

## SUPA APPLAUDS SUPREME COURT RULING

June 15, 2007

For Immediate Release:

“The Supreme Court struck a blow for freedom Thursday when it unanimously upheld a Washington state law that forced unions to seek permission before deducting money from their members’ paychecks for political purposes,” said Linda Chavez, president of Stop Union Political Abuse (SUPA). The Washington state law was approved in a referendum of voters in 1992 but was challenged by the Washington Education Association (WEA).

The Supreme Court decision was handed down in the consolidation of two cases: *Davenport v. Washington Educational Association* and *Washington v. Washington Educational Association*. The Supreme Court of Washington had earlier struck down the law in a challenge brought by WEA, which argued that the law unfairly burdened the free speech rights of the union. Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the unanimous Court, said “The notion that this modest limitation upon an extraordinary benefit violates the First Amendment is, to say the least, counterintuitive.” The ruling, however, only applies to public employee unions, even though the original referendum applied to both public and private sector unions.

Said Chavez, “This win in the Supreme Court does not end the struggle to protect workers’ rights. Washington remains the only state to enact protection of union members’ right not to have money taken out of their paychecks to pay for political activity that they do not support or approve. With the Court’s action, perhaps more states will enact laws that force unions to get members’ approval before they spend their money on politics.” Chavez, who was nominated by President George W. Bush to be secretary of labor before withdrawing her name, has written extensively on union abuses in the political arena.

Stop Union Political Abuse is a non-profit public policy advocacy organization that promotes union democracy and the rights of members to withhold union fees used for purposes other than collective bargaining and contract administration unless the union receives members’ express permission and approval.