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NATIONAL

U.S. Supreme Court hears the Janus case

Janus v AFSCME, about public sector union fees, is the biggest union case in a generation.



U.S. Supreme Court justice Neil Gorsuch, President Trump's appointee, is expected to be the deciding vote in the pivotal union case *Janus v AFSCME*. But during oral arguments in the case on Feb. 26, Gorsuch gave no sign which side he'll take. He asked no questions, made little eye contact with attorneys, and often rested his chin in his hands. It's pretty clear where the rest of the nine will land: Assuming they continue to hold the positions they held in a deadlocked nearly-identical case last year, the other four Republican-appointed justices will side with Janus, and the four Democratic-appointed justices

will side with AFSCME.

In *Janus v AFSCME*, the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation is arguing — on behalf of Illinois state worker Mark Janus — that any requirement that public sector workers contribute to a union's costs of representing them is an unconstitutional infringement of First

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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Vigor shipyard workers vote to authorize strike

For the second time in 40 days, shipyard workers in Portland and the Puget Sound voted down a contract proposal from Vigor Marine. The Feb. 23 vote was also a strike authorization: The rules were that if a two-thirds' majority rejected the offer, the bargaining committee would be given the authority to take workers out on strike. Workers voted to reject the offer by 80 percent.

"The members are tired of being disrespected," said Pat Christensen, president of the Metal Trades Council of Portland and Vicinity, and a union rep for Plumbers and Fitters Local 290.

The second rejected offer was nearly identical to the one workers rejected Jan. 15 by an overwhelming margin. Vigor sweet-

ened the second offer by adding back the option for workers to pay extra to get a richer (90-10) health plan, an option that's in the current collective bargaining agreement but which Vigor had proposed to end.

But for union workers, the key sticking point was continuation of a "rolling 40" overtime policy in which the work week begins whenever the employer determines. Workers used to be paid overtime for weekend work prior to the master agreement that's currently in force. Vigor has refused union calls to restore that policy in bargaining thus far.

"We don't look for a strike," Christensen said, "but members have told us they've had enough

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WORKERS RIGHTS

Burgerville fires more union workers

By Don McIntosh

The ink was barely dry on our Feb. 16 print edition when we learned that one of the young workers pictured in our front page story about the Burgerville strike and boycott had been terminated.

On a picket line Feb. 1 outside the Burgerville's Northeast MLK Jr. Boulevard store, Burgerville employee Michelle Ceballos talked to the Labor Press and other news media about why she and her co-workers were taking part in a three-day strike. Plain-spoken and open-hearted, she came across as a sincere and articulate advocate for the Burgerville Workers Union, and showed courage in taking part in a strike. Two weeks later, on Valentine's Day, she was fired.

Ceballos may be the latest casualty of what more and



When Michelle Ceballos picketed in protest of the firing of her co-workers, she didn't imagine she'd be fired herself two weeks later. But Ceballos believes in the union movement and says she has no regrets.

more appears to be a scorched-earth campaign by Burgerville of firing pro-union workers. Supporters of the union say the company has fired as many as seven union supporters since the campaign began in April 2016. The pattern has been to

fire otherwise exemplary workers for what appear like trivial pretexts: an unpaid-for bagel or dollop of soft serve ice cream. In Ceballos' case, it was an unaccounted-for chicken patty.

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A VIEW FROM THE DRIVER SEAT



What's it like to spend the day behind the steering wheel of a bus? Since 2012, a TriMet bus driver who writes under the pen name Deke N. Blue (a hat tip to the Steely Dan song "Deacon Blues") has tried to answer that question in a blog called "From the Driver Side." Now he's collected those blog posts in a book entitled, "Just Drive: Life in the Bus Lane." A member of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, "Deke" has blogged about driving since he was hired by TriMet in 2012. The Labor Press spoke with him recently by phone.

Why do you use a pseudonym? What my employer doesn't know can't hurt me. At some points in the blog I have lambasted them for what they do to us.

What most surprised you about the job of bus operator? The physicality. It's very hard on the body. There's a lot of repetitive motion injury. You brake the bus between 700 and 900 times a shift.

There seems to be a perception that riding public transit is unsafe. Is there any basis

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