

Building Strong Unions TOOLKIT

For Janus Decision Day.. and Beyond

Brothers and Sisters,

The Janus decision is expected any day now. Most expect that the Supreme Court is going to rule against unions and force the entire public sector into Right to Work Is Wrong. We've been working with you to prepare for and inoculate against the decision for months. We appreciate everything you are doing to keep your union strong.

But now we must get ready for Decision Day, which will happen at 7 a.m. on a Monday between now and June 25. Good messaging the day of the decision and in the weeks ahead is essential. The media is likely to advance a doomsday narrative for unions. We must push back strongly against that narrative. All unions, whether public sector or private sector, are in the billionaires' crosshairs.

On Decision Day, we must speak as one. We ask everyone to join in on that day to show that Washington's Labor Movement is #UnionStrong!



Enclosed you will find a communications toolkit to prepare you for Decision Day. Included please find:

- Core message points you can use to prepare statements and letters to the editor
- Q&A for Media/Public
- Messages for members
- Objections and tough questions from members
- Message points for allies
- Message points for elected officials
- Words to use (and words to lose)
- Sample social media posts
- Sample email to supporters/activists

Access these materials at our private website: www.wslc.org/private-info password: **2018jointogether**
We only ask that you don't share these materials outside of your union prior to Decision Day.

Remember, when working people stand together, we're an unstoppable force. No court case can ever change that. Thank you for all you do to keep our movement strong.



In Unity,

Jeffrey Johnson
President

Lynne Dodson
Secretary Treasurer

Additional information can be found at the AFL-CIO website: www.freedomtojoin.org
Special thanks to the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO
for granting permission to adapt the contents of this Toolkit for our use.

Core Message Points for Negative Decision

Today the Supreme Court overturned more than four decades of precedent by making fair share fees for public sector workers unconstitutional in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case. This case forces the entire public sector in California and across America into Right to Work.

Core points for talking about the decision and impacts:

- No court decision can extinguish the desire of **working people standing together** in unions to create better lives for our families and communities. Washington state needs strong unions to stand up to the rich and powerful who rig the economy against workers.
- While we strongly condemn the Supreme Court's decision to overturn 40 years' worth of precedent in the Janus case at the behest of billionaire corporate elites, working people will continue to organize for a fair deal on the job that allows us to negotiate with our bosses for good wages, decent benefits and safe working conditions.
- Since the 19th century, labor unions have served as the primary countervailing force to corporate power. When working people stand together, amazing victories are achieved. In Washington, unions have led the way to raise wages, ensure all workers have paid sick days, enact paid family leave, protect immigrants on the job, strengthen workplace safety, fund public education and much more.
- Despite corporate CEOs' heavy-handed and often illegal efforts to destroy the freedom of working people to stand together in unions, they've failed. And Washington state won't allow this decision to turn back the clock on workers' rights. We've come too far.
- There's no doubt this decision makes it more difficult for working people to exercise our freedom to stand together. That was the intent of the corporate billionaires all along.
- But no one court decision can stamp out decades of progress made by unions and our members. Corporate CEO-funded front groups have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to divide and conquer working people. But what they still don't understand is that our strength in numbers ultimately defeats their millions of dollars.
- We won't allow a court decision to stand in the way of our fight for good jobs, safe workplaces, equal pay for women, fair treatment of immigrants and dignity at work for everyone. If history tells us anything, it's that working people always rise to counterbalance the growing power of corporate CEOs and the politicians they bankroll.
- Today, we commit to not only sustaining the labor movement, but building and strengthening it so more working people can negotiate a fair deal in return for their hard work. Despite this decision, Washington's unions will continue to lead the fight for a balanced economy that gives everyone a fair shot at the American Dream.



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Q&A for Media and Public

Today the Supreme Court overturned more than four decades of precedent by making fair share fees for public sector workers unconstitutional in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case. This case forces the entire public sector in California and across America into Right to Work.

What is your reaction to this loss for unions?

This decision was the culmination of hundreds of millions of dollars spent by corporate billionaires over decades to take away working people's freedom to stand together in a union. But their efforts will fail. No court decision can extinguish the desire of working people standing together in unions to create better lives for our families and communities. Washington state needs strong unions to stand up to the rich and powerful who rig the economy against workers, and workers aren't about to let these corporate billionaires turn back the clock on all the progress we've made.

