



ACTION NEWS

President's Perspective Our Indisputable Need to Belong by Steve Ball



In the last Newsletter, I wrote an article called "A Lesson From Wisconsin". It was about how seven years ago, teachers in Wisconsin lost most of their union rights and strength. Seven years later, over 40% of those teachers have left the profession, and those that remain have no insurance or retirement, and have seen an average 21% decrease in compensation.

And now it appears that California may end up in the same place. And although Wisconsin teachers had many of their protections stripped away through legislation, California teachers may do it to themselves.

See, what we have now is called "Agency Fee Payer", sometimes called "Fair Share". If you don't want to be a member of the union, you don't have to be- but since the union is the sole bargaining representative for your employment group, you have to pay your fair share of what it costs to provide those services. You enjoy the salary, benefits, and all the coverage of what your negotiated contract provides- so you have to pay your fair share. It's just fair. Now, an anticipated negative decision from the new Supreme Court in a case known as Janus v. AFSCME will almost certainly put an end to that.

If that basic idea of fairness gets struck down- and CTA expects that it will be- Each individual teacher will have the choice to remain a dues paying member, or simply decide to drop from the union and pay nothing. Of course they would still get the benefit of our contract, and the same salary and benefits that ACT and CTA have won through negotiations- but they'd leave the cost of providing those things to the remaining members to pay.

That's like showing up to a pot-luck empty handed, eating your fill, and loading up a plate to take home. Who would do that? I think the answer is: someone who doesn't know, or has forgotten the benefits of belonging to a union.

I've heard teachers say that they've been teaching x number of years and had never used the union. They're dead-wrong. In fact, they used the union every day they stepped into the classroom. The number of days per year they work, the seven-hour contracted workday, class-size, salary and benefits, sick days, seniority rights, pension - on and on- aren't things that magically appeared or were happily given by some benevolent employer- it was negotiated, bargained, fought for, won, and protected every day by the unions they belong to.

And now, if we are to keep those things, we still need to belong. Because belonging to ACT/CTA/NEA is the only way that we're not going to see an erosion of all those things that we take for granted. And if you think those things are so entrenched that they can't be taken away, you're kidding yourself. Look at the other states like Wisconsin that have become "right to work" states. Lower wages, a loss of benefits, seniority, and pensions, and what used to be highly qualified educators, now at-will employees.

In fact you don't have to look at another state- look right here in California at the difference in teaching at a unionized public school and a non-union private school. It's the very reason some of us are here- we came for the better pay and benefits. Nationwide, the difference between union jobs and

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Together, we are ACT!

Questions? Comments?
Concerns? Ideas? Please
contact us at:
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similar non-union jobs is between six and nine thousand dollars a year. But that comes at a price – your union dues. And I'll invest a thousand dollars to make nine thousand dollars any day of the week.

But this wall of protection we've built by belonging to a union will only hold if we remain together. For every person who decides to let their colleagues bear the cost, and walks away from the union, the weaker the protections become for all of us. Our union has faced challenges and crisis before, but this dwarfs them all. Now more than ever, we all need to belong.

"RIGHT TO WORK" IS WRONG

WAGES ↓ Average worker in RTW states makes **\$5,333/yr.** less than in free bargaining states.

POVERTY RATE ↑ **12.5%** in RTW states compared to 10.2% in free bargaining states.

CTA Support Don't Be Fooled



by Liz Pinkava

On February 26, 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case of Janus v. AFSCME. In anticipation of a decision against all public employee unions including ACT, organized and well-funded anti-union groups, some of which funded the Janus case, have begun Drop Campaigns in CVUSD and other districts throughout the state. These "drop campaigns" are led by anti-union activists who seek to reduce union membership by asking that you drop your membership with ACT. These organizations will ask that you pay "dues" to their union in exchange for "representation" in employment matters. Don't be fooled. These groups have:

- Sought to eliminate sick leave and have authored a national report opposing paid sick leave for all workers.
- Coalitions in Oregon and other states to cut the "retirement, disability, and health insurance fund" of public workers. They have compared retirement security to the Ponzi scheme orchestrated by Bernie Madoff.
- Fought for cuts to public schools. They have argued against increasing education funding saying it is not important and has nothing to do with student outcomes.
- Fought for lower wages.
- Admitted that their ultimate goal is to rid the country of unions.
- No rights to represent you in your union contract. ACT is your exclusive bargaining representative and no other group can negotiate for your rights or represent you under your contract.
- No power with the district.

