

MSCF Minute



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Racial Equity and the Attack on Public Sector Unions

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by the MSCF Racial Equity and Diversity Committee

For decades, public sector employment has been a haven for Black workers seeking protection from discrimination in the private sector and a pathway into the middle class. Today, one in five Black adults is employed in the public sector, making it the largest employer of Black Americans.

The public sector is where unions remain strongest, with union membership rates five times those in the private sector. Additionally, education has one of the highest rates of union membership in the public sector.

Black workers are more likely than any other racial group to be union members. Unions were an important factor in reducing the racial wage gap in the 1960s and 1970s and the benefits of union membership for Black workers are well-documented today. Black union members have 16.4% higher wages, and are 17-18% more likely to have employer-provided health insurance and retirement plans, than non-union Black workers are.

However, the de-unionization of the private sector beginning in the 1980s, and the loss of public sector jobs following the Great Recession --a burden disproportionately born by Black workers--have eroded the gains made in earlier decades. The current attacks on public sector unions through right to work legislation and the Janus v. AFSCME Supreme Court Case, which would eliminate our ability to collect fair share fees, represent a further threat to racial equity for all the reasons described above. Black Americans stand to lose the most of any racial or ethnic group if public sector unions are weakened.

This is just one more reason why we, as MSCF, are making equity and inclusion a top priority of our organization. Janus v. AFSCME does not have to hurt us. When we embrace racial equity in MSCF, we strengthen our union. Historically, when unions are strong and union membership is high, the racial wage gap goes down. Racial equity is both the means and the ends of strong unions.

Once again, MSCF is collecting college baskets for the annual [NSJ silent auction](#) held on March 22. Officers will pick them up when they visit your campus during the next few weeks.

Sources:
United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm>
"Black Workers, Unions and Inequality" Center for Economic and Policy Research <http://cepr.net/publications/reports/black-workers-unions-and-inequality#five>
"Public Sector Jobs Vanish, Hitting Blacks Hard" New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/25/business/public-sector-jobs-vanish-and-blacks-take-blow.html>



Click on the picture above to view a legislative update from Mark Grant, MSCF legis. liaison

Delegate Assembly Proposed C&B Amendments & Resolutions due tomorrow!

Forms and more information may be found [here](#). All proposed items must be submitted to delegates 30 days prior to the Delegate Assembly.

Janus Faculty Forum is Tuesday, March 6

MSCF presents a faculty forum on, Janus: An Analysis of the Arguments. Dinner served at 6 p.m., forum begins at 6:30 p.m. Presenters Nicole Blissenbach, Education Minnesota legal department, and Kevin Lindstrom, MSCF President, will discuss the history of the Janus case, the legal arguments being presented and possible implications of the outcome. RSVP by tomorrow to mscf@edmn.org.

MSCF Legislative Liaison Training March 20

The day will include information sessions, guest speakers, legislative training, and meet and greets with legislators. RSVP by March 12 to Janel at janel.engesser@edmn.org.

Education Minnesota Professional Development Grants

Professional Development Grants are intended to provide education support professionals (ESPs**), higher education faculty of colleges and universities, and teachers with opportunities to take the lead in acquiring and sharing new skills and knowledge. These skills might include new instructional ideas, technology, working with parents, attending a conference, etc. You may request a grant to acquire these skills and share your new learnings with your colleagues.

Dates for spring 2018 professional development grants

Deadline: 4 p.m., April 6, 2018

Grants awarded by: June 2018

Funds to be spent by: February 2019

Click [here to apply online](#).

Nellie Stone Johnson Silent Auction Baskets