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VIDEO: Food for Thought on Union Fair Share Fees

<http://www.afscme.org/blog/video-food-for-thought-on-union-fair-share-fees>

by David Sheeley | April 22, 2015



Sometimes complex court rulings can best be understood with the simplest of explanations. Thus it is with a new AFSCME video that uses the analogy of friends going to dinner to puncture the logic of a new court challenge to “fair share” fees.

In the cartoon-style clip, four stick figures vote to choose a restaurant, and three of them pick Applebee’s. After dinner there, the lone dissenter asserts that he doesn’t have to pay because he voted for Sizzler, even though he enjoyed his meal as much as the others.

“So it is with unions,” the narrator says. “Everyone votes on whether to join and if a majority votes yes, everyone gets the benefits.”

The stick figure show comes as the Supreme Court considers taking up an appeal on the constitutionality of the fees in its May 1 conference.

The appeal challenges a unanimous Supreme Court decision from 1977 that said unions can collect the fees from workers who receive union benefits.

In *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, a group of teachers argues that paying fees to a union they do not want to belong to is a violation of First Amendment rights.

A win for the anti-union group would be a blow to AFSCME as it fights to negotiate good wages and benefits for workers.

The court ruled in the 1977 case, *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, that when public employees vote to form a union, they can require all workers to share the union representation cost because all of the workers receive the benefits of the union.

Last year, a similar appeal in *Harris v. Quinn* knocked out fair share fees for nontraditional workplaces, such as home care and child care providers, but the court chose not to overrule *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*.

So far, the simple cartoon is cutting through the complexities. In a survey of more than 500 AFSCME members, 81 percent said they better understand what a union fee payer is after watching this video. [Check out the video here](https://www.facebook.com/AFSCME/videos/vb.6165653060/10152836303508061/?type=2&theater) (<https://www.facebook.com/AFSCME/videos/vb.6165653060/10152836303508061/?type=2&theater>).

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