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## Oregon legislation would undercut Janus, empower state to fund unions itself

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Oregon lawmakers are hopeful their state will pioneer legislation that would exempt it from the effects of a landmark right-to-work ruling this past summer by the U.S. Supreme Court.

[House Bill 2643](#), authored by Rep. Paul Holvey (D-Eugene) and scheduled to be introduced during the legislative session beginning later this month, is a shot across the bow of *Janus v. AFSCME*, which banned so-called “agency” fees charged by government employee unions to workers who’ve opted out of full membership and dues.

The bill — a wolf in sheep’s clothing — first recognizes the newly affirmed rights given to workers in the *Janus* decision. Later, however, it creates a slush fund from which the state would pay the unions directly rather than deducting dues from workers’ paychecks.

If approved, workers would no longer have the option to opt out of paying union dues because the state would do it for them — with the worker seeing a corresponding reduction in his or her wages.

“This is nothing more than a scheme to legalize money laundering of taxpayer dollars,” said Aaron Withe, Oregon director of the Freedom Foundation. “It’s a classic example of government unions’ influence at the capital. They’ve funded these politician’s campaigns; now they expect a return on their investment.”

The ploy is so audacious, in fact, it makes even AFSCME national President Lee Saunders queasy. In an [article](#) published in *The American Prospect* shortly after the *Janus* ruling was issued last June, he conceded:

***Direct payments from the employer to the union are prohibited in the private sector because they compromise the independence of the union. No experienced union negotiator would want his or her management counterpart to literally control union revenue. The union must belong to the workers, and they must pay for their union so they can own it. A direct payment from the government employer will also undermine the union’s credibility with its own members.***

He goes on to admit:

***Finally, there’s the political problem. Anti-tax groups and anti-worker politicians will never acknowledge the payment is workers’ money” and will insist the funding is an inappropriate, and perhaps illegal, expenditure of taxpayers’ funds.***

Taxpayers and public employees should see this bill for what it is, an attempt to re-funnel taxpayer dollars meant to be designated to our teachers and other public employees that will inevitably be used to keep government unions in power at the capitol.