

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 12, 2021

Contact: Max Hall  
(c) 612-247-3725  
[Max.Hall@afscmemn.org](mailto:Max.Hall@afscmemn.org)

### **AFSCME Council 5 Secures the Rights of Workers in Court**

**South St. Paul** - Following two victories in district court, AFSCME Council 5 [Executive Director Julie Bleyhl](#) issued the following statement:

"In the years following the AFSCME v Janus Supreme Court decision, anti-worker organizations have continued to wage their war on organized labor and the rights of the working-class. Two lawsuits, in particular, that were filed against AFSCME Council 5 by anti-union funded organizations tried to decimate our collective power as working people in our fight for racial, social, and economic justice for our members and all Minnesotans. They failed. After many months of oral and written arguments, two Court rulings were issued today that upheld our legal arguments and dismissed the lawsuits. Prior to Janus v. AFSCME, fair share fees were collected to ensure that if members of our bargaining units refused to fully pay for services provided in contract negotiations, grievance representation, and more, that they would pay a smaller fee to pay for services provided by our union.

"In Brown v. AFSCME Council 5, anti-worker forces contended that AFSCME Council 5 ought to repay all fair share fees that were collected prior the Janus Supreme Court decision. AFSCME Council 5 filed and argued a motion to dismiss the case for the plaintiff's failure to make a legal claim on this case. The judge upheld AFSCME Council 5's legal arguments, agreed to our motion and ordered the case be dismissed.

"Piekarski v. AFSCME Council 5 sought to rule that contract language contained on membership cards was unlawful. AFSCME Council 5 filed and argued a motion for summary judgement and the judge granted our motion against the plaintiffs, holding that unions are not liable to repay fair share fees collected prior to the Janus decision.

"Council 5 Executive Director Julie Bleyhl said, "Labor unions and the rights of the working-class are constantly under assault by those who wish to decimate our right to collectively bargain to improve our wages, hours, working conditions and terms of employment. While these two court rulings are a significant victory for working people, we are prepared for more to come. With our union united, working collaboratively together, and steadfast in our pursuit of racial, social and economic justice for all, we will continue to secure victories in our workplaces, the halls of power, and court rooms."

*AFSCME Council 5 is a union of more than 43,000 working Minnesotans from across the state. We advocate for excellence in services for the public, dignity in the workplace, and opportunity and prosperity for all workers.*