



*For immediate release – 3 July 2014*

## **Harris v. Quinn: PSI stands with all unions in the USA in the fight for social justice**

Public Services International (PSI) condemns the continuing attacks on trade union rights for public sector workers in the USA. The conservative majority of the US Supreme Court this week, in *Harris v. Quinn*, attacked the rights of home care workers and invites further legal challenges. This decision is the result of years of plotting, manipulating and massive financing from neo-conservative pressure groups. It demonstrates the growing corporate power in the USA, and confirms their strategy of undermining all trade unions.

Home care can be a much more affordable and humane alternative to institutionalisation of the sick and elderly. It is a fast-growing field, but marked by low wages and benefits, poor training, and little respect for workers. Home care workers, by the very nature of their work, are isolated. Providing care for people in their homes is difficult, stressful and demanding. It is perhaps no coincidence that the majority of home care workers are women. US trade unions are protecting these isolated workers with innovative organising strategies. It is exactly these innovative organising strategies that the Supreme Court is seeking to undermine.

**PSI General Secretary Rosa Pavanelli** said “We are saddened, but not really shocked by this decision, as the attack on public sector workers is part of the overall attempt to destroy trade unions in the United States. The Supreme Court justices appear not to understand the rights and responsibilities enshrined in UN and ILO conventions, guaranteeing freedom of association for workers. However, workers and trade unions are mobilising in their communities to increase minimum wages and improve working conditions.

We especially encourage the union fight to give homecare workers a voice. It is only with the union that we can stop the systematic abuse of workers and protect the vulnerable who depend on qualified staff.

Conservative groups will use this decision to further undermine trade union rights, to isolate workers and to increase attacks on public sector unions in all US States. This will force PSI affiliates, especially SEIU, AFSCME and AFT, to spend a lot of resources in the courts. Thankfully, these are strong unions which have weathered many such attacks in the past. PSI stands with our affiliates, and with all unions in the USA in the fight to bring social justice to all.”

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