GOOD NEWS FOR TWITTER AS IT TURNS A PROFIT IN Q4

Twitter says its had its first quarterly profit in history and returned to revenue growth in the fourth quarter. Shares surged up more than 20% in premarket trading Thursday. For the fourth quarter, Twitter reported revenue of $7.32 million, up 2% year-over-year. Net income was $108 million, compared to a loss of $207 million a year ago. Twitter’s monthly active user base remained flat at 330 million users; its daily active users grew 15%.

MORTGAGE RATES CLIMB FOR FIFTH WEEK IN A ROW

Long-term U.S. mortgage rates climbed for the fifth consecutive week amid investors’ growing concern about inflation. Mortgage giant Freddie Mac says the average rate on 30-year, fixed-rate mortgages shot up to 4.32%, up from 4.21% last week and the highest since December 2018. The rate on 15-year, fixed-rate loans rose to 3.57%, from 3.65% last week and the highest since May 2011.

USA SNAPSHOT*

80%

80% of all employees, including managers themselves, feel they could do their job better if they could fire their managers.


WHEN TO SMILE ON THE WEB

3

A smile can add a weapon to your email arsenal - or do you need one? Learn how to use it to your advantage.

SOURCE:おかあさんは笑って寝ました (Mommy Stays up Laughing), American Red Cross

IS 4TH TIME THE CHARM IN ANTI-UNION CHALLENGE?

Supreme Court could deal a fatal blow to ‘fair share’ fees

Richard Wolf USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Diane Knopf describes herself as “a child of the 60’s.” Pam Harris grew up a butcher’s daughter in a proud union household. Rebecca Frankhouser was secretary to her local teachers’ union. Mark James supports the rights of workers to organize.

But as hard-pressed public sector unions fight a Supreme Court case challenging the power of public employee unions, Knopf, Harris, Frankhouser and James take pride in helping conservative groups such as a tipping point in their decades-long, anti-union campaign.

What Knopf in 2002, Harris in 2010, Frankhouser in 2016 and James in 2018 have done is put the parties within one vote of overturning a 40-year-old precedent that allows the unions to collect fees from non-members for the cost of representation. It is a case that will be heard this month, the court appears to have that additional muscle in the form of Justice Neil Gorsuch. A 5-4 decision against the unions would free about 5 million government workers, teachers, police and firefighters, and others in 22 states from being forced to pay “fair share” fees — potentially staggering blow to public employee unions.

The challengers’ battles against the Service Employees International Union, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Workers are based on disagreements with the political and policy priorities of the national leadership.

“This is not my father’s or my grandfather’s union,” says Harris, recalling the Ameaginiatedorraine Creations to which they belonged. “This is a money-making scheme. It is a way to advance political agenda.”

Union leaders see the opener as a power grab by what they call corporate billionaires and right-wing special interests to chip away at the unions standing in their way.

“It’s a defining strategy,” Roell Winogron, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said Wednesday. “They want the economy to be further rigged in their favor.

It’s no coincidence that the four cases have emerged from Southern California, Michigan, a state with strong public employee unions and strained state budgets. They are among 22 states without so-called “right-to-work” laws, which make union membership and contributions voluntary.

Already in the 22 states, workers do not have to contribute to the unions political activities. A nailing by the justices