



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**ON HEELS OF SUPREME COURT DECISION, MAYOR DE BLASIO AND 22  
MAYORS DEEPEN COMMITMENT TO WORKING FAMILIES AND MUNICIPAL  
EMPLOYEES**

*Sign pledge promising to recognize and protect the rights of municipal labor unions*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor de Blasio has joined 22 mayors from across the nation in signing a pledge committing to defending the rights of working families and municipal workers. The commitment comes on the heels of an unfavorable Supreme Court decision in the case of Janus v. AFSCME Council 31, which strikes a blow against “fair share” fees that unions receive from employees who elect not to join the union but nonetheless benefit from the collective bargaining of union members. By targeting unions’ resources, the decision puts all workers at risk by weakening their bargaining position and ability to collectively negotiate.

“In New York City, we believe in fairness – we believe working people deserve fairness. It’s clear that the conservative Supreme Court justices don’t share that same sentiment,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Unions and their members are the backbone of the middle class, and this attack on the power and resources of the labor movement demands a response. I’m proud to stand with mayors from across the country who once again recognize the power of cities to do right where others have done wrong.”

The pledge was also signed by:

- Mayor Steve Adler, Austin, TX
- Mayor Ras Baraka, Newark, NJ
- Mayor Sharon Weston Broome, Baton Rouge, LA
- Mayor Kirk Caldwell, Honolulu, HI
- Mayor LaToya Cantrell, New Orleans, LA
- Mayor Jacob Frey, Minneapolis, MN
- Mayor Joe Ganim, Bridgeport, CT
- Mayor Toni Harp, New Haven, CT
- Mayor Sly James, Kansas City, MO
- Mayor Tim Keller, Albuquerque, NM
- Mayor Jim Kenney, Philadelphia, PA
- Mayor Lyda Krewson, St. Louis, MO

- Mayor Rick Kriseman, St. Petersburg, FL
- Mayor William Peduto, Pittsburgh, PA
- Mayor Kathy Sheehan, Albany, NY
- Mayor Paul Soglin, Madison, WI
- Mayor Darrell Steinberg, Sacramento, CA
- Mayor Ethan Strimling, Portland, ME
- Mayor Ben Walsh, Syracuse, NY
- Mayor Nan Whaley, Dayton, OH
- Mayor Ted Wheeler, Portland, OR
- Mayor Victoria Woodards, Tacoma, WA

The pledge identifies several ways cities can level the playing field for unions and mitigate the damage done by the Supreme Court's harmful decision. It has received support and validation from national labor leaders, including the National Education Association, Service Employees International Union, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and the American Federation of Teachers, among others.

The pledge can be found online at [www.MayorsStandWithWorkingFamilies.org](http://www.MayorsStandWithWorkingFamilies.org) and below:

### **Mayors Stand With Working Families Pledge**

#### **Preamble:**

As Mayors we know that efficient delivery of city services goes hand in hand with standing up for the rights of municipal workers, including the right to join a union. Effective unions are not only vital to the quality of life of municipal employees, they are the backbone of the middle class and essential voices for fairness in our cities.

Unions have been leaders in the movement for economic justice and civil rights. The accomplishments of the labor movement include many policies that Americans rely on: The 40 hour work week, child labor laws, the minimum wage, workplace safety laws, social security, unemployment insurance and more.

The rights of public employees are under attack as never before. An unfavorable Supreme Court decision in the case of Janus v. AFSCME Council 31 is the latest attack on the labor movement, and among the most damaging ones this nation has witnessed in generations.

We believe that a strong labor movement is necessary for the future of our cities and our country. By ensuring high-quality jobs for working families in our cities, unions help improve the standard of living in our communities and reduce demand for public benefits.

To ensure that unions remain strong and effective, we will partner with our local public employee unions and will stand with working families by supporting the following measures to the extent legally permissible:

- **Affirming the role of unions:** As part of the new employee onboarding process provide new employees with a message from the Mayor that highlights the contribution of unions

to civic life and their role in ensuring high-quality jobs that improve the standard of living for working families.

