



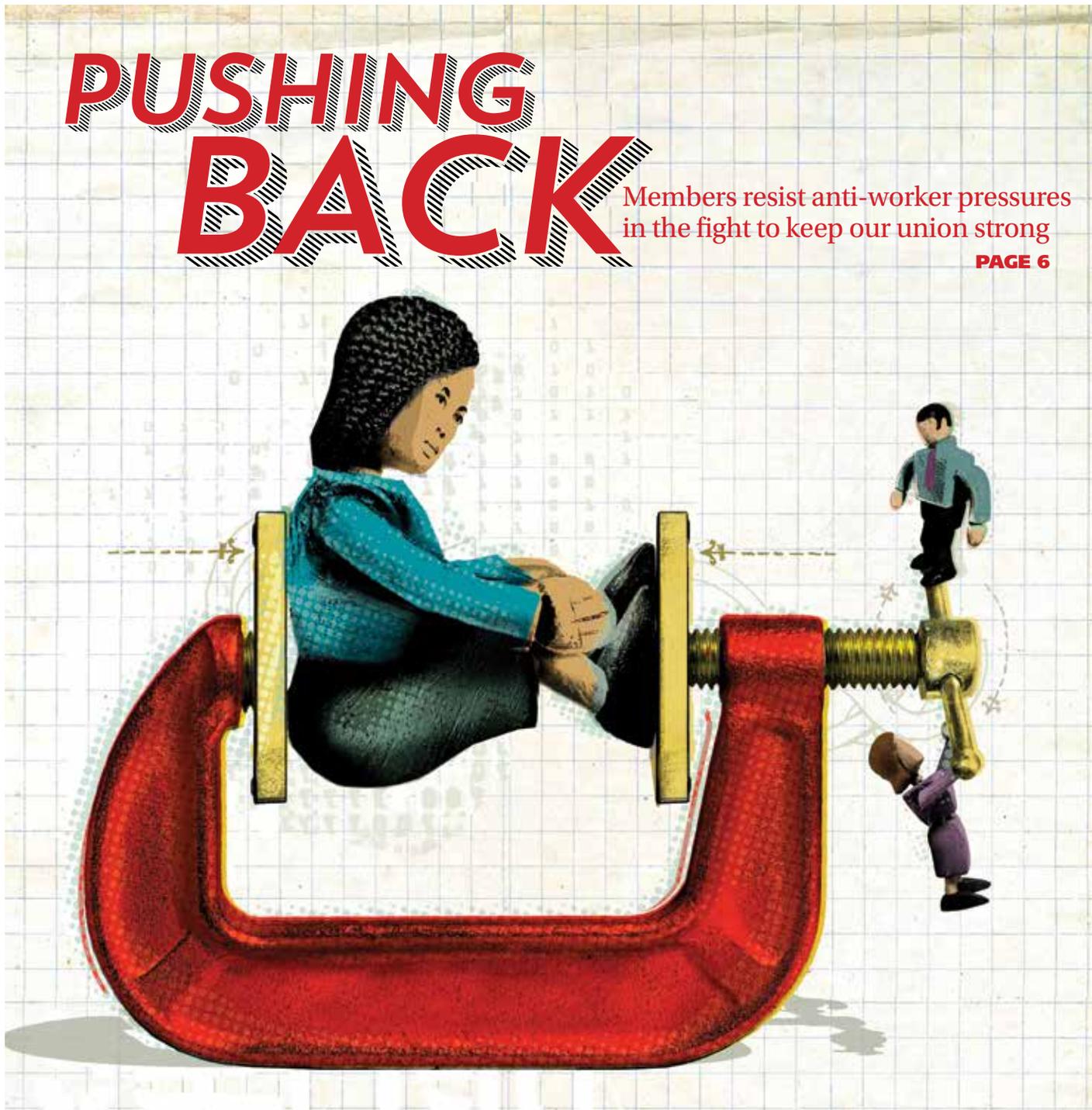
PSRP Reporter

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF AFT PARAPROFESSIONALS AND SCHOOL-RELATED PERSONNEL

PUSHING BACK

Members resist anti-worker pressures in the fight to keep our union strong

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OUR MISSION

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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'Cheese sandwich' policies don't satisfy kids

GIVEN THE ECONOMIC PRESSURES on working families, good school nutrition is more important than ever. Serving healthier meals is vital for our kids.

Many school meal programs, however, struggle to pay for healthier food and more wholesome preparation, as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. In a recent survey of AFT members, 42.9 percent of food service workers said they expected school meal costs to exceed revenues. With low federal reimbursement rates for school meals (42 cents for paid meals, \$2.81 for reduced-price meals and \$3.21 for free meals), the added cost of healthy food gets passed on to families that can least afford it.

This predicament has led to "cheese sandwich," "alternate meal" and "unpaid balance" policies in school districts nationwide. These policies apply when a student has surpassed some threshold—five unpaid meals or a negative balance of \$12, for example—or when a child lacks documentation to qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

When that happens, children must forgo the school's hot, nutritious lunch and instead receive an alternate meal, one that is often less substantive, less nutritious and cold, such as a cheese sandwich and milk. They even may be asked to return a hot meal that has already been set on their tray, ready to be eaten. Meanwhile, kids miss out on the most nutritious—and sometimes the only—food they would have received that day.

