ARE YOU SURE YOU’RE READY?

#1: WHY JANUS AND OTHER ANTI-UNION CHALLENGES MATTER

Most everyone knows by now that the Supreme Court has agreed to hear Janus v. AFSCME, a case challenging the constitutionality of “fair share” or “agency fee”. With the appointment of Neil Gorsuch, virtually all SCOTUS observers anticipate a ruling declaring these fees unconstitutional as violating the First Amendment rights of public sector employees. Observers anticipate the adverse ruling coming between April 1 and June 28.

Let’s be honest & real for a moment. Even if we somehow got a favorable ruling in the Janus case, that will not end the challenge to agency fee/fair share, or the challenges facing our unions:

- Dozens of similar cases are winding their way through the courts.
- State legislatures are debating and enacting legislation designed to cripple public-sector unions. (e.g., Loss of payroll deduction & state-by-state adoption of “Right-to-Work” laws.)
- Trump Administration push to “aggressively investigate” so-called “union corruption.”

NEA’s affiliates all contribute to its strength and stability. Loss of agency fee in California and any/all of the other 22 remaining agency fee states will likely result in significant membership losses for NEA. This in turn will have a dramatic and devastating effect on the budgets of all NEA affiliates. You only need to look at the dramatic loss of membership in Wisconsin following its loss of collective bargaining to see a preview of the impact of Janus and other legislatively-driven attacks on NEA affiliates and staff. Here’s the simple “math” of why this matters:

- Loss of members = Loss of NEA dues dollars
- Loss of NEA dues dollars = Loss/Reduction of NEA UniServ grants
- Loss of NEA UniServ grants = Loss of affiliate staff
- Loss of affiliate staff = Probable loss of more NEA members

This issue matters to each and every one of us!

STAY TUNED for the next issue of “Are You Ready?” in mid-January. We’ll be sharing & reviewing recommended bargaining and organizing strategies from NSO to help our unions build a good offense and defense. Additionally, more information will be discussed at WAR College in Sarasota! Because it is NOT too late to act!