Dear Colleagues,

On November 7th New York State voters roundly rejected the Constitutional Convention (83%-17%), fearing the disastrous ramifications of such a process. Many of the fundamental rights that our predecessors worked so hard to achieve could have been taken away by the same elected officials who relentlessly attack our profession. I applaud and thank all of our active members and retirees who exercised their right to vote.

The next issue we need to address is the outcome of the *Janus v. AFSCME* case in the spring/summer of 2018. Its aim is to destroy labor unions.

**THE TIMEFRAME:**

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear this case during its current term. A decision is expected in late spring or early summer 2018.

**WHAT IS AT STAKE:**

*Janus v. AFSCME poses a grave threat to the very existence of public-sector unions nationwide.* What's at stake is the principle of “fair share.” The question “should those employees reaping the benefits of being covered by a collective bargaining agreement and represented by a union have to pay their “fair share” or can they coast by as “free riders” without paying a red cent?” will be answered.

Can any one of us be part of an organization in our community without paying dues? How would the organization survive, serve or address the members’ needs?

Our members clearly understand the importance of BEING the union and the atrocities that our brothers and sisters endure in “right to work” states where the unions, are always struggling to maintain a majority and have little leverage to negotiate fair contracts.

As members of an effective union with a collectively bargained and legally enforceable contract, we are entitled to:

- Higher competitive salaries and a comprehensive salary schedule
- Longevity payments
- Lower health insurance costs and access to good health plans
- Paid time off
- District-supported Welfare Trust Fund benefits, including dental, vision, legal, copay/coinsurance reimbursement
- Due process and basic job protections non-existent in non-unionized workplaces
- Right to union representation, including free legal counsel in cases of discipline
- Educational and professional support
- A voice in safety, in working conditions, in ensuring high standards for our profession, and in the services, we provide
- The ability to advocate for our students without fear of reprisal

Continued on page 2
The Current Legal Framework:

Since the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1977 *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education* decision, unions have been allowed to collect dues from all private or public employees they represent. In New York State, the law says that those who choose not to join the union must pay their “fair share” for the union’s work that benefits them. Those members are called “agency fee payers.” These agency fee payers who formally object don’t have to contribute to political or lobbying activities, but they must contribute for the unions’ efforts in negotiating higher competitive salaries, benefits, working conditions, health and retirement benefits, etc.—in other words, contribute their “fair share.” The *Janus* case would overrule *Abood* and prohibit any “fair share” arrangement, allowing those members who choose not to join the union to pay absolutely nothing.

**Wisconsin’s Act 10 negative effects:**

The Wisconsin Act 10, which became law in 2011, severely limits the scope of collective bargaining and allows members to opt-out of unions. The law led to big cuts in teacher compensation, particularly for veteran teachers and especially in health insurance and retirement benefits. To make the situation worse, some Wisconsin districts moved from a single salary schedule to a performance-based and biased pay system after Act 10 was passed.

There was also a spike in teacher retirement immediately following the law’s passage. As compensation dropped, it became harder for districts to attract and retain highly qualified teachers. Educators hop from one district to another in search of raises causing higher turnover than usual. A study by Jason Baron found that weakening unions also led to declining student performance, particularly in math and science, especially in struggling schools. The effects were fairly significant, comparable to sharply increasing class sizes.

The *Janus v. AFSCME* outcome could easily propel New York to a right to work state. Wisconsin's experience could soon confront teachers across the country to endure the same. I strongly urge you to read an article by Lydia DePillis; *Here's what happened to teachers after Wisconsin gutted its unions*. http://money.cnn.com/2017/11/17/news/economy/wisconsin-act-10-teachers/index.html.

More than ever before, rest assured that the leadership of the WCT has been diligently working and is ready to address these issues. We have already taken proactive steps to educate our members to deal with the outcome of *Janus*. To protect and preserve our hard-fought benefits, the membership must participate in unity when called to action. I’m confident that by working together we can succeed and overcome this latest obstacle.

In solidarity,

Pasquale Delli Carpini
WCT President
Kinry’s PBIS Service Projects
By: Meredith Inkeles, Kinry

Each month this school year, the Kinry Road PBIS Committee has implemented a service project which correlates to the month’s character trait. As school began, the nation was reeling with the devastation of three hurricanes and the school’s PBIS trait was kindness. The Kinry students raised $275 during two hat days and recycling bottles collected at school. The $275 was donated to Literacy Lifeboats, an organization through The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project which supports teachers and children in schools that have been hit by Hurricane Harvey.

The October PBIS trait was responsibility, and students learned about how we need to be responsible for ourselves and members of our community. Each student in the building created a placemat and some even decorated bags that have been donated to Meals on Wheels of Greater Poughkeepsie. Students also helped collect items to be donated to deployed service members through Operation Santa. November’s PBIS trait was cooperation/generosity. As a community, we cooperated with each other to show our generosity to our community through a food drive. The food, turkeys, and gift cards donated were sorted into Thanksgiving baskets given to families in the Kinry community.

Now that December is here, and the holidays are upon us, the PBIS character trait being emphasized is empathy. The Kinry community is once again collecting toys for the annual Toys for Tots campaign and filling up our mitten tree in the front lobby. Students, faculty, and staff have been bringing in hats, scarves, and mittens to be donated to those in need of staying warm this winter. We are looking forward to the new year and another six months of doing for others.

