

Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

A ruling in favor of Janus v. AFSCME supreme court case would have a direct effect on public sector employees, allowing them to make a decision to either not pay union dues or to continue paying into their union. However, immediate implications of this would still require labor unions to represent those who are not paying dues, causing membership and funding to significantly decline. Individuals such as Mark Janus who do not want to pay into labor union dues typically do not agree with specific aspects of the union, such as their political positions and therefore feel that they should not be forced to pay into something they do not support. Those who do not wish to pay into a union they do not politically endorse, feel that it is a direct infringement on their first amendment rights. Unfortunately, at a glance this perspective makes perfect sense. However, employees like Janus sometimes do not realize how collectively important labor unions are when it comes to fair wages, working environments and benefits such as healthcare and retirement, despite whatever side of the political coin they stand on.

If this supreme court decision passes, it would weaken public unions that stand up and carry a strong voice for the employees that it represents. Although, labor unions would still fight for issues such as employee rights, job security and fair wages, it is definite that less people would pay into their dues, if employees knew that they would still be represented for them without payment. In a perfect world this would be a great thing, but it is safe to say that receiving a “free ride” would not be sustainable route to continue providing for its employee members. It is important to realize that there is always power in numbers, and lower numbers will directly result in a weaker representation of equality for everyone.

In an ethical perspective, utilitarianism is a term that is used to justify actions that result in the greatest good for the greatest number of people. This case is a prime example which

represents that the needs of the majority should outweigh the needs of the minority, even if the potential for controversy is elevated. Therefore, labor unions provide the greatest good for the greatest number of people, such as their employees regardless if some of its members have any disparity because they will still receive the same benefits as the person next to them. These unions are essential for the workers to be able to have a strong voice when it comes to dealing with management such as CEO's, that way their labor is not taken advantage of and ensures being treated fairly in the workplace with proper respect and reasonable benefits.