

NATIONAL REVIEW INSTITUTE

National Review Institute to present Mark Janus with the 2019 Whittaker Chambers Award

NRI to recognize Mark Janus at the 2019 Ideas Summit for his remarkable demonstration of courage while challenging powerful public employee unions all the way to the Supreme Court, resulting in a landmark victory in Janus vs. AFSCME for First Amendment rights.

NEW YORK, NY; February 20, 2019 – National Review Institute announced that the 2019 Whittaker Chambers Award will go to Mark Janus, the plaintiff in the Supreme Court case *Janus vs. AFSCME* which resulted in a landmark decision to restore First Amendment rights to five million public employees across the country.

Janus, a resident of Springfield, IL worked as a child support specialist for the Illinois state government for over a decade. In this capacity he learned that Illinois politicians had granted the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees — a politically influential government union — the power to exclusively represent more than 90 percent of state workers in Illinois. As a condition of employment, state government employees were forced to support the union by paying agency fees, even if the employee disagreed with the union’s political speech and activity. Government workers in states across the country were subject to this compelled speech – a gross violation of the First Amendment – until Janus decided to fight back, bringing his case all the way to the Supreme Court.

“Mark Janus has been and will continue to be a tremendous advocate for workers’ rights to free speech. He has been a champion of the First Amendment in the face of relentless pressure and intimidation,” National Review Institute President Lindsay Craig said, “and that is why we chose to honor him with the Whittaker Chambers Award.”

Despite the decisive victory for workers’ rights in the *Janus* decision, state, county and local government workers across the country continue to be blocked from exercising their First Amendment right to resign union membership. In one of many obstructive tactics used to prevent the ruling’s implementation, government unions in many locations are refusing to inform workers of their *Janus* rights.

Mark Janus continues to fight against mistreatment of workers by speaking to policymakers, the public, and the media about his story – which is representative of the stories of countless government workers – and about their *Janus* rights. He now serves as a Senior Fellow at the Liberty Justice Center, where he supports the organization’s litigation efforts to enforce the Supreme Court’s decision. He also holds a fellowship at Illinois Policy Institute, where he helps inform state government workers about their First Amendment rights and supports them as they consider their options regarding union membership.

NRI's 2019 Whittaker Chambers Award will be presented on Thursday, March 28 at its biennial Ideas Summit, which this year will address "The Case for the American Experiment." The full conference will take place over two days at the Mandarin Oriental in Washington, D.C., commencing in the afternoon on Thursday, March 28 and concluding in the afternoon on Friday, March 29.

The Whittaker Chambers Award was established in 2017 by NRI's Board of Trustees to honor a conservative "profile in courage" at each biennial Ideas Summit. The award is named for the former *National Review* writer and author of the seminal memoir *Witness*, who was a profound influence on William F. Buckley Jr. and on the modern conservative movement in its founding era, and who publicly stood – vilified and denigrated by the prevailing liberal establishment – as a true and defiant witness of the Communist threat inside American government

NRI's first Chambers Award honoree, British MEP Daniel Hannan, was recognized in 2017 for his courageous leadership in the UK's Brexit referendum.

Since 1993, the Institute and *National Review* have hosted several major post-election movement assemblies, where leading policymakers, scholars, and activists gather for public conversations and presentations, with most sessions broadcast by C-SPAN for broader coverage and viewing. In 2015 the gatherings were formalized by NRI into biennial "Ideas Summits" that continue the tradition of presenting powerful and diverse lineups of conservative speakers, who focus on providing insightful, forward-looking ideas to all in attendance.

In the spirit of NRI's founder, William F. Buckley Jr., participants in the 2019 Summit will focus on American exceptionalism, as well as the country's resilience and economic recovery. Speakers will share their vision for a future guided by timeless conservative principles. The audience will consist of nearly 500 NRI supporters from across the country, including leaders in the business, policy, and philanthropic communities.

For more information, please visit NRI's website or contact Miranda Melvin.

miranda@nrinstitute.org

(202) 827-4101

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The 2019 Ideas Summit is open to press, registration required.

Please email Anna Walsh, Pace Public Relations, for credentials.

anna@pacepublicrelations.com

(212) 254-4730

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