

For Immediate Release

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America Needs Unions

Union Members Declare, “No Politicized Court Case Will Stop Our Fight For Higher Workplace Standards.”

Members of CSEA SEIU Local 2001 joined their brothers and sisters across the country today to declare their resolve to stand together in their unions. The U.S. Supreme Court delivered a long-expected decision in the Janus case that was backed by anti-worker extremists seeking to divide us, but we remain dedicated to sticking together, uniting more working people in unions and holding politicians accountable for creating good, union jobs.

“The important work performed by public sector workers keep our state moving,” said CSEA President Stephen Anderson. “Our work ensures that special needs kids get a quality education, that our communities and roads are safe, and that our air and water are clean to breath and drink. The wealthy individuals who funded and pushed this court case are trying to take away the key things we need to support our families while we support the state, but they have made a serious misjudgment because we will never stop fighting for ourselves or the vital services we deliver to the people of Connecticut.”

“Now is the time for us to stick together,” said Andre Sonnenberg, a facility maintenance worker in West Hartford. “We understand that we need to support each other because there’s strength in numbers. We won’t let this decision put us under, we’ve come too far to lose ground. Generations of workers have fought for the rights that we have, and we are not going to sit back idly and watch them erode away.”

Union members continue to earn higher wages and have better benefits than their non-union counterparts because they fight for decent wage, health care, and secure retirements that are enforced by legally binding contracts, but unions do far more than just contract negotiation.

“The work we do through our union can also save our members’ lives,” said Julius Preston, a Correction Supervisor in the Connecticut Department of Correction. “The average life expectancy of a correction officer is just 59 years. The danger of the job has led many officers to contend with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, mental health issues, anxiety and depression. We were sick of seeing our coworkers die so young, so we formed a collaboration with UConn Health Center and the Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplaces (CPH-NEW) to improve our members’ health. As a result of our work, the idea of health and wellness promotion has spread to other State Departments of Correction. Ultimately, our goal is to build a culture of health and wellness among our fellow union members. It’s through our union that this important work is even possible.”

“The idea that there are adequate labor laws, and therefore unions are not necessary is false,” said Cynthia Ross-Zweig, a paraeducator in the New Fairfield School District. “Most paras are women who took the position to help fill an important need in our communities, but earn a wage that is below the federal poverty level, and barely above the minimum wage. Those paras who are fortunate enough to have a union are doing a little bit better than our non-union sisters. Without unions, the least paid among us pay the greatest price; unfair wages, poor benefits, all while management increases their salaries. We would see an increase in discrimination against a workforce that has been discriminated against for ages. Is that what we want for working women? Of course not. Our union contracts assure our rights and are essential to our protection in the workplace. We are sticking together in our union.”

We won’t let any court case stand in the way of our fight for the good, union jobs that our communities need. We know that when working people are united in a union, they have the power to raise wages, secure basic needs like healthcare coverage and pensions, improve their working conditions and make life better for their families and build stronger communities.

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CSEA SEIU Local 2001 represents 25,000 active and retired state, municipal and private sector workers.