

My Two Cent's Worth

By: Joseph Andalina

Why stay in the union?

I have been serving the law enforcement community for about 63 years. And yes, I'm older than that. Almost 25 ½ years as a cop and 38 years or so as a union guy.

During that time, I have seen police officers in all kinds of emotional states; happy, joyful, courageous, prideful, determined, funny, dedicated, and serving with honor.

I've also seen sadness, depression, PTSD, inconsolable, full of pain and sorrow, with a sense of discord for tomorrow.

But through it all — the good, the bad, and the really, really ugly — there is utmost professionalism. The sense of duty and honor that makes them all strap on their duty gear is prevalent, despite a never-ending criticism by the public, press, and politicians, or what I call the three P's.

Sometimes this discord comes from the inside, too. Self-centered and narcissist chiefs, brass, and mayors who would throw you under the train without a second thought when it suits them.

So we banded together and formed associations and unions to fight the dastardly deeds of Snidely Whiplash. (Just in case you don't know Snidely, you do. He is the stereotypical villain to be found in cartoons and most police departments or village halls.)

And now after the Janus decision, administrations feel a sense of empowerment. They see a door open to rid the public sector, and especially cops, of the evil dirge of collective bargaining and unions. The billionaire republican sees a chance to destroy what so many of us have built up over the years to provide you with:

- A fair, bargained contract
- Wages
- Life and health insurance
- Longevity
- Court pay
- Overtime
- Redress of your grievances
- And the most important — **legal protection**

Don't be fooled. A few, but not many, cops are already looking to opt out to save union dues. But it's the union who provides you with all of the above. Unions did that, not your benevolent father in the mayor's office, or your step-dad in the chief's chair. They will take care of their own. And you should take care of your own.

Opting out of a union to save a dime will cost you a buck in a few years. Yes, they will pretend to take care of you and encourage you into opting out to save some dues.

But you must see right through this. It will last only long enough to defeat you and then if you want increased wages, they will smile and snicker as they tell you it's not in the budget.

You know, I'm retired now, but when I was a union thug (I've always loved that one) I have heard every bullshit argument from the dark side and I could miraculously see through the lies.

I pray that you do, too, and do not fall for the evil doings of Snidely Whiplash.

Stay with your union, for your sake as well as your brothers and sisters in law enforcement.

Vita é bella.