

Labor & Industry Committee, Pennsylvania House of Representatives Public Hearing on Public Sector Union Reform

Testimony of David R. Osborne, CEO of Americans for Fair Treatment November 15, 2021

Good afternoon, and thank you to Chairman Cox, Democratic Chair Mullery, and the committee for the invitation. My name is David Osborne; I am CEO of Americans for Fair Treatment, a nonprofit educating public employees as to their rights in a unionized workplace and connecting them with every available resource to exercise those rights.

The bills we are discussing today represent commonsense solutions to the most practical problems facing public employees who want to exercise their workplace rights. I think we can all agree that public sector employees deserve to understand their rights, that no one should be forced to be a union member just to get a government job, and that everyone should have a choice when it comes to which union represents them.

Unfortunately, right now, every major public-sector union is investing in just the opposite. Since the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Janus v. AFSCME, Council 31*, 585 U.S. ____; 138 S. Ct. 2448 (2018), which recognized the First Amendment right of public employees not to pay a union, unions have continued to find new ways of obscuring information from public employees, manipulating public employees into becoming union members, and locking public employees into membership using complicated membership forms and legal jargon.

I asked the committee staff to accept and disseminate membership cards (attached) from the most notable public-sector unions in Pennsylvania. Public employees most often get these in one of two contexts: either when they are filling out paperwork for their employer, making them appear necessary for employment; or in an unsupervised orientation session with the union, where union officials can and have said whatever is necessary to get people to sign.

I will focus on four distinct issues that are on display in these membership cards. Each of these issues present problems under the Supreme Court's ruling in *Janus*, but litigation has not yet resolved them. You can tackle them immediately as legislators:

First, all major unions are making employees pay dues regardless of membership status, an obvious attempt to circumvent *Janus*. *See* Exhibits. A, B, C, D. Under these provisions, even if a public employee resigns their union membership, they're being made to pay full dues to the union. For example, the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees

("AFSCME") Council 13—which represents over 65,000 state and local public employees in Pennsylvania—requires that members sign a membership form with the following language:

Effective immediately, I hereby voluntarily authorize and direct my Employer to deduct from my pay each pay period, regardless of whether I am or remain a member of the Union, the amount of dues certified by the Union, and as they may be adjusted periodically by the Union.

Exhibit A.

Second, public employees are being led to believe that membership is a condition of employment. According to documents from a lawsuit filed by a state liquor store clerk, the United Food & Commercial Workers ("UFCW") Local 1776KS tells new employees in orientation sessions that they must join the union in order to keep their job. See Exhibit E. The union initially defended itself in court by arguing that it properly apprised public employees of their rights. But the membership form itself shows that any such language is only printed on the back of the form in light grey, difficult-to-read type that an employee may never see. See Exhibit B. UFCW Local 1776KS—which represents 3,000 Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board employees and 30,000 other private- and public-sector employees—eventually settled the case.

Third, unions are loading up membership cards with confusing, small print language. For example, the Pennsylvania State Education Association ("PSEA")—the state's largest teachers union—takes it to an extreme. See Ex. C. As best I can tell, the font the PSEA is using is 5.5. You may also notice that the membership agreement is placed very closely to an authorization meant for political action committee fundraising. This sort of membership card is very difficult for employees—again, under the watchful eye of a union representative on the first day of work—to read and understand before signing. It leads to many employees inadvertently signing up to fund political projects with which they disagree.

Finally, unions are collecting personal bank account information from public employees. For instance, the Service Employees International Union ("SEIU") Local 668 requires members to sign the following language:

To facilitate payment of the dues or other contributions from my bank account, I authorize my employer to provide to SEIU Local 668's designated secure payment processor the information for the bank account (bank account number and routing number) on file with my employer ("Account") that I have designated to receive the proceeds of my paycheck via direct deposit.

Now, this discussion may remind you of some issues you may have handled in the consumer protection space, and I see why. In both contexts, you have a multimillion-dollar organization seeking relatively small amounts of money from people who do not have a lawyer on hand and who are put under extraordinary financial or social pressure. Of course, many of our consumer protection statutes exempt or do not apply to unions.

Yet I believe the problems facing public employee are even greater than those facing consumers, and that is because we have given public-sector unions extraordinary power to act in a special fiduciary capacity for our public servants. State and local governments also rely on unions to act as an exclusive representative for their employees, but only on the assumption that unions are treating public employees fairly.

