

Why is the Union Interested in You?

Tuesday, August 2, 2016



The NEA talks about what it hopes to get for our OS/PAT employees, but what is in it for the NEA if the union represented you? The NEA could receive more than \$700,000 a year from your paycheck and those of your colleagues, but with no guarantee that you will get any more in wages or benefits than you have now.

The NEA may want every employee it represents to pay either union dues of \$375 a year or an agency service fee of nearly as much as a condition of your continued employment. We reviewed all NEA contracts in New Hampshire (they are online) and learned that 29 of 193 contain this mandatory provision. Here is an example from the Holderness Support Staff Association contract, Art. IV, Sec. 4.4:

Any member of the bargaining unit who elects not to join the Association shall, as a condition of employment by the District, execute an authorization for the deduction of a "representation fee" which shall be a sum equivalent to 85% of membership dues and assessments required to be paid by members of the Association. Such representation fee shall be deducted from the employee's salary and transmitted to the Association according to the same schedule as membership dues.

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Most of the other 28 contracts with this provision state that the service fee is “equivalent to” or “not greater than” the amount of union dues.

At Keene State College, the NEA asked the college to start withholding union dues from the paychecks of employees before contract negotiations even started — and those contract negotiations still have not started. In light of this approach at Keene and the language we found in 29 existing NEA contracts, do you think the union will negotiate for the inclusion of a mandatory union dues/agency service fee in a collective bargaining agreement affecting you?

—Kathy Neils

Chief Human Resources Officer

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