How many members will your union lose now?

I can tell you that working people are committed to standing together in their unions. We've seen an overwhelming response of workers committing to stand together over the last several months. Look, this economy is rigged against everyday people. We all know it. The wealthy elites are controlling our lives in about every conceivable way. The only way for working people to fight back is by standing together. And it works. We've seen it happening with the teacher strikes sweeping the country. We see it happening in the resistance to the Trump Administration. We're not focused on how many members we might lose. We're focused on building stronger unions that give more workers the opportunity to stand together to fight back.

How will this decision effect your political spending?

The power of our political campaigns doesn't come from money. It comes from people. Thousands of union volunteers are ready to hit the streets this year, talking to voters in their communities one-on-one, to ensure that we elect candidates who stand with working people up and down the ballot. With the Trump Administration continuing its assault on workers and our values in Washington state, we expect a record number of volunteers this year to do the critical work of having real conversations door to door. That's the strength of our program. Given how important this election is for working people, we don't expect to make any changes in our political program based on this decision. However, we do expect more enthusiasm from volunteers who are willing to work nights and weekends to set this country on the right path again.

What are your next steps after this devastating decision?

Today's ruling makes Washington's union workers even more committed to:

- Standing together with their co-workers in their union
- Giving more working people the opportunity to join unions to fight the billionaires and CEOs who have rigged our economy
- Holding politicians accountable for doing everything in their power to help more workers create a path to the American Dream by standing together in unions



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Messages for Members (and What They Can Do)

Today the Supreme Court overturned more than four decades of precedent by making fair share fees for public sector workers unconstitutional in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case. This case forces the entire public sector in California and across America into Right to Work.

- **When we stand together, we have some power.** That power allows for us to bargain a good contract that includes pay increases, health care and retirement security. It gives us a seat at the table to negotiate for things that improve our job and allow us to better serve our communities.
- If the corporate billionaires succeed in tearing apart our union, we know what will happen next. The politicians will roll over us. We'll see pay cuts. Our jobs will be outsourced. Forget about any kind of retirement or affordable health care.
- That's why it's more important than ever for us to keep our union strong. When we're strong in our union, we can withstand the attack. We can look out for each other. We can create a better future for our families.
- No court decision or politician can stop us from standing together in a union to get a better deal for our hard work. It's our right and they can't take that away.
- Groups funded by billionaire corporate CEOs are already attacking our union. They want us to be weaker. They're counting on anti-union politicians and judges to make their job easier. We can't let them succeed. Now is the time to be loud and proud about being a member of our union.
- Let's stand together and show the corporate CEOs that we're united. We're sticking with the union no matter how many dirty tricks the CEOs and politicians have up their sleeve. Let's show them we're STRONGER TOGETHER!

What you can do to keep our union strong!

- Reaffirm your commitment to standing with your co-workers to protect our pay and jobs
- Take a moment to post support for our union on social media using the #UnionStrong hashtag.
- Tell everyone how being in a union and getting a good contract changed your life!

Remember, we're stronger together. Let's stay #UnionStrong!



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Objections and Tough Questions

When we ask a worker to join or recommit to the union, we want to address their concerns in a way that is sincere, productive, and gets the conversation back on track. For any objection we want to follow a similar pattern:

- Acknowledge the question;
- Answer their question as best you can, or if you don't have the answer – acknowledge that you'll get back to them with the info;
- Pivot: Go back to the concern/issue/benefit that you were connecting with them on, and talk about how being part of the union can make that issue/concern/benefit better; and then...
- Ask again about membership/COPE.

“But I've already been paying dues! Why I do I need to sign this card?” (Confusion around membership/fee payer status)

I understand the confusion. You have been paying fees because you are covered by the contract, but you aren't officially a member. Only members get the full benefits of our union like the right to vote in union elections and on contract ratifications, the right to attend trainings and go to our union convention. By becoming a member you are showing your commitment to stand together with your coworkers and showing the employer that we have the power to win a fair contract.

“Do my dues go to politicians?”