Cheese sandwich policies pit children's health against schools' bottom lines. And who loses that contest? Our kids.

Alternate meals and "no feed" policies can lead to students feeling singled out and embarrassed. One in 4 surveyed members

reported seeing a child stigmatized for parents' lack of payment or documentation. Cheese sandwich policies can mean students go hungry, skipping the cafeteria entirely to avoid embarrassment.

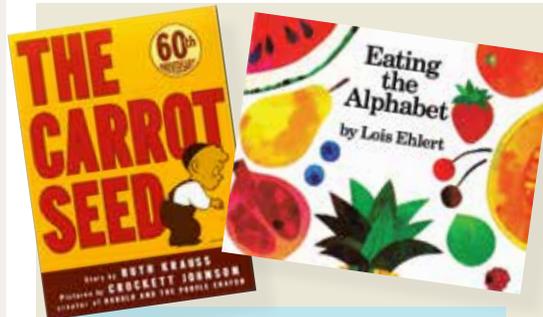
Seeing this conflict between nutritional and financial priorities, many AFT members go so far as to pay off a student's balance or break rules to slip him or her a regular meal. Many others keep a desk drawer or cabinet filled with food for students they know come to school hungry.

"Truth be told, there are a few of us who make sure the students don't go without lunch," says a former chef and cafeteria manager from West Virginia. "We pay their bill."

To begin addressing this nationwide issue, the AFT has sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture sharing AFT members' thoughts and recommendations, and proposing ways to eliminate ad hoc solutions.

The letter from AFT President Randi Weingarten to the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service maps out in detail what the federal government could do to improve school meal programs. Broadly, this includes restructuring programs so that all children have regular, nutritious meals; providing models for schools and districts that continue to use alternate meal policies; and avoiding punitive scenarios when families can't pay.

"At the end of the day, the health and well-being of our children comes before the bottom line," Weingarten wrote. "Denying a child food, excluding a child from school activities or marginalizing a child goes against the AFT's mission and the mission of FNS, which is 'to provide children and needy families better access to food and a more healthful diet.'"



Tasty books for tots

FOOD DOESN'T have to be cheesy for kids to love it. AFT partner First Book, whose mission is to increase access to books, offers new, low-cost books about healthy eating on its First Book Marketplace. Check out *The Carrot Seed* and *Eating the Alphabet* as two great examples of picture books that can help instill a love of reading and healthy eating at a young age.

Find books on healthy foods at First Book Marketplace: www.fbmarketplace.org/healthy-eating.



Building our power by standing together

RANDI WEINGARTEN, AFT President

CAMPUS GROUNDSKEEPERS IN California. Records clerks in Maryland. Paraprofessionals in Michigan. Our members are proud of what they do. Across the country, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel are building on that pride to strengthen our union from the inside out, while fighting for the services their students and communities need—and beating back the latest round of attacks from those who want nothing more than to eviscerate us.

Why is there this drumbeat of attacks? Because those who choose to destroy us know that their claims about things like trickle-down economics and the evils of big government don't hold much water with the rest of us. They know that those in the 99 percent realize that their aim is to further build the 1 percent's astronomical wealth. So instead, their strategy is to dismantle our infrastructure, piece by piece.

The attacks have been sweeping through our state legislatures. Wisconsin, for example, recently became the 25th state with a so-called right-to-work law after Gov. Scott Walker reversed a campaign promise by signing a bill aimed to silence workers by destroying their link with their union. Unfortunately, the impact of these efforts extends well beyond our members: Workers in right-to-work states make about \$1,500 less per year than workers in states with collective bargaining.

On the national stage, the U.S. Supreme Court could change the way that public sector unions function in this country. *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* is the latest in a series of court cases intended to upset the balance of power.

The plaintiffs in *Friedrichs*, like those in *Harris v. Quinn* a year ago, are pushing to put an end to “agency fee,” which represents the cost to the union of representing all workers in a bargaining unit. Agency fee

is also known as “fair share,” because it's only fair if everyone who benefits from the services a union provides—such as collective bargaining for things like better wages, healthcare, a secure retirement and protections against wrongful firing—chips in to cover the cost of those benefits.

Under the current system, if a majority of workers in a given workplace vote in favor of forming a union, everyone gets the benefits of that union. If the Supreme Court were to follow the plaintiffs' reasoning, it would

Private sector unions helped drive up all workers' wages. And public sector unions ensured better government services for the poor and middle class. The gap in income between the wealthy few and the rest of us was about half of what we see today.

Take it from the International Monetary Fund: Rising inequality on the global level is in part due to a decline in unionization. Or as Hillary Clinton said, “The American middle class was built, in part, by the right for people to organize and bargain.”

The American middle class can be rebuilt by our collective right to organize and bargain, by reminding each other that the way we fight back is to stand together.

be setting aside thousands of public employee contracts as well as precedent reaffirmed by the court at least four times over the past 30 years. Workers in a bargaining unit wouldn't have to pay their fair share even though the union would continue to work on their behalf. The intention of the *Friedrichs* case is strictly to starve unions.