Instead, public-sector unions spend inordinate amounts of time and money on amassing political power and capital and very little on representational activities. The PSEA's most recent disclosure, for example, shows that it spent \$3.9 million on political activities and lobbying in one year, while just 21% of its spending went toward "representational activities," such as collective bargaining negotiations, handling grievances, and arbitration proceedings. See Exhibit F. The SEIU spends an inordinate sum of money organizing new employees, while just 12% of its spending went toward representational activities for existing members in that time period. See Exhibit G. The American Federation of Teachers—the national affiliate for our largest teachers' unions, the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers—raised its dues by 2% so it could spend nearly \$46 million of teachers' money on political, legislative, and advocacy work. See Exhibit H. And AFSCME Council 13 spent roughly half of members' dues just to keep the union running. See Exhibit I.

There is a real need for the General Assembly to get involved, particularly given that the courts have been slow to act after *Janus*. I am looking forward to working with you to find solutions that will give public employees the power to make informed decisions regarding their union affiliation.

David R. Osborne, CEO Americans for Fair Treatment 225 State Street, Suite 301 Harrisburg, PA 17101 833-969-3247 david@afft.org

EXHIBIT A - TESTIMONY OF DAVID R. OSBORNE

AFSCME COUNCIL 13 Membership Card



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EXHIBIT C - TESTIMONY OF DAVID R. OSBORNE



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Membership Application

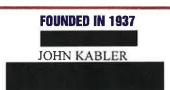
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request and accept nocal 668 to act as my ith my employer. I ur	nembership in SEIU Local 6 y exclusive representative in derstand that membership	n collective bargaining over wa and dues deduction require se	per of SEIU Local 668. SEIU Local 668 constitution and by-laws. I authorize SEIU ges, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment parate authorizations. I also understand that dues deduction ons to SEIU Local 668 are governed by the provisions below.
SIGN HERE			Date:
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WENDELL W. YOUNG, IV President MICHELE L. KESSLER Secretary-Treasurer

BARBARA JOHNSON Recorder

Dear John,

We are taking this opportunity to welcome you to the United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1776. You are working for an Employer/Company that has a Collective Bargaining Agreement (Union Contract) with Local 1776. It is a condition of employment with this company that you become a member in good standing with Local 1776. Previously we sent you a copy of the present contract that was negotiated, voted upon and approved by your fellow co-workers that are members of Local 1776. Your union contract sets forth conditions of employment, hours of work, wages, fringe benefits, health and welfare and pension benefits where applicable and when eligible, as well as the grievance procedure. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY. Also, please find attached your membership card.

According to our records you were hired on 04/10/2017, therefore, you will be affiliated into our union on 05/2017. The dues rate for your present classification is your hourly wage rate weekly, plus an additional \$6.67 if you are full time; if you are part time an additional \$3.32 will be added to your weekly hourly wage rate. Dues are payable one month in advance, therefore your employer has been instructed to make these deductions through payroll effective in the month in which you were hired which will be applied to the month you are affiliated. The initiation fee for your present classification is \$200.00. This fee will be deducted through payroll over several pay periods.

In order to protect your rights as defined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, it is your responsibility to remain in good standing with Local 1776. If you fail to maintain this obligation, your Employer is required to remove your name from the work schedule and you will not be permitted to work.

If you have any questions, problems or grievances, contact the union shop steward at your work location or your business representative PEG RHODES, at the SOUTH CENTRAL DIV office. Questions regarding dues can be answered by our Membership Services Department. Again, welcome to United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1776.

Fraternally yours,

Wendell W. Young, IV

Michele L. Kessler Secretary-Treasurer

> 30 P

> > 6

Login to <u>WWW.UFCW1776.ORG</u> for up to date Union information.

Username: Password: MEMBERSHIP CARD

This is to certify that

MAIN OFFICE

JOHN KABLER is a member of the

UNITED FOOD & COMMERCIAL WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION

Local 1776 of PENNSYLVANIA

SUBJECT TO PAYMENT OF CURRENT MONTH'S DUES AND OTHER OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION AND BYLAWS OF THE LOCAL UNION.







AMERICANS FOR FAIR TREATMENT

WHERE DO YOUR UNION DUES GO?