That's a valid concern. No, dues money is not used for political contribution. Dues are spent on building member power: bargaining wages and benefits, representing members, enforcing the contracts, trainings, communications and organizing. We have a separate political fund (COPE, etc) that supports candidates who support workers. Members voluntarily make a separate contribution to our political action fund and have a say in choosing where that money goes and who gets endorsed.

“I don't support XYZ candidate that the union endorsed.”

I understand your concern. We have over _____ members so we are never going to all agree but we all have a voice in the process. Our union and members care about issues that impact our jobs. The candidates we, the members, vote to endorse have been questioned and their voting records examined to make sure they support issues important to our jobs like our wages, pensions, healthcare (add your own issues). There are times when we've endorsed a candidate that wasn't my first choice, but as public employees, it's important for us to have a voice in politics. Politicians often make decisions about our contract and working conditions. We need to have political power to get wage increases, maintain our benefits, help to fund public services. If you don't agree with some of the positions, join; become active and share your ideas. What would you like to see us address?

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Objections and Tough Questions (CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

“Dues are too expensive. I can’t afford it.”

I hear what you are saying. The cost of living makes things tough for all of us. However, dues are ____% of your pay. Those dues allow us to negotiate a fair return on our work. (Provide an example of an economic win in a recent contract, if possible.) Our dues collectively give us the resources to fight for the improvements and changes we deserve. Could any of us protect or raise our wages/benefits on our own? No. We only have the wages we do because we stood together to negotiate them. We need everyone on board to protect benefits and wages and make improvements at work. In fact, for most of us, our dues works out to just \$____/hour and in return we’ve won in wages, benefits over \$____/hour. (Calculate average wages, employer contributions to healthcare/pensions/other economics). What improvements would you like to see happen?

“The union doesn’t do anything for me. I don’t get in trouble and I like my job.”

It’s great to hear that you are happy with your job! This is a good place to work now, and we have all worked hard to have a good contract that has made our jobs and working conditions better. Your job has been made better and more secure because we have stood together to win fair wages, benefits and good working conditions. Without our union contract we wouldn’t have all the rights and opportunities we have. We need to continue to stand together to protect those things. What part of your job is the most important to you? What do you want to protect?

“I’m still mad about (something that happened in the past).”

I’m sorry to hear that. I don’t know much about what happened then, but we can work together to make the future better. If we want to make improvements, we need to stand together. What would you like to see change? (Listen!) What are you willing to do to make that happen? I’m happy to set up a meeting with you and our leadership to listen to your concerns. In the end, we all must back each other up and stand together so that we’re all treated fairly.

“I don’t like unions.”

Why not? What do you think of when you say “union?” (Listen carefully without getting defensive. Find out what the real issue is: past experience, political disagreement, etc., and address that.) People have misconceptions about unions. Employers want us to think a union is a third party or people “out there” not connected with us. But our union is all of us standing together to have a say in our wages, benefits and working conditions. Everything that we have now is because our union and members have stood strong and bargained these rights and benefits. Having the power of our membership has made our employer take us seriously. Do you think you could make these improvements on your own? We all deserve more and the more we stand together for our future contracts the better we’ll all do.

“I’ll get the same wages and benefits. Why should I join?”

We will all lose money if we choose not to stand together and pay this small amount of dues per month to protect what we have now and improve in the future. Our employer takes us more seriously in bargaining if our membership is strong and they know that when we stand together, we’re able to win what we deserve. If our membership is not strong, our employer will take away things we’ve fought for and they won’t agree to the increases or improvements we propose.



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Messages for Allies (and What They Can Do)

It's no surprise that today the Supreme Court overturned more than four decades of precedent by making fair share fees for public sector workers unconstitutional in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case. From Day 1, this case was backed and funded by billionaire corporate extremists like the Koch Brothers to divide working people and pad the pockets of the wealthiest among us at the expense of the workers who create their profits.

Across Washington state, union families, our friends, neighbors, elected leaders and allies are standing up to send a clear message that no court decision can extinguish the necessity of working people standing together to make the American Dream possible for everyone. Because we know that when working people stand together, amazing victories are achieved.

In Washington, unions have partnered with progressive organizations to raise wages, ensure all workers have paid sick days, enact paid family leave, protect immigrants on the job, strengthen workplace safety, fund public education, protect the environment, fight for criminal justice, stand up for LGBTQ rights, support a women's right to choose, and much more. While we have achieved a lot together, there's so much more to do to make Washington a better place to live and work.