Right now, we're dealing with the equivalent of tectonic plates across America. On one side, we have the deck stacked against working families, with attacks on workers' rights and breaks for corporations and the wealthy few. On the other side, we have working families whose wages have been stagnant for decades—who don't just want to get by but want to get ahead. They are clamoring for change.

The labor movement was instrumental in building a middle class. When unions were at their peak, more workers—upward of 50 percent—were in the middle class. Even those who were historically marginalized and disenfranchised—women, African-Americans and Latinos—had a clearer path.

I would add: The American middle class can be rebuilt by our collective right to organize and bargain. Which is why what our members in California, Maryland, Michigan and elsewhere are doing is so important. They are fortifying and building our power by reminding each other that the way we fight back is to stand together—willfully defiant.

They are doing it by sitting down, member to member, co-worker to co-worker, friend to friend, and reminding each other that our power comes from one another. As we stand up against relentless attacks from those who want to wipe unions off the map and take away workers' voice, that strength gives us the power to fight back and move forward.

Remember, when we are stronger together, we can leverage that power to improve the lives of the kids, families and communities we serve. And that's why we're here. We take pride in our work. We take pride in improving the lives of others. We can build on that power, if we do it together.

PSRPs launch full-court press on ESEA reauthorization

Members travel from as far as Alaska to talk with their representatives in Congress

FROM GRASS-ROOTS LOBBYING on Capitol Hill to a telephone town hall meeting, the AFT has focused intense energy on reauthorization of the keystone federal law for K-12 education: the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

More than 40 AFT activists from 19 states traveled to Washington, D.C., in March and April, urging their senators to preserve essential ingredients and advocate for changes in ESEA (known in its current version as No Child Left Behind). ESEA also was the focus of a telephone town hall meeting that drew more than 4,000 activists.

The visits connected the faces and voices of classroom educators with AFT priorities. Among those goals: to maintain paraprofessional qualification requirements, to relieve the pressure of high-stakes tests, to expand access to early education and to maintain ESEA's original purpose—keeping funds focused on schools with high concentrations of poverty.

Paraprofessionals and school-related personnel have been more active than ever during this year's reauthorization. They are explaining to Congress and their communities the necessity of keeping the law's language that all paraprofessionals must attain certain levels of professional development and certification, such as college credits or equivalent exams—a fact that AFT President Randi Weingarten and Secretary-Treasurer Lorretta Johnson pointed out in a letter to Senate leaders. The AFT has advocated for paraprofessional standards for more than 35 years—an effort Johnson has led since she served on a national task force about para certification in 1979.

PSRPs began mobilizing in the weeks leading up to lobby day.

PSRP Chair Ruby Newbold, president of the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees and an AFT vice president, encouraged all members to make their voices heard in Washington and to keep parents and other allies informed at home. It's important that PSRPs continue to push for school resources, she said, urging them to call or write their representatives.

"We need to put pressure on both sides of the aisle," she said.

And in fact, AFT pressure on the House side yielded a victory for paraprofessionals. Thanks to thousands of calls, letters and tweets, the House voted 218-201—winning over 35 Republican members—to restore the qualification requirements for paraprofessionals working in high-poverty schools. While there is much AFT members don't like about NCLB, one thing we do appreciate is the provision that mandates training and stops school districts from hiring paras with little experience in education.

Awesome lobby days

PSRPs were well represented during lobby day visits. At the office of Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), paraprofessional Dien Forbes, a member of the United Teachers of Dade, said she has used every bit of her training in behavioral therapy, bilingual skills and autism to help students learn. She expressed hope that PSRP training and professional standards will continue under ESEA.

Alfreda Martin, a pre-K and kindergarten paraprofessional, also from the United Teachers of Dade, described how the teacher in her classroom went out on maternity leave for three months and was replaced with three different substitutes. "By me being the para, knowing the students and knowing the curriculum, it went smoothly," Martin told a Senate staffer. "You need a highly qualified paraprofessional."

MaryFran Wessler, a paraprofessional at Peoria High School in central Illinois and president of the Peoria Federation of Support Staff, traveled to Washington because she's concerned about further cuts to programs that fight concentrated poverty, and she wants the Senate to maintain paraprofessional qualification standards in its version of ESEA.

Wessler said she's seeing more students trying to cope with symptoms of poverty, such as too little food and too much crime in their neighborhoods. She showed staffers in the office of Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) a list of trainings she has taken to mitigate the effects of poverty and to maintain her qualifications as a paraprofessional—from emotional, social and cognitive training to understanding medical conditions and administering emergency medical procedures.

When one staffer expressed surprise about the need for diabetes training, Wessler explained: "When a kid drops into a coma in front of you, you need to know what to do and not do."

Because of loss of funding, teachers are dealing with increasing class sizes, Wessler adds, making paras more important than ever. "Professional development is huge," she says. "We need that for our students."

Marcia Watson, an administrative paraprofessional who works in the office of Proviso West High School near Chicago, says all paras in Illinois now know the right way to uphold

"We need to put pressure on both sides of the aisle."

