



The Spearhead

A Newsletter for the Jefferson Federation of Teachers

Winter 2018

Volume 4, Number 2

Will You Write a Check?

David Shearouse, JFT TJ Vice President

As a result of the “election” of ~~Comrade~~ President Trump, Neil Gorsuch, an extremely conservative judge from Colorado, was appointed to the Supreme Court to fill the seat of Antonin Scalia. As a result, the balance of the court remains conservative when, in actuality, former President Barack Obama should have been allowed to appoint a judge to fill Scalia’s seat, tilting the balance of the court. Nonetheless, one may be asking, “Why does this matter to me?”

During the Supreme Court’s most recent term, Janus vs. AFSCME was heard, a case that challenges compulsory union dues. When the Supreme Court rules on the case in June 2018, the court is expected to rule that compulsory union dues violate the First Amendment and are, as a result, unconstitutional. This ruling would essentially render the entire country “Right to Work” and the paying of union dues would become voluntary, which means union membership would be voluntary as well. As seen in states that are already “Right to Work” (for less), the elimination of compulsory union dues results in weaker unions which, eventually, results in fewer worker rights, reduced salaries, and less benefits.

So why *does* this matter to you? Whether you realize it or not, your approximately \$600 in annual union dues provides numerous benefits to you, including:

- \$1 million in liability coverage against parental and other professional lawsuits
- Access to high quality legal representation should the need arise
- Participation in a “Sick Bank,” which provides for full pay plus disability benefits in the case of long-term illness, a nearly unheard of benefit in the private sector.

Regardless of your political leanings, it’s hard to argue against the benefits afforded to you by your union. For further proof, look no further than the teacher in Louisiana who was recently arrested at a school board meeting for questioning why her school district’s superintendent received a \$30,000 raise while teachers in the same district had not received a raise in nearly 10 years. We are fortunate as teachers with a good union in Pennsylvania to not face such a serious problem, and the most likely explanation for why is because Louisiana has effectively banned unions through “Right to Work” legislation, and the result for their teachers is obvious.

So, as “Right to Work” prepares to be legislated from the bench and rolled out nationwide by the Supreme Court, each and every JFT member needs to realize the benefits they enjoy as a result of their “compulsory” union membership. Unless you want to see Pennsylvania devolve into Louisiana in terms of its treatment of teachers, you need to prepare yourself for paying your \$600 in annual union dues voluntarily. Hopefully, after realizing the great benefits you enjoy from your union membership, you will answer in the affirmative to “Will You Write a Check?”

Winter News

Right to Know: In light of recent developments in the district, it is important to know that each and every committee that JFT members serve on is subject to public scrutiny through so-called “Right to Know,” or “Sunshine,” laws. This is especially important for JFT members who serve on committees that assume confidentiality or anonymity for their members such as scholarship committees and/or policy committees. It’s imperative that, before you decide to participate in such a committee, you realize that your participation is subject to being made public through “Right to Know”/”Sunshine” laws and, and as a result, you could face whatever social consequences that result regardless of fairness or merit.

Administration Deceptiveness: At least at the high school level, if you experience any instance of deceptiveness on the part of building administration, please document the occurrence and let David Shearouse know. This includes any instance where you feel you may have been lied to and/or “thrown under the bus.”

New JFT Stationery: After updating and adopting the new JFT logo a few years ago (see front of newsletter), new stationery, including letterhead and envelopes, were ordered from a union-affiliated printshop in Pittsburgh. The new stationery will replace stationery that was decades old and provide the JFT with a new, more modern look as it completes all of its regular business dealings.

Contract Knowledge

Per the Contract, did you know:

Section 5: Management: The District retains its exclusive rights to manage the educational process and facilities and to direct the working forces. The District, in the exercise of its rights, shall be subject to the provisions of this Agreement (the contract).

The right to manage the District and facilities and to direct the working forces includes, but is not limited to, the right to hire, suspend, discharge, or transfer employees, the right to relieve employees from duty because of lack of work or for other legitimate reasons and the right to set standards, qualifications and certification requirements for positions for which no specific certification exists or which the PDE indicates that additional qualifications may be set by the District.

Upcoming Dates

Tuesday, April 24, 2018- JFT TJ Building Level
Spring Meeting

Friday, June 1, 2018- Steak Fry (TBC)

Recognitions

Bob Kerr- Wedding
Taylor Kanaski- Wedding
Chad Smith- Baby
Mike Cenna- Baby

Have a marriage or birth to celebrate? Tell us about it! E-mail: jjakubowski@wjhsd.net