We need you to stand with us today to not only condemn this decision, but to amplify the need for strong unions to fight back against an economy that's rigged to the advantage of the wealthy and powerful.

Here are some ways to stand with working people TODAY and in the future:

1. **Join us on social media to support unions using the hashtag #UnionStrong.** If possible, take a picture of yourself with the #UnionStrong sign (see social media guidance below)
2. **Issue a statement condemning the decision and supporting the work unions do** to build strong communities in Washington.
3. **Join us in urging elected leaders to talk about the value unions provide to progressive causes.**

Thank you for all you do to make Washington stronger by supporting the right of working people to stand together in unions. **If you plan to issue a statement, use social media, or take other actions in support of working people on decision day, please let us know so that we can elevate your efforts.**



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Messages for Elected Officials (and What They Can Do)

It's no surprise that today the Supreme Court overturned more than four decades of precedent by making fair share fees for public sector workers unconstitutional in the Janus v. AFSCME case. From Day One, this case was backed and funded by billionaire corporate extremists like the Koch Brothers to divide working people and pad the pockets of wealthiest among us at the expense of the workers who create their profits.

Across Washington state, union families, our friends, neighbors and allies are standing up to send a clear message that no court decision can extinguish the necessity of working people standing together to make the American Dream possible for everyone. Because we know that when working people stand together, amazing victories are achieved.

In Washington, unions have partnered with progressive elected leaders to raise wages, ensure all workers have paid sick days, enact paid family leave, protect immigrants on the job, strengthen workplace safety, fund public education and much more. While we have achieved a lot together, there's so much more to do to make Washington a better place to live and work.

We need elected leaders to stand with us today to not only condemn this decision, but to amplify the need for strong unions to fight back against an economy that's rigged to the advantage of the wealthy and powerful.

Here are some ways to stand with working people TODAY and in the future:

1. **Join us on social media to support unions using the hashtag #UnionStrong.** If possible, take a picture of yourself with the #UnionStrong sign (see social media guidance below)
2. **Issue a statement condemning the decision and supporting the work unions do** to build strong communities in Washington.
3. **At forums and other public events, talk about the value unions provide to your communities** and the need to make it easier for workers to stand together in unions so that they have a seat at the table to negotiate for fair treatment in return for their hard work.

Thank you for all you do to make Washington stronger by supporting the right of working people to stand together in unions. **If you plan to issue a statement, use social media, or take other actions in support of working people on decision day, please let us know so that we can elevate your efforts.**



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Words to LOSE and Words to USE

WORDS TO LOSE		WORDS TO USE
Freeloader	➔	When working people stand together we have more power
Keep us from joining unions, make it harder to join unions	➔	Take away our freedom to stand together and negotiate
Hard work should be rewarded	➔	Fair pay for a hard day's work
Business	➔	Corporate lobbyists, corporate special interests, CEO's, wealthy elite
Protect Unions	➔	Protect our freedom to stand together
Right to join unions	➔	Freedom to stand together in a union
Political spending	➔	Power in numbers
Unions do X for us	➔	Our union gives us a seat at the table to negotiate fair wages and benefits
Protect our right to a union on the job	➔	Workers deserve the freedom to stand together in our union and have a voice on the job
Unionized	➔	Working people standing together in a union
When working people pay dues in a union	➔	When we stand together, we have some power. That power gives us a fair shot at the American Dream
Collective bargaining, bargain collectively	➔	A seat at the table to negotiate fair wages and benefit



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#UnionStrong #FreedomToJoin

Social Media Toolkit for Unions & Members

On Decision Day, we must speak as one – both offline and online! We need to show the world that we're **#UnionStrong** and support **#FreedomToJoin** across all social media platforms. The sample posts below will work for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Let's show the billionaires attacking unions who we are and why they won't ever be able to take away our freedom to stand together in unions!