—RUBY NEWBOLD

President of the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees, PSRP chair and AFT vice president



At the offices of Michigan Sen. Debbie Stabenow, from left: Andella White, Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals; Anna Platt, senator's staff; Lois Lofton-Doniver, former secretary-treasurer, AFT Michigan; and Doug Messana, senator's staff.

LEONARD EDMONDS



BRIAN PASCALE

From left, Marcia Watson, Jesse Sharkey, MaryFran Wessler and Amy Alsop represent the Illinois Federation of Teachers during lobby day at their senators' offices.



MICHAEL CAMPBELL

PSRP leader Sharon Baker of Alaska, president of the TOTEM Association of Educational Support Personnel in Anchorage, visits the offices of Sen. Lisa Murkowski to discuss ESEA reauthorization, especially Title I funding.

standards and handle school procedures. “If you don’t have qualified people, then you basically just have baby sitters,” says Watson.

Representing PSRPs in Ohio, Kris Schwarzkopf, a paraprofessional and PSRP leader from the Toledo Federation of Teachers, met with the staff of Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Rob Portman (R-Ohio).

In April, a delegation of PSRPs came all the way from Alaska to visit one of their senators. PSRP leader Sharon Baker, president of the TOTEM Association of Educational Support Personnel in Anchorage, joined TOTEM Vice President Sandy Thompson and AFT field rep Jennifer Nicoletto at the offices of Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) to share their thoughts with the senator on ESEA’s Title I funding. “Good programs are not cheap, and they keep getting cut,” Baker said.

Emails flooding in

PSRPs were among AFT members who submitted 18,000 comments to Congress on our priorities for ESEA.

“We have to make sure that all our paraprofessionals are not only qualified, but have the continuing professional development needed to perform the duties they are hired for,” wrote Patricia Speech, a teaching assistant and vice president of the Baldwinsville (N.Y.) Educational Support Professionals.

“I am a classified employee with a master’s degree in public administration,” wrote Fern Reisner, a member of the AFT College Staff Guild in Los Angeles. “It is important to keep the standards and requirements high, not water them down or discard them.”

Noting that only 11 states have paraprofessional standards codified under state law, and that the rest of the states will have no such provisions unless the federal standards continue, a number of PSRPs specifically asked Congress not to return this responsibility to the states.

Members also invoked the original, bipartisan intent of NCLB to help students. “Without proper training for paraprofessionals, both initially and continuing, children would most certainly be left behind,” explained Donna Flanagan, a member of the Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers in Orland Park, Ill.

Even several academics wrote to Congress on the importance of paraprofessionals in the classroom. “I am a Ph.D. student in curriculum and instruction at Purdue University and have been in many different schools, seeing paraprofessionals in many varied capacities,” wrote Sue Ellen Richardson, a member of the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children. “Paraprofessionals require training, as they provide vital support for students. Without paraprofessional training, students would not receive the support they need.”

But as always, PSRPs themselves say it best.

“Do not leave us out of the equation,” wrote Janet Eberhardt, a member of the United Educators of San Francisco. “We need the skills to fully assist in teaching and learning. We do the work and we must be supported in the reauthorization.”

Follow-up is critical

These visits, comments and calls, combined with follow-up both in Washington, D.C., and back home, will be critical in the weeks ahead. Leaders in the Senate proposed a bipartisan bill in April, while the House of Representatives could vote any time on its draft. Differences between the two bills will then need to be ironed out before a bill is offered to the White House—creating a critical window of opportunity for PSRPs to communicate with their lawmakers.

The AFT’s telephone town hall provided thousands of activists with breaking news on ESEA reauthorization and allowed them to put that information to work immediately. After the call, many participants took a moment to patch their phone connection into the offices of their senators—leaving messages that highlight what public schools need in ESEA for the profession and the students they serve.

These types of calls, letters, emails and visits have a big impact on Capitol Hill, AFT President Randi Weingarten told the town hall crowd. They can help our union seize this opportunity to fashion a good new law. “I thank you for wanting to make a difference in the lives of children and for standing up for the respect and dignity you deserve,” Weingarten said.

Union presidents talk ESEA priorities

THE PRESIDENTS of the nation’s two largest education unions offered a shared vision for overhauling the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in March at a meeting of state policy chiefs and in a joint keynote address during a Share My Lesson virtual conference. AFT President Randi Weingarten and National Education Association President Lily Eskelsen Garcia emphasized that our unions are on the same page when it comes to moving ESEA away from testing mania and back to its original purpose: giving children in poverty the same shot at success as wealthier students.

PUSHING BACK

What every PSRP needs to know about member mobilization

A UNION MEMBER in this time of constant attacks on working families could understandably be excused for feeling battle weary. Every election, we are told, is the most important election, and every fight is the biggest fight against the longest odds. It is hard to cut through the hype and identify the real threats.

It's important, though, to be aware of a U.S. Supreme Court case that may present us with a national challenge and a tremendous opportunity.