To see what else is going on at the Kinry Road Elementary School, be sure to follow us on Twitter: @KRPawPride or @KRESLibrary.

Senate tax bill a 'disgraceful attack on working people'


ALBANY, N.Y. Dec. 2, 2017 — New York State United Teachers President Andy Pallotta today released the following statement upon Senate passage of a tax bill that hurts teachers and middle-class families to further enrich big corporations and the wealthy.

“In what can only be called a disgraceful attack on working people, the U.S. Senate chose the interests of big corporations and the wealthy — the donors who finance their campaigns — over the needs of middle-class families. The Senate’s bill is a barely disguised tax giveaway to the rich that will exacerbate already unacceptable income inequality; explode the deficit by at least $1 trillion; and gash deep holes in Medicaid, Medicare and state budgets all across our country. New Yorkers will be especially hard hit. The elimination of the state and local tax deduction will undoubtedly lead to massive tax increases for many middle-class families, taking money out of their household budgets so the rich can get richer.

“NYSUT and its national affiliates vow to continue to fight against this disastrous plan as Congress now tries to reconcile the differences in the House and Senate bills. We commend Sen. Schumer and Sen. Gillibrand for leading the fight to protect New Yorkers and the country from this scam on all but the richest Americans.”
Members’ Classified Ads

FOR SALE: 4-camera security system. Includes all parts and instructions (DVR, cameras, cables, AND spare parts). Originally over $700, NOW $200 complete. 845/494-2174.

White Metal Daybed Twin Size & Trundle Bed

Whether you are looking for extra seating in the living room or a sleeper for overnight guests, this Metal Daybed is the perfect fit. With round posts, a brushed metal frame, and traditional scroll work, this daybed has character that will add instant charm to any room. Sturdily constructed, the bed features metal slats and supporting legs for added support and comfort. Additional foundation is not required. Both mattresses are regular twin size and are included. It is easy to assemble. Asking $500 for everything. Call Steve Schwartz at 797-1472.

WCT EXECUTIVE BOARD

2017—2018

President: Pasquale Delli Carpini (JJ)
Treasurer: Donna Kart (VW)
VP Secondary: Ray Koretsky (RCK)
VP Elementary: Flip Gertler (FS)
Director of Internal Communications: Kim Mahusky (FS)
Director Political Action: Jim Marrinan (OG)
Secondary at Large: Diane DiChiara (JJ)
Secondary at Large: Ann Liebergot (VW)
Elementary at Large: Michelle Ross (GY)
Elementary at Large: Theresa Stowell (FP)

THIS MONTH IN LABOR HISTORY

http://www.unionist.com

1 December 1955

African-American Rosa Parks refuses to go to the back of a Montgomery, Ala., bus, fueling the growing civil rights movement's campaign to win desegregation and end the deep South's "Jim Crow" laws.

2 December 2009

Court documents filed in Boston say Walmart Stores Inc. has agreed to pay $40 million to 87,500 Massachusetts employees who claimed the retailer denied them rest and meal breaks, manipulated time cards and refused to pay overtime.

3 December 2001

Arrests began today in Middleton, N.J., of teachers striking in violation of a no-strike law. Ultimately 228 educators were jailed for up to seven days before they were released following the Middleton Township Education Association's agreement to take the dispute to mediation.

5 December 1955

Merger of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), forming the AFL-CIO. The merger ended a 20-year split in the American labor movement growing out of differences over the form trade union organizations should take. The merger recognized that both craft and industrial unions are appropriate, equal, and necessary as methods of union organization.

9 December 1869

Knights of Labor founded. The Knights broadened the labor movement beyond a few skilled trades and reached out to all working men and women. Its goals of equal pay for equal work, abolishing child labor, and the eight-hour day provided a rallying cry for all workers.

13 December 1924

Death of Samuel Gompers, president and founder of American Federation of Labor. One of the labor leader's most famous remarks, in response to the question, "What does labor want?" was: "We want more schoolhouses and less jails, more books and less arsenals, more learning and less vice, more constant work and less crime, more leisure and less greed, more justice and less revenge."
WCT WELFARE TRUST FUND LEGAL & FINANCIAL DAYS 2017-2018

Dec 20, 2017
Jan 17, 2018    Feb 21, 2018
Mar 21, 2018    Apr 18, 2018
May 23, 2018    June 20, 2018

*If you would like to schedule an appointment, please call the union office at 227-5065.

THE WCT WELFARE TRUST FUND TRUSTEES
Flip Gertler—Chairperson
Theresa Stowell—Treasurer
Erin Mulligan—Secretary
Kim Mahusky—Trustee
Pasquale Delli Carpini—Trustee
Ronnie Dwyer—WTF Administrator

LOCATION OF WCT OFFICE
280 NEW HACKENSACK RD
WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY 12590
Located directly across from Dutchess County Airport
On the right 2.5 miles from Rt 9
On the left .25 miles from All Angels and 376 Intersection
Next to Mid-Hudson Podiatry

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

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commentator@wcteachers.org.
Checks payable & mailed to WCT
Commentator Editor: Meredith Inkeles
Webmaster: Nancy Beiner
HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU—ENJOY THE WINTER RECESS!

January 1, 2018—no school
January 3, 2018—District Spelling Bee
January 15, 2018—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—no school
January 22—25, 2018—Regents Testing
January 26, 2018—1/2 day Professional Development Day