

## **The Fairness Center**

Contact: John Sweeney, 609.477.0930, [jrsweeney@fairnesscenter.org](mailto:jrsweeney@fairnesscenter.org)

### **New York Union Refunds Dues After Lawsuit Alleges Constitutional Violations**

*Union officials acknowledge Dolly Bernard as a nonmember  
and return money taken since she resigned*

**April 7, 2021, Albany, NY**—Dolly Bernard, a New York public employee with the Office of Victim Services, has secured a refund of union dues that were taken from her paycheck by the Public Employees Federation, AFL-CIO (“PEF”) after she resigned her union membership.

In August 2020, Ms. Bernard resigned from PEF, but union officials ignored her resignation and continued taking dues from her paycheck. To recoup her money and ensure union officials respected her constitutional rights, Ms. Bernard sought assistance from the [Fairness Center](#), a nonprofit public interest law firm.

After Ms. Bernard filed a federal lawsuit against PEF and the state officials who continued taking dues for the union, the union acknowledged that Ms. Bernard is no longer a union member and refunded, with interest, all the dues taken since the date of her resignation.

Ms. Bernard’s was the first lawsuit filed by the [Fairness Center](#) on behalf of a client in New York. [Fairness Center](#) attorneys have since filed several [lawsuits](#) in New York on behalf of public employees seeking to vindicate their constitutional rights.

Fairness Center President Nathan McGrath released the following statement:

“While it’s unfortunate that Ms. Bernard needed to file a federal lawsuit just to have her union resignation acknowledged, we are thrilled that PEF officials reversed course, honoring our client’s resignation and refunding her hard-earned money. Public employees shouldn’t have to file federal lawsuits to make union officials stop violating their constitutional rights.”

## **Documents**

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

Fairness Center attorneys are available for comment. Contact John Sweeney at 609.477.0930 or [jrsweeney@fairnesscenter.org](mailto:jrsweeney@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-sector union officials. For more information visit [www.FairnessCenter.org](http://www.FairnessCenter.org).*