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Summary:

According to a recent poll in a national education journal, only 38 percent of public school teachers support mandatory union fees, while 50 percent oppose them.

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Most Teachers Oppose Mandatory Union Fees

By Steve Buckstein

A national education journal, [EducationNext](#), has just released results of its [annual poll](#) asking a number of education-related questions. One question has particular relevance now because this happens to be [National Employee Freedom Week](#), a nationwide campaign offering an unparalleled focus on the freedoms union employees have to opt out of union membership.

The EducationNext poll asked people in general, parents, and teachers, among other demographic groups, how they feel about mandatory union fees. Here is the exact question asked in the poll:

Some say that all teachers should have to contribute to the union because they all get the pay and benefits the union negotiates with the school board. Others say teachers should have the freedom to choose whether or not to pay the union. Do you support or oppose requiring all teachers to pay these fees even if they do not join the union?

Only 34 percent of the general public supports such mandatory union fees, while 43 percent oppose them.

Only 31 percent of parents support such fees, while 47 percent oppose them.

Most surprising of all, only 38 percent of public school teachers support mandatory union fees, while 50 percent oppose them. As a [Reason.com “Hit & Run” blog post](#) notes, “It’s not just non-unionized teachers who think this; unionized teachers made up almost half the sample, and only 52 percent of them said agency fees should be mandatory.”

One public school teacher who opposes mandatory fees could be instrumental in seeing them banned not only for all teachers, but for all public employees across America. California teacher Rebecca Friedrichs has filed a lawsuit against the California Teachers Association, arguing that mandatory fees violate her Constitutional First Amendment rights of free speech and free association. The U.S. Supreme Court recently agreed to hear [her case](#), with a decision likely by next June.

While the Court [ruled in 1988](#) that no one must join a union or pay the political portion of union dues, many workers are still required to pay so-called “fair share”



non-political union fees for services such as collective bargaining. Now the Court will take up the argument that at least in the public employment setting, all union activities can legitimately be considered political.

Rebecca Friedrichs [says](#), “It’s time to set aside this union name calling and all this fear mongering and let’s put America and her children first, and let’s put the rights of individuals above the rights of these powerful unions.”

It is clearly time to [put individual rights above those of the powerful unions](#), and now we know that even most teachers agree.

Steve Buckstein is Founder and Senior Policy Analyst at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.

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