

National Right to Work  
Foundation Press Conference  
Wednesday, March 15, 2006  
Olympia, WA

### Statement of Kimberly Johnson

My name is Kimberly Johnson and I have been working for the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries for almost six years. I had hopes of working for the state for many more – I enjoy my job, and I'm proud to be in a position that serves the citizens of Washington. But unfortunately, union officials are doing all they can to force my agency to fire me.

As a state worker who objects to the WFSE union's brazen abuse of my rights, I have refused to pay any dues or fees to the union. And as long as they are violating the protections granted to me by the Constitution and the laws of this state, I will continue to do so.

My department has already called me into a "pre-disciplinary hearing" – not because my work needs improvement, but because I will not give in to WFSE union officials' demands for forced dues.

At this point, my job security is certainly in question. If the union's eagerness to have so many of my colleagues fired is any indication, I too may be fired soon.

So what makes someone like me risk their job – their livelihood, really – to stand up to union officials who supposedly represent us?

I never asked to be part of this union. Everything about it seemed to benefit WFSE union officials rather than employees like me. Frankly, I was happy with my work conditions, and I trusted my employer to treat me with respect and judge me on the merits of my work. If for some reason that condition changed, I always had the option of finding another job. But then – like thousands of other state employees – I was blindsided by the forced union dues provision in the new contract last year.

The actions of the union over the past year have done nothing but strengthen my lack of desire to be associated with them. That's why I joined the filing of this federal lawsuit against the union for violating our constitutional rights. I've given up on expecting the union to do what is morally or ethically right, but I should at least be able to expect them to abide by the law.

My hope is that this lawsuit will finally force WFSE union officials to respect the rights of my colleagues and myself – particularly those that have been fired. Right now, however, the union seems much more interested in collecting dues than "representing" state workers.