

## **Teachers “Vindicated” by SCOTUS’ *Janus* Ruling; Pennsylvania’s Largest Teachers’ Union Promises Reform | RELEASE**

### **The Fairness Center**

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*Lancaster County court dismisses four-year long case as “moot” following Pennsylvania State Education Association’s decision to stop compelling fees from religious objectors*

**October 30, 2018, Harrisburg, Pa.** – After nearly four years in the courtroom, the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA)—the state’s largest teachers’ union—promised to end its decades-long practice of making religious objectors and other union nonmembers pay the union just to keep their jobs. The lawsuit forced the PSEA to promise reforms consistent with the United States Supreme Court’s decision earlier this year in *Janus v. AFSCME, Council 31*.

“Pennsylvania’s public-sector union officials are taking steps towards compliance with *Janus*,” said Fairness Center President David Osborne. “The PSEA has had to admit that public schoolteachers are entitled to keep their money under the First Amendment. Now, union officials are promising to honor schoolteachers’ rights, and the court found their promises credible.”

The case focused on the challenges faced by teachers Jane Ladley and Chris Meier. As religious objectors to union payments, the Fairness Center’s clients Jane Ladley (now retired, Chester County) and Chris Meier (Lancaster County) had the right to support a charity instead of the union. But for years, the PSEA rejected their chosen charities, instead holding their money in escrow and demanding that objectors donate to a charity that advances the union views that led them to become religious objectors in the first place.

That policy led to multiple lawsuits challenging the unions right to indefinitely hold money intended for charity. The Fairness Center, a nonprofit public interest law firm, represents clients from across the state who have had funds withheld from charitable organizations for years.

Following the United States Supreme Court ruling in *Janus* in June 2018, public employee nonmembers of unions across the country were able to free themselves from forced fees. For religious objectors in Pennsylvania, *Janus* also raised questions as to how to handle escrowed money.

After the *Janus* ruling, and because of this case, the PSEA forfeited any claim to the funds and returned the money to Chris and Jane. After receiving her check from the PSEA, Ms. Ladley chose to donate her money to the Constitutional Organization of Liberty (COOL), an organization that educates Pennsylvanians on the Constitution and founding principles. For years, the PSEA had blocked Ms. Ladley’s efforts to donate her money to COOL on ideological grounds.

In determining that the case is now “moot,” the court in Lancaster County did not find it necessary to formally strike down Pennsylvania law allowing for nonmember fees.

**Documents:**

- [Ladley and Meier v. PSEA Backgrounder](#)
- [Opinion](#)

Fairness Center President David Osborne is available for comment. Contact Conner Drigotas at 844-293-1001 or [conner@fairnesscenter.org](mailto:conner@fairnesscenter.org) to schedule an interview.

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*The Fairness Center is a nonprofit public interest law firm offering free legal services to those hurt by public employee union officials. Fairness Center attorneys provide clients with a voice in the court of law and the court of public opinion. For more information visit [www.FairnessCenter.org](http://www.FairnessCenter.org).*