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In response to the Supreme Court's decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*, CSEA has established a Member Response Center to respond to the membership related concerns from bargaining unit employees represented by CSEA. Members and non-members who have questions or concerns about their Union membership are encouraged to contact CSEA at 1-800-342-4146. The lines are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5 pm.

Local and Unit Leadership will most likely be asked membership related questions as well. Here are the Top 10 Anticipated Talking Points in response to *Janus v. AFSCME*

### **Do I have to be a member of the Union?**

No, each worker chooses to be a member by signing a Membership Application. It's an individual choice. There are no initiation or activation fees.

### **What will I give up if I'm not a member of CSEA?**

There are specific benefits of Union membership that only members enjoy. These include the ability to vote on our contract, run for office or vote for your officers, enjoy discounted benefit programs and free civil service test preparation support, participate in insurance programs, including a free member only \$10,000 Accidental Death Benefit and, if necessary, be provided representation should you have a disciplinary issue in the workplace. CSEA will only represent members in other legal matters that are beyond the bargaining contract such as workers' compensation claims, civil service and human rights issues, among others.

### **I think Union dues are too high.**

I can certainly appreciate the desire to save money. There is a structure and purpose to our dues, and they are, generally, lower than most unions and are based on your salary. There is a schedule and the only way for that dues schedule to increase is by the approval of voting members of the Union. Dues pay for contract negotiations, representation, including attorneys and arbitration fees, if necessary, and our local activities. Some of the dues that we pay are rebated us at the to the local and unit levels to support our local and unit events and activities.

### **We have a bad / no contract, so why bother?**

Management often makes negotiations very difficult looking for outrageous give backs and concessions. Often, the reason we don't have a contract is we're fighting to keep what we have. Even though our contract has expired, there are laws that protect our existing rights and benefits. Generally, the expired contract remains in effect until a new one is negotiated. So, things like health insurance, paid time off, work hours, shifts, overtime rules, due process, grievance procedures, discipline procedures all remain intact until we agree to a new contract.

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If you're unhappy with the existing contract and its terms, I can assure you that a majority of our coworkers in the bargaining unit approved of it. All CSEA contracts are approved by a majority vote of members. If the members vote down a proposed agreement, then we would return to the bargaining table to continue our fight. Perhaps there were details about the proposals, especially from management, that we can discuss.

**Unions should stay out of politics.**

CSEA is involved in the political process because decisions made by County Executives, Mayors, and other elected officials including the Governor directly impact our jobs. The New York State legislature and local governments throughout New York are very active, and the budget decisions they make determine which agencies and jobs get funded. Without our involvement in politics our jobs and benefits could be in jeopardy.

**I don't agree with CSEA's endorsement of candidates.**

We are very careful about how we endorse candidates. Any CSEA endorsement is made by assessing who will best represent our interests and protect the services we provide. It is not based on political party affiliation. In fact, we have good relationships with both republicans and democrats at all levels of government. Also, our endorsement process is an open and member driven process. Candidates for office are interviewed and screened by members like us.

**I don't want my Union dues used for politics.**

Very little of your dues goes to political activities and most of it is used for lobbying within New York State. In fact, only 3 cents of every \$1 of your dues goes toward politics, and CSEA must be involved in lobbying to protect your interests as public employees. Most dues paying members contribute less than \$25 a year toward political action.

**I want my benefits, but I don't want to pay dues.**

If you choose to leave or drop membership in CSEA, you would lose any Union benefits that are outside of the contract. It's true that you would continue to be covered by all benefits negotiated in the contract, including health, dental and vision plans. However, under the Taylor Law, only members of the Union are entitled to representation at a discipline or a related procedure. You also will lose access to our member only benefits such as discounted insurances such as homeowners, renters or auto and our free death benefit which helps your family. We also have many other benefits such as discounted purchasing programs and free tuition benefits.

It's very important to realize, however, that these benefits only exist if CSEA remains the Union in our workplace. If enough members quit the Union, The Union could go away and we could then lose our contract and all of the benefits within it, such as paid time off, affordable health care coverage, reasonable work hours and more.

**I want to attend Union events / trainings.**

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Participation in CSEA sponsored events is a benefit of Union membership. Members can participate in educational programming, Civil Service test preparation workshops, conferences, informational meetings and more. Likewise, Union membership meetings and discussions about contract negotiations are limited to Union members.

**I received mail / a call from a foundation/organization encouraging me to quit. They have some valid points.**

If you have been encouraged by an outside party to quit your Union, then they have a vested interest in seeing our Union go away. That interest is for their own gain. Typically, these groups want to destroy the Union so there won't be anyone watching out for your pension, your wages or your days off, etc. If the Union goes away, management is free to get rid of all of our benefits to better balance the budget to make the taxpayers happy. They want people think that we're the bad guys just because we stand up for ourselves to get good wages and benefits along with fair and safe working conditions. In the meantime, we lose. There's a reason they want you to quit your Union and its not so that you can keep enjoying your benefits. Without CSEA, the employer will be free to do whatever they want and we won't be able to fight it.

**I want study guides for Civil Service Exams.**

Non members are no longer permitted to purchase study guides.