Overview of Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) dues (2019-2020):



\$64.7M

in dues were collected from school employees



+\$1M

increase in total revenue from the previous year (2018) despite having 739 fewer members



27%

increase in teachers' dues since 2011

What about the National Education Association (NEA)? (PSEA's more political parent organization)

Teachers and other PSEA members fund a web of progressive organizations and causes through their membership dues. In addition, every PSEA member must pay NEA dues of \$200/year for full time teachers, despite NEA's overtly political expenditures.



- 50% of NEA's member dues went towards political or related activities.
- Both PSEA and NEA use their own PACs to collect and spend political money.

2018 Janus v. AFSCME Supreme Court Decision

was a big win for nonmembers and relieved them from the obligation to pay any fees to the union as a condition of public employment. However, for teachers who remain PSEA members, Janus changed NOTHING about how union dues are spent, meaning they can still be used for political purposes.

PSEA's Spending Breakdown

Data provided by U.S. Department of Labor ("LM-2" Financial Report, Nov. 2020)

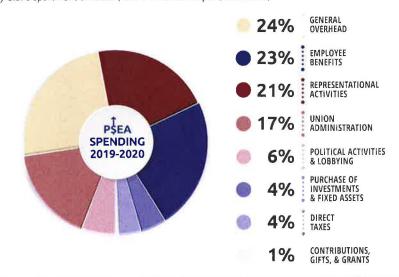
\$3.9M

of member dues were spent on "political activities and lobbying."

ONLY 21%

of spending went towards "representational activities," such as collective bargaining negotiations, handling grievances, and arbitration proceedings.

Note: According to federal law, member dues can be used for a variety of political activities, such as get-out-the-vote drives, election mailers, lobbying of legislators, and public marketing campaigns,





\$37M of member dues on "political activities & lobbying."



Nearly 69% of PSEA's overall spending went towards running the union, including: salaries, union employee health and retirement benefits, general overhead, multiple union leadership conferences, and purchase of investments and fixed assets (ie. land, buildings, and cars).

The Receipts Add Up

Data provided by U.S. Department of Labor ("LM-2" Financial Report, Nov. 2020)

Political mailings and advocacy materials \$1.8M Union officer and employee compensation for \$1.5M their political and lobbying activities Internal PSEA account "Fund for Student \$800K Success," a 527 independent expenditure committee, which is a political organization able to raise unlimited funds to influence "an issue, policy, appointment or election, be it federal, state or local," according to Opensecrets.org Pennsylvania Spotlight, a progressive news \$65K organization

\$50K PR consulting firm Shelly Lyons, billed as a contribution to the progressive CLEAR Coalition

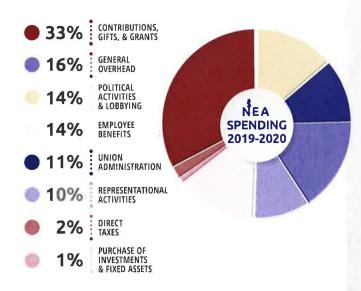
\$31K Keystone Research Center, a progressive policy institute in Pennsylvania

\$29KFor Our Future Action, a PAC that hires organizers to mobilize voters on behalf of progressive candidates and issues

\$25K

PA Alliance Action, a committee that funds Democratic candidates in Pennsylvania

NEA's Spending Breakdown



\$50M+

__ \$20M+

in contributions from NEA to political organizations

increase from the year before (2019-2020)

\$17M Strategic Victory Fund, a super PAC that funnels money from donors to Democratic candidates and causes

\$9.5M NEA Advocacy Fund, a super PAC started and run by the NEA

\$3.5M The Good Land Committee, the fundraising arm of the Democratic National Convention

\$1.5M State Engagement Fund, a progressive advocacy organization

\$800K PA Alliance Action, a Pennsylvania-based super PAC that raises money for Democratic candidates and causes

\$400K For Our Future Action Fund, an organization that advocates for progressive causes and candidates

\$400K Priorities USA, the largest Democratic Party

\$375K State Innovation Exchange, an organization that creates and advocates for progressive state-level legislation

\$330K American Bridge To The 21st Century Foundation, a rapid response organization for democrats

\$300K Committee on States, a group that coordinates donations to state-based progressive groups

\$280K Democracy Alliance, an invitation-only network of progressive donors who agree to support a set of endorsed organizations

\$272K America Votes, a coordination hub of the progressive community that mobilizes to change election law