These organizations are also using deceitful means to get you to drop your union membership. In fact, two of these organizations have made

Public Records Act requests to the district (which the district has thus far not complied with) seeking ALL your personal information. One other group has placed flyers in at least two different sites under the name of "Association of American Educators." Please be assured that ACT and CTA are working collegially with the district to protect your personal information from these outside groups. But if you are approached by someone who seeks that you drop your membership, please know that you have the RIGHT to:

1. Refuse to sign anything provided to you by someone you do not know.
2. Ask that you are removed from their contact list. If they do not remove you, please let ACT know and report the activity. You have the right not to be harassed by these groups.
3. Request the ID of any person who approaches you. An ACT or CTA rep will carry identification or a business card. These groups have been known to lie about their identification and say that they are with the "union." Write down their information and report it to ACT. This will help protect other members from harassment.
4. Take a picture or record a conversation. Politely let them know that you are recording the conversation for your protection. If they refuse, then you can refuse any discussion with them.
5. If you feel scared or intimidated, please ask the person to leave the premises immediately and call 9-1-1.
6. If you see something, say something! Please let ACT and/or CTA know if you feel that one of these groups have contacted you or your colleagues.



ACT Holiday Toy Drive to support Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez's 52nd District Toy Drive.



Contract Corner



Asked to Sub?

14.9.2 Except in cases of emergency, no unit member will be scheduled to teach as a substitute during said unit member's regular work day. Prior to scheduling substitute service for any unit member, the District will make a good faith effort to obtain a substitute teacher. If no substitute is available, the District will first seek volunteers for substitute service. If no volunteers are available, assignments of substitute duty will be made on an equitable basis from among available unit members. A secondary teacher assigned to perform substitute duty shall receive the hourly instructional rate for each period of service. An elementary teacher, who is required to take extra students because no substitute is available, shall receive a pro rata share of the hourly instructional rate based on the percentage of the total class which he/she receives.

My Non-Union Life

by Lisa Witte



I'm now in my fourth year with CVUSD. Eight years before that, however, I taught in a non-union state. Because of this, I know what our union does for me. There is a difference that is worth talking about. In a time when people are questioning the value of unions, I wonder if people understand life without one.

The question is not so much about whether you're conservative or liberal. I've worked with both. The question isn't so much about whether your family has traditionally been in favor of unions or against. The question is everything to do with quality of life. This career choice, for many if not most, will extend over a period of time—maybe a lifetime. While our commitment to teaching our students comes first in our hearts and minds, our profession is part business. We must get paid, and there must be some quality of life.

Teachers in a non-union state do not have a voice. By contrast, teachers here not only have a voice, they also have considerable wins in the bag already. Having experienced both now, I believe this voice has made a significant difference in teachers' lives, not the least of which centers on financial remuneration. In the eight years I worked in the non-union state, I received one pay raise, which included the step increase going into my second year there. Beyond that, teachers were given a 1% COLA twice. There were no additional raises. There were no step increases provided either. In fact, additional teaching years were not even acknowledged. I was frozen at step three. As a result of board decisions, my pay was effectively flat for seven years. Further, the state discontinued our retirement. Feeling doubtful this was going to turn around, I left. Now with CVUSD, I earn double what I did there. Thanks to the union, I

have received each of my step increases and we've received two raises. If you don't think that your quality of life is affected by your paycheck, try to live on half of it.

Regarding work requirements and other benefits, a contract in a non-union state is also very different from what I've experienced here with CVUSD. In a non-union state, there is no such idea as "outside the contract." Everything is inside the contract. Each summer, for example, professional development and/or committee responsibilities were required, often over multiple days, yet not time-sheeted. There was never any compensation for professional development. At the same time, we were required to attend and track PD for recertification. Recertification did not happen without a minimum of 180 hours. We were required to attend PLC's prior to contract hours. We turned in lesson plans for the entire year and sat on a minimum of three committees. If you were reassigned and required to move, you got a couple boxes. There was no comp time like there is here. If you've only worked in California, you probably haven't run into these experiences yet because of your union. It is no mystery to me that this union has been tremendously effective for teachers here for years, whether it is acknowledged or not.

