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Unions attacking public employee rights in Olympia

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The U.S. Supreme Court ruled last year in *Janus v. AFSCME* that it is unconstitutional to force public employees to financially support a union.

Since that decision, however, unions in Washington have tried to make it difficult for employees to cancel the deduction of union dues from their wages. [House Bill 1575](#) and its identical companion [Senate Bill 5623](#) seek to legalize some of these questionable practices.

Among other things, the bills:

- Prohibit government employers from honoring employees' requests to stop the deduction of union dues from their wages. Instead, an employee must persuade the union to direct the employer to stop the dues deductions. This is significant because most unions have inserted provisions into their membership forms obligating employees to pay dues for at least a year and limiting the signer's ability to cancel the deductions thereafter to a narrow annual window period. In effect, an employee would have to submit a written request to the union during their specific window period in order to exercise their constitutional rights.
- Require government employers to begin dues deduction upon electronic or "recorded voice" authorization (over the phone or in person) by an employee. Currently, unions must get employees' written authorization before they can have the employer begin dues deduction.
- Specify that employees can only cancel dues deductions from their wages in writing.
- Strip employees of their right to vote on union representation in secret-ballot elections. Instead, elections would be conducted petition-style, with union organizers collecting "votes" from employees one-on-one.

A fuller analysis of the bills is available by contacting Max Nelsen at Max@OptOutToday.com