

The Fairness Center

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Union Caves, Refunds Pa. Public Employee's Disputed Dues Deductions

Union officials continued taking public employee's money after her membership resignation

September 22, 2020, Harrisburg, Pa.—Another public employee has secured a refund of union dues that she alleged were improperly deducted from her pay by union officials even after she was no longer a union member. The refund came as part of a settlement to resolve lawsuits filed in both [state](#) and [federal](#) court against the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Council 13 (AFSCME). Watch a quick explainer video here:



In July 2018, union officials pressured LuAnn Zeigler into signing a union membership card, telling her that she would only have the right to vote on the new union contract if she became a paying member. But after she signed the card, union officials never gave Ms. Zeigler the opportunity to vote on that contract. And when Ms. Zeigler then resigned her union membership in January 2020, union officials kept taking union dues from her paycheck.

To recoup her money and to ensure union officials properly acknowledged the denial of her constitutional rights and right to vote as a union member, Ms. Zeigler sought out the Fairness Center's assistance and filed state and federal lawsuits against the union. Once facing multiple lawsuits from Ms. Zeigler, AFSCME officials refunded all her union dues, with interest, back to her resignation.

Ms. Zeigler's lawsuits are some of the most recent Pennsylvania cases seeking to enforce the 2018 landmark [Janus v. AFSCME, Council 31](#) decision by the United States Supreme Court. That decision stated that nonmember public employees cannot be compelled to financially support a union as a condition of employment. But some public employees, like Ms. Zeigler, continue to see money deducted from their paychecks for the union, even after resigning their union membership.

Nathan McGrath, President and General Counsel of the Fairness Center, released the following statement:

"Ms. Zeigler had to file lawsuits in both state and federal court just to stand up for her rights against AFSCME officials. Public employees should not have to resort to litigation to enforce their basic rights. Union officials are supposed to be for employees, not against them."

Six public employees represented by the Fairness Center have brought lawsuits seeking to recover monetary damages and to protect their constitutional rights. In the last year alone, the Fairness Center has helped at least [9](#) clients secure refunds of dues from AFSCME, Council 13.

Documents

[Video Link](#)

Zeigler v. AFSCME, Council 13 (Federal)

- [Case Website](#)
- [Complaint](#)
- [Backgrounder](#)

Zeigler v. AFSCME, Council 13 (State)

- [Case Website](#)
- [Complaint](#)
- [Backgrounder](#)

Fairness Center attorneys are available for comment. Contact Conner Drigotas at 207.205.9133 or conner@fairnesscenter.org to schedule an interview.

The Fairness Center is a nonprofit, public interest law firm offering free legal services to those hurt by public-sector union officials. For more information visit www.FairnessCenter.org.