- **Access:** All employees should have the opportunity to interact with their union representatives. Cities will provide new employees with early access to their union representatives, involve union representatives in new employee orientations, and provide opportunities for new bargaining unit members to meet with union representatives early in their employment. On at least an annual basis, all bargaining unit members should be provided with an opportunity to meet with their union representatives during the course of their employment.
- **Rapid and Secure Information:** Institute systems that ensure rapid, accurate, and secure transmission of new hire and bargaining unit member data to union.
- **Ease Recruitment and Maintenance of Membership Dues:** Institute systems to facilitate membership recruitment and maintenance by unions such as honoring electronic signatures and standardized opt-out window for discontinuing dues set by union rules.
- **Enhance opportunities for union-employee engagement:** Allow union representation at employee trainings, improve access to employees at worksites, and ensure adequate union leave provisions.
- **Training and Benefits collaboration:** Identify opportunities to collaborate with unions to provide professional development and training opportunities, joint-labor management benefits and services.
- **Neutrality:** Prohibit supervisor/manager statements that discourage union membership by implementing employer neutrality policies.

"Public sector unions are critical to ensuring that the best interest of local municipal workers are represented. While today's decision is disappointing, I will continue to support working families and find ways to ensure that the labor movement is strong and effective in Austin in spite of today's ruling," said **Mayor Steve Adler, Austin, TX**.

"The Trump Supreme Court has signaled its hostility to the rights of working people in the Janus decision. They have made a calculated and highly political decision designed to weaken the public employee unions that have enabled millions of Americans to enter the middle class. I stand in solidarity with my fellow mayors across America in pledging to work locally to enable public employees to retain their power and strength to contribute to the struggle for economic, social and racial justice," said **Mayor Ras Baraka, Newark, NJ**.

"One of the greatest qualities of our democratic, free society is the ability to have independent labor unions. They work together and develop a responsibility to rise together to serve the common good of our nation's backbone: the worker," said **Mayor Sharon Weston Broome, Baton Rouge, LA**.

“Here in Maine, unions have been one of the most effective tools workers have had to ensure livable wages, especially for women and minorities. Today's decision greatly undermines that strength. Now, more than ever, we must stand together to show support for our brothers and sisters, and for policies like paid sick days, pay prevailing wages, and raising the minimum wage,” said **Mayor Latoya Cantrell, New Orleans, LA**.

"Today's Supreme Court decision, reversing decades of legal precedent, is a gift to Corporate America and a blow to workers' rights to collectively bargain. In Minneapolis, we have a proud history of being on the front lines of the labor movement, and today we continue that tradition by pledging to help unions remain a strong and vital part of our city," said **Mayor Jacob Frey, Minneapolis, MN**.

“This decision is nothing less than an attack on collective bargaining itself, and beyond that, an attack on working families and the middle class. The fees at issue in this case are only fair because though every public sector employee can choose whether or not they want to join a union, it is clear that everybody working in the public sector benefits from the wages and working conditions negotiated by thousands of members of collective bargaining units. This is proving to be one of the most radical supreme courts we have ever seen, with decisions allowing discrimination based on sexual orientation and religion, restricting women's access to family planning, and now giving a financial incentive for public sector workers to leave their union. In Bridgeport we are committed to collective bargaining that is looking to be the last line of defense protecting the middle class in America. We will do everything we can to support our municipal unions, with whom we have successfully partnered in government for many years,” said **Mayor Joe Ganim, Bridgeport, CT**.

“By siding with a well-funded, corporate-backed attack on unions in Janus V. AFSCME Council 31, the Supreme Court has dealt a blow to countless workers and their families who are struggling to remain in America's middle class. We must continue to move forward from this troubling setback, and work to support candidates and organizations who will fight for workers' rights and economic dignity,” said **Mayor Sly James, Kansas City, MO**.

“We owe many of the things we take for granted like overtime pay and the 40-hour work week to organized labor. In Albuquerque, organized labor provides technical training, increases worker safety, and fights for fair wages for hardworking families. Today, even in our city, everything our city does for our community from trash pick up to staffing our community centers is made possible with the help of our local unions,” said **Mayor Tim Keller, Albuquerque, NM**.

