohio.org
614.221.4504

Supreme Court sides with special interests over working people Janus decision further weakens collective bargaining

Today, the U.S. Supreme Court made it more difficult for 17.3 million working people to join together to seek safer working conditions, fair pay, and family-sustaining benefits. The court has undercut long-standing law in 22 states, including Ohio, that requires state and local government employees who benefit from a union but opt out of membership to pay a fee that covers the costs associated with contract administration and grievance protection. Making these payments optional means that workers can receive the benefits from a union contract without having to pay for them.

“This decision will drain funds away from unions, making it more difficult for workers to secure a fair deal through collective bargaining,” said Hannah Halbert, project director with Policy Matters Ohio. “Unions will continue to represent all members, but free-riders will not contribute, to the long-term detriment of all workers.”

“Judicial attacks like *Janus* and so-called “Right-to-Work” legislation do nothing to address the real struggles of working people,” said Halbert. “When unions are weak, working people get a smaller share of the growth they help create. When unions are strong, middle incomes grow. Black, white, male and female workers all earn more when they are in a union, and the gap between races and sexes shrinks when wages are collectively bargained. Unions help balance the overwhelming power of employers in our political and economic system. Today’s decision is a sure step in the wrong direction.”

Nationally, 58.3 percent of state and local government workers affected by the Supreme Court decision are women, and nearly a third are workers of color. Nearly 47 percent of Ohio’s state and local government employees have joined together in a union.

“Many teachers, mostly in states that are unfriendly to unions, walked off the job this spring demanding better compensation and better education conditions for their students. Today’s decision will drain resources from worker bargaining, but as the teacher strikes around the country demonstrate, it will not dampen workers’ resolve to get a fair deal,” said Halbert. “Workers will continue to create new ways to build strength despite a climate that is hostile to unions.”

Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.