



Thousands of Washington employees no longer forced to pay unions to keep their jobs

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<https://www.washingtonpolicy.org/publications/detail/thousands-of-washington-employees-no-longer-forced-to-pay-unions-to-keep-their-jobs>

Public employees in Washington state, and the rest of the nation, are no longer required to pay dues to a union just to keep their jobs. That wasn't always the case, but thanks to a 2018 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that stood up for workers' rights, compulsory unionism in public employment is a thing of the past.

In an era in which people are losing their livelihoods because of government mandates, it's encouraging to remember the court stood up for workers in this way.

In 2018, the Supreme Court ruled in [Janus v. AFSCME](#) that non-union government workers do not have to pay union fees as a condition of employment. It was a major victory for First Amendment rights that many public workers have since exercised, benefitting more than 5 million public school teachers, first responders and other government workers across the country.

The Freedom Foundation, a leader in gaining this legal victory for workers, reports that the week of Nov. 10 represented a milestone. The Foundation assisted its 100,000th public employee in opting out of forced union membership. Of those, a large portion — 27,120 — lives in in Washington state. (Read Freedom Foundation's press release about hitting that mark [here](#), and see an interactive map and Washington state's stat [here](#).)

Washington Policy Center has an ongoing public information campaign leading public workers to [optoutoday.com](#), an essential Freedom Foundation tool created to assist workers who want to keep more of their paychecks and who don't want to pay for various union political agendas.

This milestone is a big one for Washington workers. As the Supreme Court staff summarized the Janus decision: "The First Amendment is violated when money is taken from nonconsenting employees for a public-sector union; employees must choose to support the union before anything is taken from them. Accordingly, neither an agency fee nor any other form of payment to a public-sector union may be deducted from an employee, nor may any other attempt be made to collect such a payment, unless the employee affirmatively consents to pay."