



## YOU hold the key to your own power

When the day comes when union membership becomes voluntary due to pending court cases, there is one important thing union members should know... You and your co-workers hold the keys to protecting your own economic future. You have the power, **if** you choose to wield it.

This is really important. I know many union members disagree politically with each other and with political positions taken by our union, but this isn't about politics, this is about what we all hold valuable, and despite our differences, I believe there are a lot of values we share.

We value the ability to have **fair wages**. We don't think people should be paid more just because they are someone's favorite. We believe that if the economy is doing well, everyone should share in that prosperity, and the workers doing the work should be paid a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. We don't begrudge managers for earning a decent living, but we also don't think CEOs should be pulling in wages that are 100 times higher than their average worker. We also value the ability to negotiate collectively as a group to try and make wage gains.

We value the ability to have legal and enforceable **job protections**, in writing in our union contract, that keep us from being employees-at-will who can be fired at any time without any due process or good reason.

We value the pensions we have earned through our hard work. We believe that **retirement security** from a defined benefit pension – one where we know how much we will be getting in retirement – is far better and more fair than a defined contribution pension plan that bases our retirement security on how well or poorly the stock market happens to be doing at the time.

We value **affordable health care** that covers us and our families without breaking the bank. We realize that health care expenses continue to rise, but we don't believe those costs should simply be passed on to the workers. We believe in working with management to collectively find solutions to limit rising costs, and making sure everyone is carrying their fair share of the burden.

Here's my point... All these things we collectively value, these things that speak to the heart of our livelihoods and our ability to provide for our families, are at risk if we take our union membership for granted or allow ourselves to "opt-out" or quit our union.

You see, the people behind the attacks on worker unions, the people funding the "right to work" movement, are powerful people with very deep pockets. They have been waging a war against us, making the case to the public

that our wages are too high, our benefits too costly, and our retirement security is unsustainable. While these "one-percenters" try to make more money at our expense, they play this smoke-and-mirrors game trying to deflect blame and criticism and make US the enemy. **They are trying to take away our rights and our power.**

What's most important here is the concept of who has the power. You might think that with their billions of dollars, the people behind "right to work" anti-union schemes have all the power. Not true.

Yes, their money buys them massive influence politically, and the ability to keep spreading their messages of misinformation, but it does NOT give them the power they desire – only YOU can do that.

**As union members, we continue to hold the key to our own personal prosperity and our collective ability to push back** to keep leveling the playing field against the elites, corporations and the CEOs – from having all the money and all the power. We may never have the billions of dollars they have to spend, but we DO have what makes the union movement worth anything at all – people power.

It's really this simple – **if you choose to quit or "opt out" of our union, you are essentially giving up our people power, and in doing so, you are giving up on your co-workers and all those common values we share and benefits we value.**

We understand it's attractive to give up paying hundreds of dollars for union representation. In the short term, it would certainly be nice to have a few extra car payments, or money to spend on a vacation. But if you opt for that short-term savings, you better understand the **significant cost to you and your family** over the long run.

If a small amount of workers leave the union, we risk losing our strength and many of our union resources. If a large amount of workers leave the union (all it takes is 50% of any bargaining unit) then we can lose our union representation completely, and become at-will employees with no contract, less rights, and less benefits.

So your decision comes down to risk and reward. Are you ready to risk your livelihood, benefits, job protections and security for a short-term reward? Or do you value these things enough to say that you'll never quit on your union and your co-workers? The choice will someday be yours to make. I hope you choose to keep our collective power going forward.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.