Preparing for Friedrichs v. CTA: Building A Powerful Union

Presenter:
Mayrose Wegmann
NEA Center for Organizing
Organizing: ORG139

- Advocacy
- Business
- Communication
- Governance
- Leading Our Profession
- Organizing
Session Description

The U.S. Supreme Court will likely rule on Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association, a case challenging the union’s ability to collect agency fee. Regardless of the outcome of this court case, there is an opportunity to build capacity and win on issues our members care most about.

In this session, participants will gain an understanding of what is at stake and steps to take now to organize around professional issues that bring about real change for the schools our students deserve.
Session Outcomes:

- Understand what’s at stake/Urgency of our work
- Understand the political impact
- See what other public sector unions are doing
- Learn to develop strategies and steps to take now
- Gain new or review skills for building power
- Increase our ability to sign up agency fee payers and get more people active in our union
- Begin to formulate a plan
- Make commitments for next steps
Introductions: Who’s In The Room

Tell us:

• Your Name
• Local Association Name
• How many members do you have?
• How many fee payers do you have?
• What is your estimate of how many members are unengaged or likely to drop union if/when we lose Agency Fee?
Video Clip

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yujUoLN9GMM
Video Clip
Losing Agency Fee: What’s At Stake:

- Loss of Power
- Loss of revenue
- Membership loss
  - Fee payers
  - Unengaged members
- Reduced staffing
- Pressure on NEA pension
- Pressure on State Affiliate's pensions
- Potential financial crisis in locals not positioned to survive loss of revenue
Agency fee provisions (19 States)

Law silent on agency fee (6 States plus D.C.)

Agency fee prohibited (25 states)
How Will Loss Of Fair Share Impact State Affiliates & Locals?

- Immediate loss of all fee-payers who have not converted to membership
- Loss of unengaged members who do not see value of union membership
- Membership loss will be greater if loss of fair share combined with loss of payroll deduction and attacks on collective bargaining
- Full impact of membership loss may not be felt in first year
Michigan And Wisconsin: Didn’t Just Lose Fair Share

**Michigan**
- Declining growth in education spending
- Negative membership trends before its loss of fair share
- Lost payroll deduction alongside fair share
- Lost 4.3% of active membership
- MEA conducted intense organizing efforts

**Wisconsin**
- Loss of fair share
- Loss of collective bargaining
- Loss of payroll deduction
- Significant cuts in education spending
- Governor Scott Walker and anti-union elected leaders
If/When We Lose Fair Share, Can We Predict Membership Loss?

• No crystal ball: Hard to predict
• Need to begin organizing now!
Let’s Do The Math

• What is your current membership density?
• How many fee payers do you have?
• How many members don’t actively participate in the union?
• How much will your state affiliate and locals lose in dues revenue?
• How much will your state affiliate and locals lose in POWER?

Membership = POWER
Let’s Hit This Head On...

Time To Fight... Time To Organize
## Opportunities

- Run issue based campaigns that engage members and fee payers
- Win on issue based campaigns demonstrating union difference
- Enhance and test worksite structures
- Engage members and move them to activist to leader
- Educate members around union difference
- Build POWER
- Move to true organizing culture
Why Do You Think We Have Fee Payers?

Why Do We Have Unengaged Members?
AFSCME’s 50,000 Stronger And Beyond Organizing Resolution

AFSCME leaders came together in January 2014 to assess AFSCME’s position for the future. They concluded that we must build on previous efforts to:

- grow the union
- build political power
- strengthen our affiliates
- build partnerships with allies.

AFSCME leaders recognized that these goals are achievable only with a strong local union foundation of leaders and activists. They launched the 50,000 Stronger internal organizing campaign.

The 50,000 Stronger campaign set the following goals:

- Each AFSCME council and local will sign up at least 30 percent of current represented non-members by the convention. We will sign up at least 50,000 new members in all.
- We will train 800 Volunteer Member Organizers (VMOs) to get the job done.
- We will take full advantage of technology to communicate with activists and engage those who are not active in our struggles.
- We will bring the urgency of what’s at stake to the worksites, communities and kitchen tables of workers we represent.
- The national union will coordinate and support these efforts with VMO training and sharing of best practices.
We Know We Need To Organize...
So What’s The Plan

WE NEED TO:
1. Identify and engage members who are most likely to drop
2. Know how to talk to fee payers
3. Identify issues to move members to action AND address their interests through collective action
4. Identify activists and potential leaders
5. Map and chart our worksites
6. Track our members who flip their membership and engage in the union
What Do You Think We Need To Do?

Table Discussion:

• What can we do right now to prepare?
• What issues exist as potential organizing issues in your local or state?
Let’s Brainstorm

• How will you and your local(s) engage members who have not been engaged?

• How will you and your local(s) talk with fee payers about the important work your union is doing?
Agency Fee Tool Kit

• Checklist of things to do NOW
• How to prepare a campaign
• Sample communications plan
• How to move Fair Share payers to full members
• How to create a year-round membership engagement plan
• Tips for reaching out to younger members
• Benefits of NEA membership
Preparing Your Campaign

1. Conduct internal analysis of local
2. Build your team: Bring together stakeholders: president, vice president, executive director, staff, field, communications, membership, financial, etc.
   - Describe the nature and potential extent of the challenge
   - Identify the potential consequences of loss of fair share
   - Establish a membership organizing committee
3. Make a plan and set goals
4. Identify your message and talking points
5. Put your plan into action
Campaign 3 Question Litmus Test

- Will this campaign build power?
- Will this campaign grow our membership?
- Will this campaign develop new leaders?
Organizing Committee Checklist

- Develop a comprehensive field plan to focus on engaging and recruiting members
- Examine and assess your AR/site rep structure
- Update member contact info
- Identify fair share members – update their contact info with work location, primary or cell phone, email address, home address, etc.
- Develop a message of what value your union brings
- Develop membership communication plan
Tip: Role Of The Site Rep

Educator
Issue Handler
Communicator
Organizer
Leader
Political Activist
How Will We Talk To Members and Fee Payers: Your Rap

What will your Rap look like when talking to fee payers and unengaged members?
Tip: Worksite Mapping

- Mapping is a visual depiction of the work site and its relationship between and among members and potential members (fee payers).
- Map out where members are, supervisors/admin, other employees, fee payers, etc.
- Find the work sites “Hot Spots” and “Dead Zones”.
- Find where conversations and action happens.
- Check your map against your site rosters.
Putting Together The Campaign Plan

• Set goals for you as the organizer
  – How many organizing committee members will you need
  – Set your calendar and where you want to be by end of school year
  – How will follow up be handled?
  – How will data be collected and tracked?

• Talk at your tables: How will you put together your campaign plan?
What Will You Commit To Do? Right Here, Right Now!

www.nea.org/listeningtour
I Pledge To...

• Be a leader for the change our members want and need;
• I pledge to act in solidarity with fellow union members;
• I pledge to teach others about labor history and the importance of unions for working people;
• I pledge to organize and engage members and fee payers in order to be proactive and to build power for my union;
• I pledge to participate in NEA’s 2016 One-on-one Listening Tour.
What Resources and/or Help Do You Need?
Questions/Comments

Mayrose Wegmann, NEA Center for Organizing
mwegmann@nea.org

"Ghandi and King aren't coming back. We're the ones who must get it done."
Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session!