

Last week, the Supreme Court issued a 5-4 decision in Janus vs. AFSME which overturned the Abood Case that has been providing commonsense precedent and labor peace for over 40 years. The court has ruled that an employee has the constitutional right to refuse to belong to a union and that the union cannot deduct dues without written authorization from the member.

This decision is not going to change the strength and solidarity of our union! The overwhelming majority of employees in our bargaining unit are members and understand the value of belonging to a union. PTU members will not experience any disruption to the service and representation they currently receive from the Union office. We will continue to assist members with salary issues, working conditions, disciplinary matters, evaluations, Criterion Based Hiring, and so on.

Additional benefits of union membership are:

- ✓ Members belong to an organization that is the collective voice for public schools, school employees and students.
- ✓ Members have a voice in or be able to participate in any local union meetings and social events.
- ✓ Members can vote on contract ratification, election of officers, or any other union matter.
- ✓ Members may serve on the bargaining team and/or provide input into negotiations of their contract.
- ✓ Members are eligible to attend RIFTHP/AFT trainings.
- ✓ Members are eligible to access union-sponsored workshops on issues such as teacher evaluation, grievance processing, retirement, health benefits, etc.
- ✓ Members are eligible to participate in the Emergency Sick Leave Bank.
- ✓ Members are eligible to receive the \$300 annual stipend from the PTU Health & Welfare Fund to purchase additional insurances such as short-term disability insurance.
- ✓ Members receive a fully-paid \$10,000 life insurance policy.
- ✓ Members are able to hold union office at the local, state or national level. Members are able to attend RIFTHP or AFT conferences.
- ✓ Members' dependents are eligible to apply for or receive any scholarship provided by the local union, the RIFTHP, the AFT or the AFL-CIO.

- ✓ Members receive \$1 million employment liability insurance. The AFT plan provides for damages and attorney fees up to \$1 million per member from claims arising out of a member's employment activities due to:
  - accidental bodily injury to a student or staff member.
  - accidental property damage of school or student property.
  - personal injury claim against you by a student, such as slander, libel, false arrest, false detention, imprisonment or invasion of privacy.
  - Defense cost reimbursement of up to \$250,000 per member per year for suits involving the denial of constitutional rights.
  - Up to \$1 million per member per year for inadvertent acts or omissions – including “failure to educate”.
  - Defense cost reimbursements up to \$35,000 per member per year for criminal charges arising out of school activities or sexual harassment if exonerated, otherwise \$5,000.
  - Up to \$5,000 for defense of covered claims in licensure board or credential hearings resulting from educational employment activities.
  - \$10,000 in the event of death due to assault while working.
  - Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance in an amount ranging from \$5,000 to \$62,500 if they accidentally die or accidentally lose a limb or sight.
  
- ✓ Members are also eligible for the following benefits and services through the AFT:
  - AFT Advantage members discounts on travel, electronics, restaurants, auto buying program, home appliances and services.
  - AFT financial service discounts on auto insurance, periodicals, discounted personal legal services, home owners insurance.
  - Local access to AFT Financial Services financial investments program; local access to AFT Financial Services representative.
  - And many more...

As you can see, in addition to having a voice in your career, school and livelihood, union membership has many benefits. In the next several weeks more information will be provided as we navigate through the implementation of the Janus decision. In the meantime, should you have any questions or concerns or wish to confirm whether or not you have joined the PTU membership, please contact the Union office. The office is open all summer from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

In Solidarity,



Maribeth K. Calabro  
President