In *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, a group of educators backed by a right-wing pressure group filed a lawsuit that has made its way to the highest court in America. It

public education will become stronger. Here's what AFT President Randi Weingarten had to say about member mobilization at the PSRP conference in April. She started by presenting an award to Robin Herrin, a paraprofessional member of Red River United in Louisiana who used her AFT training in CPR to revive a woman who had stopped breathing.

"Robin has done something that is incredible but is so representative of what we do," Weingarten told those attending the conference in Washington, D.C.

Herrin's quieter heroics, Weingarten added, include helping her union organize members in a state where it's tough to or-

a given workplace decide they want to form a union. Once they choose union representation, the union becomes their exclusive representative; in other words, the union is the only organization permitted to represent their interests to their employer. What's more, the union is required by law to represent their interests. This is true even if a worker chooses not to join the union and pay union dues.

The First Amendment gives all of us the right to join or not join any group we want. It is easy to see how this could cause problems for a union; it has the legal obligation to represent all workers in the workplace, whether or not they join.

To deal with this problem, unions developed the concept of agency fee, also known as fair share—because it's only fair that employees who reap the benefits of a good union contract pay their fair share of the cost of negotiating that contract. Workers in a unionized workplace who don't want to join the union may be required to reimburse the union for that cost.

The agency fee equals the amount of money needed to represent a member in collective bargaining. Other expenses, such as costs for political activity, are not charged to fair share payers—in other words, these nonmembers only pay for bargaining and administering a contract that covers their wages, hours and working conditions.

Depending on how a particular union operates, the cost of representation for each agency fee payer may range from a small fraction of the membership cost to almost as much as membership.

In the 1970s, a group of teachers in Detroit who did not want to join the Detroit Federation of Teachers or pay the agency fee brought a lawsuit, *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*. They argued that having to pay the fee violated their First Amendment right to associate with whoever they wanted to. The Supreme Court upheld the agency fee, saying it did not violate the First Amendment.

Abood has remained the law of the land since 1977. However, over the past several years, the Supreme Court has decided two cases calling that law into question. In 2012, the court held in *Knox v. SEIU* that the First

Why is union power so important? Here is the main reason why: our students.

asks the court to decide whether public sector unions may continue to charge nonmembers a fee equal to the cost of representing them to their employer.

This fee is called "agency fee" or "fair share." In states where there is no fair share, the union must sign up everyone as a full member—not merely a fair share payer—to keep the union strong.

If the court rules against us, then our work to support working families and the middle class will become harder. But if we are prepared, our efforts to reclaim the promise of

organize. Louisiana, like so many states in the South, has a so-called right-to-work law, in which employees aren't required to pay their fair share for union representation. Herrin's deep involvement in her union shows that "we have the tools, and we have the courage and the confidence," to grow our union.

"Our job—on top of all our other jobs—is to connect with other members," Weingarten said. "We have to go back to making this a movement, like 100 years ago when people had no power."

Why is union power so important? Here is the main reason why: our students. More union power brings more resources for students—better learning opportunities, updated and safer facilities, and the best academic tools available. School and college employees want these things for their students, and a powerful union helps get them. When unions are strong, income inequality lessens and we have a larger and more vibrant middle class.

What's behind the case

To appreciate what *Friedrichs* is about, it is important to understand how collective bargaining works in our country.

Let's say public sector workers in



AFT President Randi Weingarten, left, commends Louisiana paraprofessional Robin Herrin for her union activism.

MICHAEL CAMPBELL

How members are taking action

Many AFT affiliates have been building membership for years

CALIFORNIA

IN CALIFORNIA, the Berkeley Council of Classified Employees has been reaching out to new workers as soon as they're hired. Bus driver and union member Johnny Billups attends new hire orientation sessions. "Johnny, as soon as we have new employees,

he signs them up within a matter of days," says BCCE President Paula Phillips. At other times, "it's all about the site reps going out and talking to them."

Of about 600 represented by the local, only 45 are agency fee payers. Billups finds the union "accessible and personable," a place where you can get involved, find out what's going on and make a difference. A place you can trust.

"The union is going to be working for you, so participate in it," Billups says. "That's the way I believe."

ILLINOIS

THE PEORIA Federation of Support Staff revamped its structure of building representatives. Union activists surveyed their reps, recruited new ones, held monthly trainings and assembled a building rep toolkit. Within two months, the number of agency fee payers dropped by 60 percent as employees realized the importance of membership in their union.

School secretary Marcy Lee, along with teaching assistants April Scott and Gail Johnson,



COURTESY OF MARCY LEE

From left, April Scott, Marcy Lee and Gail Johnson work as a team.

kicked into high gear after last November's elections. Working together at their high school, the trio signed up cafeteria workers and paras, many of whom were fair share payers who thought they were members. Lee signed up about a dozen members herself. The magic words, she found, are: "We need you."

MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN BECAME a right-to-work state in 2012, eliminating agency fee for workers who did not feel like joining the union but still could receive its benefits. It also ended payroll deduction of dues, so members had to go to the trouble of recommitting to their union every year. Well, the Van Dyke Educational Assistants Federation did not take this lying down. They went out and obtained a 100 percent recommitment from members in a massive show of solidarity and support.