\$250K Main Street Advocacy, a group that supports moderate and centrist Republican congressional candidates against challengers from the left and right

\$225K Fair Fight Action, a Georgia-based organization, founded by Stacey Abrams, that advocates for election law changes in the state

\$190K Progressive Caucus Action Fund, the advocacy arm of the Congressional Progressive Caucus

\$135K Project Keystone, a coalition of progressive groups organized to change Pennsylvania's election laws

\$125K Progressive State Leaders Committee, a progressive advocacy group

\$100K Emerging American Minorities, a group that supports state-based Democratic organizations and advocacy groups

\$50K Center For American Progress Action Fund, a national progressive advocacy organization founded by John Podesta

\$25K Verified Voting Foundation, a Philadelphiabased organization that promotes the use of technology in elections

\$20K Sixteen Thirty Fund, a super PAC that fought against Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh's nomination

In 2020, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) spent more money organizing new members – **\$87 million** or **28%** – than on any other category of spending.

Only I2% of total spending went toward representational activities for existing members, like negotiating contracts or handling grievance claims.

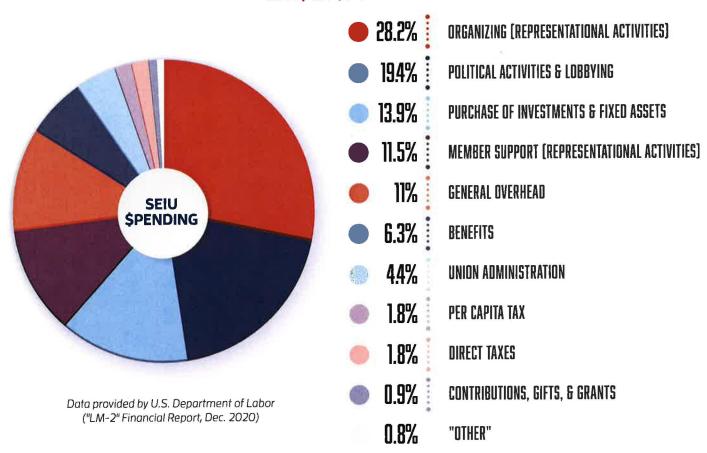


The union also spent a significant amount of money on partisan politics:

\$I out of every \$5 of member dues collected went toward progressive candidates and causes.

THE BIG PICTURE

In 2020, SEIU collected \$255 million in dues from 1,855,380 members, and spent \$310 million.



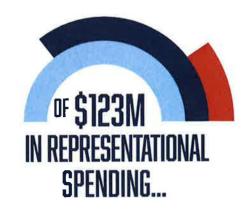
NATIONAL UNION SPENDING OF LOCAL CHAPTER DUES

Every local union chapter affiliated with SEIU owes a per capita tax to the international organization, which was \$7.65 per member in 2020. SEIU also charges each local chapter an additional \$5 per member for a "Unity Fund," which the SEIU constitution claims is to "pool resources" for "new strength" to bargain for members. However, there is no indication in the U.S. Department of Labor's "LM-2" financial report that the revenue from the standard per capita tax is kept separate from the "Unity Fund" per capita tax.

SEIU also claims it spends about 40% of disbursements on "Representational Activities," the spending category most directly related to labor representation, with line items like collective bargaining negotiations, handling grievances, and arbitration proceedings.

About 31% of the SEIU's overall 2020 spending went toward running the union, which includes: **salaries**, general overhead, and union **employee health** and **retirement benefits**, such as payments toward the union's pension liabilities. The general overhead expenses include **building security**, multiple union **leadership conferences**, and the purchase of investments and fixed assets, such as **land**, **buildings**, and **cars**.

Besides representational activities and support for organizing, SEIU also spends a significant amount of money on politics.





went to organizing new workers into unions



ONLY 29%

went to support existing, dues-paying members, making up just ~12% of total SEIU spending.

SEIU DUES PAY FOR POLITICS

The 2018 Janus v. AFSCME U.S. Supreme Court decision relieves nonmembers from the obligation to pay any fees to public-sector unions as a condition of employment. However, Janus changes **nothing** about how public-sector union dues are spent, meaning they can still be used for political purposes.