“Today's Supreme Court decision is the unfortunate result of an ideological attack on public employee unions, wrapped in the guise of constitutional law. AFSCME, which represents tens of thousands of Philadelphia municipal workers, is required by law to collectively bargain for all union positions – and that benefits everyone. The high court's decision will have far reaching consequences for all municipal unions, and for working people who struggle each and every day to move into the middle class,” said **Mayor Jim Kenney, Philadelphia, PA**.

"We depend upon unionized workers to deliver core city services from police patrols to garbage

collection and pothole patching to fighting fires. They are here in our time of need and in turn we will be there for them,” said **Mayor William Peduto, Pittsburg, PA.**

“I stand in solidarity with our union brothers and sisters, especially after the unfortunate decision by the United States Supreme Court in the Janus case,” said **Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan.** “The work undertaken by unions is critically important to our communities, and I am proud to stand with mayors across the nation who agree cities must ensure our unions remain strong and effective.”

“This assault by wealthy donors on unions comes when Americans need representation more than ever to maintain a foothold in what remains of our middle class. Public employee unions are one of our last lines of defense against the continued erosion of real wages, health benefits and pensions,” said **Mayor Darrell Steinberg, Sacramento, CA.**

“It is a myth, it is a lie that the economy suffers when wages go up. We learned years ago that as incomes go up, everyone benefits. That’s why it’s vital that we stand with unions when they are under attack – whether it’s from the Governor or the Supreme Court. Stagnant and declining wages are ruining this nation. Madison area employers pay more and look how well we are all doing,” said **Mayor Paul Soglin, Madison, WI.**

“Here in Maine, unions have been one of the most effective tools workers have had to ensure livable wages, especially for women and minorities. Today's decision greatly undermines that strength. Now, more than ever, we must stand together to show support for our brothers and sisters, and for policies like paid sick days, pay prevailing wages, and raising the minimum wage,” said **Mayor Ethan Strimling, Portland, ME.**

“Today’s decision undermines the collective bargaining process and harms the ability of cities to perform critical public services. Unions have been leaders in the movement for economic justice and civil rights. The accomplishments of the labor movement include many policies that Americans rely on: The 40 hour work week, child labor laws, the minimum wage, workplace safety laws, social security, unemployment insurance and more. Today, more than ever, I stand with the men and woman of Labor who make our City run every day,” said **Mayor Ben Walsh, Syracuse, NY.**

**Mayor Ted Wheeler, Portland, OR,** said, “The City of Portland is fully prepared to comply with the Supreme Court decision. Whether a partnership between employees and their union continues or not is up to each employee. The City of Portland will continue to work with and value these union partnerships who help give power to the working people in our community.”

“Municipal unions and their members are key players in making sure that local governments provide great service to our citizens,” said **Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley.** “Unions are champions of working people, which makes them critical for keeping our communities strong. I stand with our public employee unions and will continue to support their efforts to advocate for working people in Dayton and beyond.”

“I signed on to the ‘Mayors Stand with Working Families’ pledge in recognition of the longstanding and valuable role that unions have played in public service. Washington state as a whole has laws that protect workers’ essential rights such as the right to access their union representatives. At the City of Tacoma, our frontline workers deliver the core services that community members value most, and it is important that they know how deeply we appreciate their daily contributions which go a long way toward shaping quality of life in Tacoma. I will continue to encourage and support collaboration with our joint labor partners as we work to better serve Tacoma community members,” said **Mayor Victoria Woodards, Tacoma, WA.**

“It’s clear that unions are needed now more than ever, and if the Supreme Court isn’t going to defend the freedoms of working people, elected officials must take action to help level the playing field in their communities. Mayors know that a strong city requires first-class, professional public services. And the way to do that is to ensure that public service workers can come together and enjoy the freedom to negotiate for a fair return on their work through a strong union,” said **Lee Saunders, President of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.**