RUSS CURTIS

Amendment does not permit a public sector union to impose a special assessment unless a worker opts in. Two years later, in *Harris v. Quinn*, the court said the First Amendment prohibits the collection of agency fees from home healthcare providers, whom the court determined to be "partial" or "quasi" public employees, not full-fledged public employees like those in *Abood*.

Now there's the *Friedrichs* case. The court will choose what it decides on, but it is being asked to answer two questions: (1) whether public sector agency fee arrangements should be invalidated under the First Amendment; and (2) whether it violates the First Amend-

ment to require public employees to opt out of paying full dues (as they must do now) rather than having to opt in, which would force unions to sign up members over and over again every year.

At the end of the day, what this really means is yet another attack by those who do not share our vision for worker rights, a strong middle class and the American dream.

Reclaiming the promise

Friedrichs represents a real threat to workers, so we have two choices: We can agonize or we can organize. The AFT already is rising to this challenge, operating as if the justices will is-

sue an unfavorable decision. As you can see, many of our PSRPs are working hard to sign up and activate members, especially by bringing nonmembers and agency fee payers on board as full members.

The AFT is a union of professionals, a union of solutions and a union of action. PSRP members are talking the talk and walking the walk, championing fairness, democracy and economic opportunity for all. This is what reclaiming the promise of public education is all about. We and our community partners are all in this fight together. We can win full membership in our local unions. And when we do, we'll come out stronger.



Fighting power with **POWER**

IT WAS THEIR once-a-year chance to come together, hundreds of paraprofessionals and school-related personnel “powering up” for the hard work ahead: Hard work to mobilize fellow members. Hard work to restore school funding. Hard work to end racism.

“When will we say we’ve had enough?” asked PSRP Chair Ruby Newbold, above left, president of the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees and an AFT vice president, to open the conference, held April 15-19 in Washington, D.C. “We are powering up, ... and now that we’re powered up and fully charged, let’s get to work.”

Before and after swapping ideas on powering up members, PSRPs heard what AFT President Randi Weingarten had to say about it. She started by talking about the threat to union organizing that’s now playing out in the U.S. Supreme Court (see story, page 6). She updated the crowd on the status of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-



cation Act (see page 4). And she marked the beginning of the AFT’s participation in the 2016 presidential election by pointing members to “You Decide” (see page 10).

As always, Solidarity Night brought PSRPs to their feet for an explosion of celebration and protest set to music by the AFT Chorus, with powerful performances from PSRPs in the Chicago Teachers Union and the Baltimore Teachers Union, among others.

AFT PSRP loaded up its pre-conference schedule with Jump Start activities, in which attendees and staff join local volunteers to give back to the community (see next page).

The second day featured a seminar on the role of civil rights in the American labor movement. The labor portion of Jump Start closed with an exercise in creating vision statements. Some of the most inspiring included these: “Our children are our vision.”

“Diversity multiplies opportunity.”

“Be a mouth that can work a crowd.” And, “Member, get a member.” As one PSRP said: “We’re working for families. We’re working for health. We’re working for true opportunity for all.” And there was this: “Don’t sit alone. Stand together and fight.”

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL CAMPBELL

BEST BUDDIES IN THE AFT

“SKIMPY AND SCAMPI.” It’s like a buddy movie, but not terrible.

That’s the story of PSRP leaders Wayne Scott of Colorado and George Williams of Florida, whose deep friendship epitomizes what it means to have a “first friend, best friend” in the AFT.

Scott started out as a steelworker, later becoming a school bus driver. Only through steady organizing in the Colorado Classified School Employees Association was he able to mobilize members into an outpost of union strength. As president of the American Association of Classified School Employees, Scott led an effort to keep students safe from school violence, organizing the first national CCSEA safe schools summit. He’s held public office and become a national expert on school transportation.

“I don’t think there’s anything more important to our families than public schools and trade unions,” Scott says.

For these reasons and more, Wayne Scott took home the Albert Shanker Pioneer Award from this year’s PSRP conference. But it is his bond with George Williams, a past winner, that made the two what they are: “Skimpy and Scampi,” Scott for his stature and Williams for his love of shrimp.

At right: Award-winner Wayne Scott. Top: Scott and George Williams try on buffalo headdresses in Denver.



2015 PSRP award winners

Albert Shanker PSRP Pioneer Award

- Wayne Scott, Colorado Classified School Employees Association

Child Welfare and Community Service Helping Hands Award

- Jason Farr, Lawndale (Calif.) Federation of Classified Employees
- Ariceli Guzman, Lawndale Federation of Classified Employees

Children’s Literacy Award

- The Federation (Delaware)
- New York State United Teachers

Community Service Award

- Oregon School Employees Association

Defender of the Public Service Award

- Hillsborough (Fla.) School Employees Federation
- Niskayuna (N.Y.) School District Employees Association

Dorothea Bell Political Action Award

- Toledo (Ohio) Federation of Teachers
- Eastern Suffolk (N.Y.) BOCES

Loretta Johnson Solidarity in Action Award

- Toledo Federation of Teachers
- Oregon School Employees Association

Organizing Award

- Van Dyke (Mich.) Educational Assistants Federation
- Peoria (Ill.) Federation of Support Staff

Militancy Award

- Long Beach (N.Y.) Schools Employees Association

Union Helping Hands Award

- Robin Herrin, Red River United (Louisiana)

Workers’ Memorial Day Award

- Houston Educational Support Personnel
- Darendra Hahn, Cahokia (Ill.) Federation of Teachers
- Constance McKenna, Pontiac-William Holliday (Ill.) Federation of Teachers

Doing what we do best: **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

'Jump Start' to annual PSRP conference gives books, greens gardens, stocks baby baskets

BEFORE GETTING TOGETHER for their annual meeting of school and college support professionals, members of AFT PSRP got together to give back to the community that hosted them.