ON DECISION DAY: Show you're #UnionStrong and you support #FreedomToJoin

Take action on Decision Day to maximize our impact on social media:

- **First and foremost: uses the hashtags #UnionStrong and #FreedomToJoin.** The Washington State Labor Council will be watching those hashtags and amplifying posts throughout the day. If you can, retweet and share other posts, too! Other hashtags that will be trending include: #Union and #WeRise. Use those as well!
- **On Decision Day, tell the world why you support your union** (or unions generally) in a tweet, Facebook post, and/or Instagram post!
- **If you post on Facebook, remember to set the post to “public”** so we can view/like your post!
- **Download the WSLC's Union Strong sign at wslc.org/unionstrong** and take a picture of yourself with the sign (group photos are great, too!) This will help take your tweet and/or post to the next level! These pics are great for Instagram and Snapchat, too.

SAMPLE #UNIONSTRONG POSTS FOR DECISION DAY

- Every single day our union fights for equal pay, safe workplaces and wages that can support Washington's families. We will never allow a court decision to stop us. We will always be proud to stand together, #UnionStrong! #FreedomToJoin
- We are dedicated to not only sustaining the labor movement but strengthening it for generations to come. No court decision will stop Washington's Unions from fighting for everyone to have a fair shot at the American Dream. #UnionStrong #FreedomToJoin
- Washington state needs strong unions to stand up to the rich and powerful who rig the economy against workers. No court case will change our commitment to stay #UnionStrong! #FreedomToJoin

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Social Media Toolkit for Unions & Members (CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

- We won't allow a court decision to stand in the way of our fight for good jobs, safe workplaces, equal pay for women, fair treatment of immigrants and dignity at work for everyone. We are always stronger together. #UnionStrong #FreedomToJoin
- We will never stop standing together for a balanced economy that gives everyone a fair shot at the American Dream. We are, and will always be, #UnionStrong! And we will fight to preserve the #FreedomToJoin!
- Corporate CEOs have been trying to destroy the freedom of working people to stand together in unions since the beginning. And they've always failed. We won't allow a court decision to turn back the clock on workers' rights. We've come too far. #FreedomToJoin #UnionStrong

SAMPLE IMAGES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Download and share these graphics from the Washington State Labor Council and the AFL-CIO. Visit: www.wslc.org/private-info password: **2018jointogether**



- On Decision Day, visit www.facebook.com/WAAflcio and follow @WAAFLCIO on Twitter for more posts and images. Share them and add your #UnionStrong comments.



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Decision Day Email to Supporters

Have an email queued up and ready to send as early as possible on Janus Decision Day (some Monday between now and June 25). The decision will be announced at 7 a.m. Pacific Time, so make plans to check TheStand.org or some other news source every Monday morning, and send your email as early as you can. If it's after noon when you send it, remove the first bullet referencing the noontime Solidarity Rallies.

[Subject line] **Show the world you're proud to be Union Strong**

[First name],

For decades billionaire corporate extremists like the Koch Brothers have bankrolled attacks to divide working people and pad the pockets of the wealthiest among us at the expense of the workers who create their profits.

They still haven't figured it out: our strength in numbers ultimately defeats their millions of dollars. A court decision will never stamp out decades of progress made by unions. Now more than ever before we must show the world we're proud to be union strong! Make a plan to talk to friends, family, and coworkers about why you support unions. Today, show you're #UnionStrong and you support #FreedomToJoin across social media:

- **ATTEND A SOLIDARITY RALLY TODAY!** — Union members and community supporters will be rallying to show they are Union Strong TODAY in Bellingham, Olympia, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma and Vancouver, Wash. The rallies will be at lunchtime from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Check www.TheStand.org for details/locations.
- **TWEET OR SHARE A POST ON FACEBOOK** about why you love your union and/or support unions, generally. Use the hashtags #UnionStrong and/or #FreedomToJoin.
- **SHOW THE WORLD YOU'RE UNION PROUD** — Add a pic to your social media post! Download and print a Union Strong sign at bit.ly/2KS6Nrl — take a pic with it, and post it to Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram. Don't forget to use the hashtag #UnionStrong

Today, we commit to not only sustaining the labor movement, but building and strengthening it so more working people can negotiate a fair deal in return for their hard work. Because of your dedication and commitment, Washington's unions will continue to lead the fight for a balanced economy that gives everyone a fair shot at the American Dream.

In solidarity,

[Signer]



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