“We’re glad our country’s mayors recognize that now is not the time to count the labor movement out. Unions make possible what is impossible for working people to do alone: to create a better life for working families, stronger, safer communities, and a fairer, more representative democracy. No matter what the Supreme Court says, union members will keep fighting alongside our nation's mayors to ensure great public schools, high-quality healthcare, and 21st-century infrastructure is a reality in every American city,” said **Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers.**

“The Supreme Court decision in *Janus v. AFSCME* seeks to turn back the clock on almost a half century of progress for working people. I wish that the decision came as a surprise, but we have been anticipating this radical retrenchment by the Supreme Court on this key labor issue for years,” said **NEA President Lily Eskelsen García.** “This court’s 5-4 ruling is just the latest in a string of attacks by billionaires and corporate special interests against workers. We know what we are up against — and we are undeterred. We will move forward, in solidarity, because American families need unions more now than ever.”

“This decision is yet another example of how billionaires rig the system against working people-- white, Black and brown. We need more elected officials, like the mayors who are taking this pledge, to stand up and take action to make it easier for working people to join together in unions for higher wages, affordable healthcare, and the power in numbers to create a better future for their families and communities,” said **Mary Kay Henry, President of the Service Employees International Union.**

“Anticipating the Janus decision, union leaders have worked harder to update their organization and to educate workers on the benefits of union membership,” said **Harry Nespoli, Chairperson of the Municipal Labor Committee, and President of the Uniformed Sanitationmen’s Assn., Local 831, of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.** “We have worked with elected leaders to further protect union membership. We have learned from our colleagues in less union-friendly states how to overcome the obstacles placed in our path by right-wing ideologues.

“The Janus case was always about politics, not about the law or sound policy. Public employees greatly appreciate the work done by the municipal leaders who have signed this pledge to ensure their rights and to maintain quality public services,” said **Henry Garrido, Executive Director, District Council 37.**

“We know that these attacks on unions are being driven by anti-worker and other right wing interests to strike a blow at the operational infrastructure that supports every day working class Americans-- not simply unionized public sector workers, but their private sector counterparts as well,” said **Vincent Alvarez, President of the New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO.** “In the face of these cynical attempts to solidify political and economic power, contributing to the ongoing redistribution of wealth from the bottom to the top of society, we applaud the Administration’s recognition that a strong labor movement is critical to achieving family-sustaining wages, meaningful benefits, and a path to the middle class for workers throughout our city.”

“CSA is disappointed in the Supreme Court decision today, but not surprised. We also are unshaken: Though this ruling aims to defeat unions, we are confident it will galvanize our educational leaders to stand together and reaffirm our shared values. We know our voice must remain strong so that we can continue to fight for our children to get the education they deserve. We applaud Mayor de Blasio for his commitment to working families throughout our city,” said **Mark Cannizzaro, President, Council of School Supervisors and Administrators.**

“The Supreme Court has made a decision that is a clear attack on workers’ rights and the middle class . The United States was built by union brothers and sisters working together, and, in this case, we will come together once again to show that unions will not be cowed by attempts to destroy the protections and the rights that workers have earned from coast to coast,” said **Judith Cutchin RN, President, NYSNA NYC H&H Executive Council.**

"Conservative ideologues have been plotting to destroy the labor movement for 40 years, and today's decision is just the latest element of that assault. But no Supreme Court ruling can stop the labor movement, and with the support of Mayor de Blasio, and all the other signatories to this statement, we will fight back and we will prevail. We welcome this support from Mayors across the country as we work to ensure that all working people, in both the public and private sectors, have a democratic voice in their workplaces," said **Dennis Trainor, Vice President, CWA District One.**

“At a time when working people continue to struggle, our government and the courts should be supporting stronger unions, not working to undermine them. This decision is nothing more than a thinly-veiled political attack on public unions. Despite this decision, a reinvigorated labor movement will continue to help workers organize and use their constitutionally-guaranteed union voice. Strong unions remain the only way workers can guarantee better jobs and better lives.” said **Stuart Appelbaum, President, RWDSU.**

“As a brother in the labor movement, I’m deeply disturbed by the Supreme Court’s decision to strike at the heart of America’s working class. Unions are the foundation of our economy, and

their ability to engage in collective bargaining on behalf of their members is the fundamental basis for fairness and safety in the workplace. I urge workers to stay strong amid this attack on our values, with the confidence that New York City remains steadfast in its support of unions. We must continue to organize, because our democracy depends on it,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams**.