This year, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel teamed up with Smart from the Start, a program that supports school readiness, to host a community day on April 16 in the Woodland Terrace neighborhood of Southeast Washington, D.C.

There were hundreds of flowers and trees to be planted, tons of mulch to be slung, children's books to be distributed and barbecue to be eaten.

"We PSRPs always try to give back to the community because we are the community," Ruby Newbold, an AFT vice president and the PSRP chair, told the crowd.

AFT partner First Book helped a busload of PSRPs from across the

nation unpack and distribute about a thousand new books and baby supplies to our union's D.C. neighbors. PSRPs and AFT staff had donated enough baby supplies to fill 50 baskets for new parents, plus enough excess supplies for Smart from the Start to use in the year to come.

The volunteers grabbed shovels and rakes to plant flowers, and several worked on the chow line during a picture-perfect spring day in the nation's capital. Other volunteers included staff from the D.C. Housing Authority and the Woodland Terrace Resident Council.

Ron Friday, a community navigator with the D.C. Housing Authority, noted that April 16 is the anniversary of Emancipation Day in the District of Columbia—marking the abolition of slavery there in 1862. On that day, more than 3,000 enslaved people were freed eight months before the Emancipation Proclamation liberated slaves in the South. Like other city employees who helped with

the event, Mr. Friday, as he is called, had volunteered his time on a holiday.

"It's mind-blowing," said Kat Chapman of Smart from the Start. "We've never had such support."

Another contingent of PSRPs remained indoors to load up children's backpacks headed for Lynn, Mass., which has seen an influx of unaccompanied minors from Central America. Volunteers received a "backgrounder" on the situation from representatives of the Latin American Youth Center and Ayuda, a nonprofit group that helps these children deal with family separation, fend off gangs and find access to services.

"We **PSRPs** always try to **give back** to the community because **we are the community.**"

—RUBY NEWBOLD
AFT vice president and PSRP chair



PSRPs help members of the community, left, plant and mulch around playgrounds, residents' homes and common areas.

Volunteers dish up picnic fare, with barbecue, top left, being the most popular choice.

AFT partner First Book, above, provides free books that kids can take home.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL CAMPBELL



A Union of Professionals

ELECTION 2016: YOU DECIDE.

As we approach the 2016 presidential election, working families want to know about the issues at stake and where the candidates stand.

We've put together information* on leading declared and potential candidates and their positions on issues critical to AFT members and the communities they serve.† Read and consider carefully. Then let us know who you think deserves the AFT's endorsement and support. Visit aft.org/election2016.

It's your union. It's your voice. You decide.



K-12 Education

Higher Education

Affordable Care Act

Labor/Jobs/Economy

Retirement Security

Immigration



BIDEN

Longtime supporter of increased federal funding for critical preK-12 education programs.

A firm opponent of private school vouchers.

Led the Obama administration's \$500 million initiative to create and expand innovative partnerships between community colleges and businesses to train workers with the skills employers need.

Strongly supported and advocated for the ACA: The ACA gives "the American people more freedom and control over their healthcare choices, improving the quality of the care that they receive and reducing cost, all by building on the best of our private insurance system."

Supports raising the minimum wage and is sharply critical of rising income inequality.

Opposes privatizing Social Security, cutting benefits and raising the retirement age.

Supports comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship.

Supports the DREAM Act.



CLINTON

Leader of "Too Small to Fail," an effort to improve the health and well-being of children from birth to age 5. Supports increased Title I funding for schools in need. Opposes private school vouchers.

Has fought to expand financial aid for low-income college students.

Is committed to preserving and improving the ACA.

Favors raising the minimum wage and is an avowed union supporter. "When I'm president, we're going to stand up for unions. We're going to make sure they can organize for fair wages and good working conditions."

Opposes cutting Social Security benefits, privatizing the program and raising the retirement age.

Supports comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship.

Supports the DREAM Act.



O'MALLEY

As governor, invested record amounts in Maryland's public schools. Under O'Malley, funding increased by 37 percent.

Opposes private school vouchers.

Increased state funding to allow Maryland colleges and universities to freeze tuition from 2007-2011.

Supports the ACA. Maryland was one of the first states to set up a health insurance exchange.

Supports increasing the minimum wage.

Supports strengthening collective bargaining rights. In 2007, signed an executive order to grant collective bargaining rights to healthcare aides and child care workers.

Opposes privatizing Social Security and instead supports expanding the benefit.

