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TEACHERS

Not that easy to opt out of union politics

Opting out of union politics for Washington teachers is far from "simple and convenient," as Washington Education Association President Charles Hasse stated in "High court to decide whether to hear case on unions, politics," Wednesday.

As a former teacher and union member, I can tell you the process is convoluted, time-consuming and flat-out unfair.

First, a teacher must resign from the union to become an agency fee payer. He still pays 100 percent of union dues, but is eligible for a rebate for the amount used for politics if he remembers to request it in writing each and every year.

Seattle public school teachers pay the union more than \$1,000 annually. Agency fee payers who request their rebate receive back nearly \$250.

Non-union teachers lose union liability insurance and the right to vote on the contract despite paying dues for representation. They risk intimidation and ostracism by union members who want teachers to pay more than their "fair share" for representation. The WEA has sued teachers to thwart others from learning about their opt-out rights.

WEA killed two bills in the Legislature that required notification of union opt-out rights as guaranteed by the Supreme Court. Consequently, most teachers remain in the dark about the "simple and convenient" way to exercise their rights not to pay for someone else's politics.

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http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/opinion/286180_ltrs24.html