



Public Safety Employees Association, Inc.
“Representing Alaska’s Finest”
A.F.S.C.M.E. Local 803



February 21, 2018

Re: Press Release – As *Janus* Approaches, Consider the Value that Unions Offer

Hello Alaskans,

The United States Supreme Court is scheduled to hear oral arguments in a very important case affecting labor unions (*Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 31*). This decision, expected by June of 2018, could create a “free-rider” system, by requiring labor unions to represent employees, even if those employees are not required to pay dues or fees. This “free-rider” system would be disastrous for all working Americans, both union and non-union.

Labor unions have provided many valuable benefits to working families. Unions have fought for, and work to strengthen, many protections for working-class America. [These essential laws and programs include Social Security, child labor laws, antidiscrimination laws, health and safety laws, Unemployment Insurance, compensation for workers who get hurt on the job, the 40-hour workweek, and the federal minimum wage.](#)

In addition, union members receive better pay and benefits on average than non-union workers. The information below are just a few examples of the benefits that unions provide:

1. **Union Members Make More Money than Non-Union Workers** - [In 2017, union members earned 20% more in average weekly wages than non-union workers \(\\$829 versus \\$1,041\).](#)
2. **Union Members Receive Larger Raises More Frequently than Non-Union Workers** – [This is especially true in states with the highest union membership.](#)
3. **Union Members Have Better Benefits than Non-Union Workers** - [In 2017, 94% of union workers had access to employer-sponsored retirement and medical care benefits. For non-union workers, 66% had access to retirement benefits, and 67% to medical care benefits.](#)
4. **Union Members Pay Less For Benefits than Non-Union Workers** – [In 2017, employers paid 87% of health care premiums for single coverage for union workers, compared to 79% for non-union workers. For family coverage, employers paid 80% of the premium paid for union workers, compared to 65% for non-union workers.](#)
5. **Union Members Have Better Total Compensation Packages than Non-Union Workers** – [In December of 2014, total compensation costs for union workers averaged \\$46.50 per hour worked. The average for non-union workers was \\$29.83. Benefits accounted for 40.3% of compensation costs for union workers, compared with 29.2% for non-union workers.](#)



Public Safety Employees Association, Inc.
“Representing Alaska’s Finest”
A.F.S.C.M.E. Local 803



6. **Unions Raise Wages for Non-Union Workers** – [Non-union employers often increase pay and benefits for non-union workers, to compete with union employers in the same area or industry that offer better compensation and benefits.](#)

These significant benefits would not be possible without strong unions to aggressively advocate for workers’ rights. If labor unions are required to represent employees for free, all American workers will suffer the consequences, with smaller paychecks, less benefits, and fewer protections in the job.

As the *Janus* decision approaches, please consider the many benefits that labor unions have provided to all workers, and the importance of improving those benefits for future generations. Please volunteer to maintain your dues-paying membership to your local union, to help ensure all workers are treated with dignity and respect on the job.

Sincerely,

Meagan Carmichael
Acting Executive Director
PSEA