Supports comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship.

Championed a version of the DREAM Act for Maryland's public colleges and universities.



SANDERS

Signed the Fix America's Schools Today (FAST) Act of 2011.

Co-sponsored an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for increased funding.

Co-sponsored the Student Loan Affordability Act, which extended the reduced interest rate for Stafford student loans.

Introduced the American Health Security Act, which would guarantee healthcare as a human right and provide every U.S. citizen and permanent resident with healthcare coverage and services through a state-administered, single-payer program.

Supports raising the minimum wage. Is also a strong supporter of expanded collective bargaining rights for public employees.

Promotes strengthening the social safety net by expanding Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and nutrition programs.

Supports comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship.

Supports the DREAM Act.

* Sources and citations are available in the online version at aft.org/election2016.

† This chart reflects a brief snapshot of the candidates' positions.

K-12 Education

Higher Education

Affordable Care Act

Labor/Jobs/Economy

Retirement Security

Immigration



BUSH

As governor of Florida, signed legislation to evaluate students and teachers based on high-stakes tests, create for-profit charter and virtual schools, and provide vouchers for private and religious schools. Launched the nation's first statewide voucher program.

Ended affirmative action in Florida's colleges and universities, leading to a sharp drop in minority higher education enrollment.

Does not support the ACA and calls it "flawed to the core."

Has voiced opposition to minimum wage increases. Wants to weaken collective bargaining rights for teachers and other public employees, and supports laws that undermine the strength of public and private sector unions.

Advocates for privatization of Social Security and raising the retirement age for Social Security.

Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).

Supports the DREAM Act.



CHRISTIE

As governor of New Jersey, cut funding in 2011 budget, which the state Supreme Court ruled violated the state constitution.

Cut state funding to New Jersey colleges and universities.

Opposed the ACA, calling it a "failed federal program."

Opposed raising the minimum wage.

Was a vocal supporter of Scott Walker's attacks in Wisconsin on public employee rights.

Signed legislation that slashed pensions by \$1.5 billion, which the courts ruled was in violation of state law.

Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).



CRUZ

Supports turning federal education dollars into vouchers that can be used to fund private schools.

Voted to cut Pell Grants that help low-income students attend college.

Opposed the ACA.

Opposed attempts to raise the minimum wage.

Supports raising the retirement age for Social Security, reducing the growth rate of Social Security benefits and privatizing Social Security.

Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).



JINDAL

As governor of Louisiana, proposed budget for 2015 that keeps state funding with no increase in six years.

Implemented a private school tuition voucher program, which was ruled unconstitutional by a Louisiana judge.

Proposed hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to higher education, even though public colleges and universities in Louisiana already receive less money on a per-pupil basis than in any other state.

Opposed the ACA.

Opposes recent attempts to raise the minimum wage.

Supports legislation that would wipe out payroll deductions for union members and silence the voice of teachers and other public employees.

Tried to eliminate defined benefit pensions for public employees.

Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).



KASICH

As governor of Ohio, proposed a massive expansion of the state's voucher program that would have drained funds from public schools and used tax dollars to fund private schools.

Cut state support to higher education by 6 percent.

Opposed the ACA.

Through state Senate Bill 5, attempted to wipe out workplace rights for teachers, firefighters and other public employees. His efforts were defeated by popular referendum.

Supported legislation that cut state funding for employee pensions.

Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).



PAUL

Supports private school vouchers. Would abolish the U.S. Department of Education.

Sponsored federal voucher legislation.

Voted to cut Pell Grants that help low-income students attend college.

Opposes the ACA and has voted to repeal it.

Says we should abolish the minimum wage. Opposes collective bargaining rights, and supports legislation intended to hinder the effectiveness of unions.

Would raise the retirement age for Social Security, and supports what would be the largest cuts to Social Security in U.S. history.

Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).



RUBIO

Presided over a \$2.3 billion cut to Florida education as speaker of the Florida House.

Supports federal voucher legislation.

Voted to cut Pell Grants that help low-income students attend college.

Opposed the ACA.

Opposes increasing the minimum wage and doesn't think that the minimum wage law works.

As speaker of the Florida House, sponsored a bill attacking union rights.

Supports raising the retirement age for Social Security.

Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).



WALKER

Supports the expansion of voucher programs that drain funds from public schools and use taxpayer dollars to fund private schools.

In 2015, slashed \$300 million from Wisconsin's higher education budgets.

Opposed the ACA.

In 2011, pushed legislation that stripped public employees of collective bargaining rights; in 2015, supported and signed a so-called right-to-work bill in Wisconsin designed to hinder and harass private sector unions.

As governor, slashed state contributions to employee pensions.

Opposes the Obama administration's executive order protecting undocumented children (DACA and DAPA).



Here's one more thing
union families can share.

Plan ahead with a mortgage from Union Plus. The Union Plus Mortgage program, with financing provided by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, is one of some 40 benefits available to help union members. The program is exclusively for union members and their parents and children. Benefits include mortgage hardship assistance to help protect members' homes in the face of financial hardship. With Union Plus, a mortgage is more than a monthly payment. It's long-term protection for everything your home means to you.



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