

STRONG UNIONS, STRONGER COMMUNITIES

BONNEE BENTUM

K-12 teacher, Philadelphia, Pa.



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If unions are weakened, our voices won't be there. And what we'll see is the widening of the divide between the haves and the have-nots. Through our union, we won counselors and nurses for every public school; pay increases for staff after obtaining graduate degrees; and safe and healthy building conditions for all our children, your children.

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Union teachers, nurses and public service employees educate our children, care for and heal our families, and keep our communities safe and running. Strong unions enable working people to fight for a better life and for the economic opportunity and security for all Americans.

The Koch brothers, the DeVos family, and other wealthy and corporate interests see the opportunity and voice that unions enable as a threat to their power. They want to further rig our economy and our democracy against working folks. Corporate interests have committed millions to “defund and defang” unions, and the Koch brothers are using the massive tax breaks they just got to spend \$400 million to “break” teachers unions and undermine public education.

LLAMARA PADRO-MILANO

Registered nurse, Syracuse, N.Y.



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Without the union, I wouldn't have been able to go to Puerto Rico immediately after Hurricane Maria hit to provide lifesaving medical treatment. And I wasn't alone—300 union brothers and sisters were with me, and when we went to homes, towns and neighborhoods, we were often told we were the first people they had seen to help.

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These corporate interests have funded a case—*Janus v. AFSCME*—being heard by the Supreme Court today, which aims to defund and ultimately destroy unions. The Supreme Court has long upheld that states can decide how they handle their labor relations, including explicitly allowing unions to represent employees, and that public employees who do not want to join the union that represents them may instead pay a “fair share” fee. This fee is meant to compensate the union for bargaining contracts and other services; nonmembers are not required to pay anything toward any political activity by the union. Twenty-three states have opted to do this, because collective bargaining has proven to lead to more efficient state services and a better quality of life.

Janus' backers argue, with no evidence, that this 40-year precedent violates nonmembers' right to free speech. The current ideological composition of the Supreme Court suggests that this one complaint could undercut the interests of millions of workers by depriving their unions of funds they need to function. That's not an unintended consequence—it's the entire point of these assaults on unions. Unions fight for a better life for working people, and the right wing sees that as a threat.

DAVID WALSH

Grad employee, Princeton, N.J.



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The union made all the difference in our fight to keep graduate school affordable for everyone, not just the wealthy; together we defeated a tax on graduate tuition so anyone who wants to advance their careers or dedicate their lives to research and learning can get the education they need.

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Working people are uniting to stop this attack on our freedoms—an attack being funded by corporate interests that just want to rig our economy and democracy against us.



A Union of Professionals
Randi Weingarten
PRESIDENT

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