Most teachers love teaching. I know I do. This is an avocation, really. Our compensation and benefits are not central to our reasons for being a teacher. However, if we're in this for the long haul, the long haul needs to work a little bit for us too. Most career paths for college-educated individuals have some level of expectation for financial growth as we age and become more experienced. This is not necessarily true for teachers in a non-union state. The sad fact is, there is either a union voice or no voice. There is no middle ground.

I strongly feel that we cannot let ourselves be falsely romanced into

the idea that we would have a voice without a union. If we're even the least interested in our benefits over the long haul while we invest our years here, then we would be wise to acknowledge that we need some negotiating power. It is the strength and power of the union's representation that allows for negotiation. For me, I want someone who has my back because I know the only place I can be really effective is in the classroom.



ACT hosted a bowling night for all members on January 31, 2018.



Upcoming ACT Events

Friday, March 16 at 5:00 PM
Paint Night @ ACT Office

Friday, April 13
Quakes Game @ LoanMart Field

Contact: littlecat1961@hotmail.com

Featured: the Heart of the ACT Office—Olivia Esparza

by Bonni Gallegos



The featured ACT member this month isn't on the Executive Board- or even actually a member, but she plays a huge role. Olivia Esparza is the secretary at the ACT office. If you have ever called in about anything, she was likely the person that answered the phone.

Esparza has been working for ACT for over 19 years and says she has loved every single minute of it. She began her journey working at the CTA office. She was offered a part time position with ACT because they were in need of a secretary. She accepted the position and shortly after was offered a full time job. She has worked under six different ACT presidents and has been there to guide every single one as they began their new positions.

Esparza is there to answer the phone and provide guidance for anyone that has any questions about anything that has to do with ACT. She may not be the person that can answer your questions, but she is there to guide and direct you to your answer or who can provide you with one.

Esparza loves her grandkids and is eager to retire and spend more time being a grandma. Her love for her job and everyone in ACT has kept her in the office doing what makes her happy. "I love my job and being able to help people," said Esparza.



Taco Tuesday was hosted at the ACT office on February 13, 2018.

NOTICE

Although CTA and NEA regularly adjust their member dues, ACT has not adjusted our dues since the 2008/2009 school year.

ACT Standing Rules state that annual dues for ACT shall be .005 x column II, step I on the teacher salary scale (\$48,216), rounded to the nearest half dollar. Therefore, the newly corrected ACT annual rate beginning March 1, 2018 will be \$241 (collected tenths). This correction will change the total monthly deduction for ACT/CTA/NEA dues from \$108.10 to \$110.70. This adjustment will affect your April 1 paycheck.

COMMUNICATION

Join in on the conversation- join us on Facebook. A great way to share with, and encourage other ACT members!



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2018/2019 Site Rep Elections

Is your voice heard? Is your site represented? Should you run for site rep?
Every person in a leadership role at ACT is an employee of CVUSD. We're it. And the decisions and directions taken by those of us who volunteer our time to get involved, affect every aspect of our jobs: salary schedule, benefits, working days, hours, class size, employee representation, working conditions, and the list goes on. The most essential part of the structure is our site reps. The stronger our site reps, the stronger our union. Elections for ACT site reps for the 2018/2019 school year will be held at each school from April 9 - April 17. This year, the nominating process is different from the past, as those who are interested in serving as site reps will self-nominate by declaring as a candidate. Declaration forms can be found on the ACT website, ASSOCIATEDCHINOTEACHERS.com, or picked up at the ACT office, 5951 Sycamore Court, Chino and **returned to ACT by March 20.**

What should you look for in a site rep? A site rep needs to commit to attending all rep council meetings (one a month) and bring back information to present to the staff at a 10 minute meeting. They should also bring issues that ACT could address, from the site to the meetings. Site reps should have a good working relationship with site administration, and meet with the principal on behalf of the staff to work out any issues at the site that may conflict with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (our contract). Site reps should have permanent job status. Training and support are provided. All schools can have two site reps and an alternate. Each school site or special faculty unit shall be represented on the Representative Council according to the following formula:

- 1-45 A.C.T. members = two voting reps
- 46-75 A.C.T. members = three voting reps
- 76-105 A.C.T. members = four voting reps
- 106-135 A.C.T. members = five voting reps
- 136+ A.C.T. members = six voting reps

If you are unable to run for site rep yourself, we hope you will think about who on your campus could best represent you and encourage them to run!