“Today's decision is a blow to the working men and women of this country,” said **Public Advocate Letitia James**. “Organized labor has made it possible for this country to create a strong, working middle class with the fair wages and benefits that all workers deserve. New York City has always been a proud union town and we will continue to use every tool at our disposal to protect and uplift our workers and unions.”

“Unions are the foundation of our workforce in New York City, providing pivotal refuge and organizing power for workers seeking the wages and benefits they deserve,” said **New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer**. “Although this decision is a devastating step backward in our decades long fight to protect working people, we will not give up or allow corporate interests to dismantle the collective strength of unions. New York City is a union town and I will continue to stand with the labor movement no matter the frequency or magnitude of attacks that come our way.”

**Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said, “Our brothers and sisters in organized labor are under attack. That is why New York, the birthplace of the organized labor movement, must support our brothers and sisters. I thank Mayor Bill de Blasio for stepping up in this fight, and I will work with my colleagues in state government to ensure unions remain strong and vibrant throughout New York State.”

“The decision in the Janus v. AFSCME Council 31 case threatens the freedom of working people to pool their strength in the form of strong unions and defend the rights of themselves and their communities,” said **State Senator James Sanders Jr.** “These unions set the standards for salaries, benefits and working conditions. I support Mayor de Blasio and the other mayors around the country who have signed a pledge to recognize and protect the rights of municipal labor unions.”

“As a former union organizer, I know firsthand the benefits of union membership. Ranging from collective bargaining to legal defense, being a part of the union is a strong message that workers matter as do their rights. That is why this year my Card Check Bill was included in the state budget to help protect public sector unions from the blow that is expected in the upcoming Janus vs. AFSCME Supreme Court Case. New York has the highest union density in the country because unions provide people access to the middle class and ensure social mobility. I applaud the city’s efforts to protect our unionized workforce in New York City because they will further strength our new state mandates,” said **State Senator Marisol Alcantara**.

“When my mother came to this country in search of a better life for her future family, it was a union that helped her build it. Unions and their members have always been there when America needed them; they have been on the front line of the fight for worker rights, for civil rights, for equal rights for women and LGBT people, and so much more. I am proud to join Mayor de



Blasio in letting working families and union members know: you have always had our backs, now we will have yours,” said **State Senator Brian A. Benjamin**. “As the ranking member on the Senate Committee for Civil Service and Pensions, I know first hand the negative impact this decision could have on working families in my district and throughout the nation. My colleagues and I will do everything in their power to defend the ability of unions to build a fairer and freer New York.”

“Today’s Supreme Court ruling wounds America’s already dwindling middle class and is a bouquet to corporate interests seeking to destabilize the labor movement,” said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller, Chair of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor**. “Denying a fair share to public sector unions will constrain their ability to collectively bargain for pay, healthcare, and pensions, but this decision will never eliminate our collective efforts to preserve and enhance fundamental workplace and living standards. Generations of advocates endured many a storm while fighting to promote the upward mobility, health, and safety of every worker. This latest challenge will ultimately prove no different.”

“Janus v. AFSCME takes direct aim at the heart of unions, our best tool for combating income inequality, a rigged economy and the systemic mistreatment of women and people of color in the workplace,” says **Council Member Brad Lander**. “In light of this decision, we must unite with cities across the country to protect workers’ rights and help workers organize—in traditional ways, and in new ones.”

"America is great because of our labor unions," said **Council Member Daniel Dromm**, a son of a union organizer and proud former member of the United Federation of Teachers. "From fair wages and work hours to safe job conditions, unions have successfully fought for so much on behalf of working people. The United States has a strong middle class because of unions, and we must never forget that. I thank Mayor de Blasio for his commitment to those in the labor movement and am pleased to stand with him in support of our working families."

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