In 2020, SEIU spent more than \$60 million in dues on "political activities and lobbying," which is 20% of its total annual expenditures. According to federal law, member dues can be used for a variety of political activities, such as get-out-the-vote drives, election mailers, lobbying of legislators, and public marketing campaigns. This spending must be itemized and reported annually on the "LM-2" financial report.

2020 PULITICAL EXPENSES

Political Education & Action (PEA) Fund International & SEIU PEA State Fund, which fund the Democratic National Committee & progressive Super PACs, candidates, & causes

United We Can, a Super PAC that supports
Democratic candidates & causes, including Planned
Parenthood

Precision Strategies LLC, a public affairs agency that primarily works on Democratic candidate campaigns

M+R Strategic Services, a Washington, D.C.-based government relations & consulting company that primarily caters to left-of-center clients

The Good Land Committee, Inc., the fundraising arm of the Democratic National Convention

\$900K No on Prop 22, a campaign opposing a CA bill classifying app-based drivers as "independent contractors" rather than employees

\$735KTrilogy Interactive LLC, a digital consulting firm that primarily caters to liberal campaigns

\$600K State Victory Action, which funds progressive PACs

\$525K Yes on I5, a CA ballot measure that would have increased commercial property taxes



WHERE DO YOUR UNION DUES GO? A LOOK AT AFT SPENDING IN THE FAIR TREATMEN

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) collected \$186 million in member dues in 2019-2020. That's 4% more than AFT brought in the year before, thanks to a 2% increase in dues. Members of AFT-afiliated unions who worked full-time paid \$234.96 in dues during the 2019-2020 school year.

AFT member dues fund a number of political causes and progressive policy organizations, including large donations to help Democrats win majorities in the U.S. House and Senate and efforts to sway state and local elections.

Based on the union's own financial reporting, AFT spent only 30% of total disbursements on representational activities, the category of spending most directly related to labor representation, such as collective bargaining negotiations, handling grievances, and arbitration proceedings.

Another I3% of members' dues was spent on politics, according to the same financial reporting documents. The union spent additional money on political advocacy but listed it in the "Contributions, Gifts, and Grants" category.

Meanwhile, AFT President Randi Weingarten received \$453,000 in salary and disbursements in 2019-2020, on top of an unspecified amount for retirement and health care benefits. AFT Secretary-Treasurer Lorretta Johnson received a salary and other disbursements of \$324,000.

Other 2019-2020 expenditures included \$3.6 million on hotels and \$2.5 million on transportation.





Member Dues

DUES SPENT ON

30%

13%

Representational Activities **Politics**

\$3.6M

\$2.5MTransportation

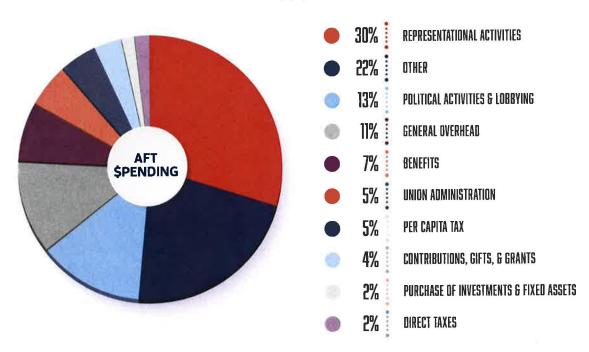
Hotels

\$777K

Only Two Salaries

THE BIG PICTURE

AFT dues money pays for politics.



In its yearly financial statement, **AFT reported spending 13% of member dues, a whopping \$45.9 million, on political, legislative, and advocacy work in 2019-2020**. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor's "LM-2" financial report shows **\$31.3 million in spending on political activities and lobbying,** with additional political spending falling under the "Contributions, Gifts, and Grants" category.

The Janus v. AFSCME Supreme Court decision relieves nonmembers from the obligation to pay any fees to the union as a condition of public employment. However, for employees who remain AFT members, Janus changes NOTHING about how union dues are spent, meaning they can still be used for political purposes.

According to federal law, member dues can be used for a variety of political activities, such as get-out-the-vote drives, election mailers, lobbying, and public marketing campaigns. This spending must be itemized and reported annually on the "LM-2" financial report.

So, how were AFT dues spent on politics? Here are just some of their recent political donations:



Obama to encourage progressive voter participation.

Commonwealth Victory Fund, the primary fundraising

arm of the Virginia General Assembly's Democratic

\$75K

Caucus







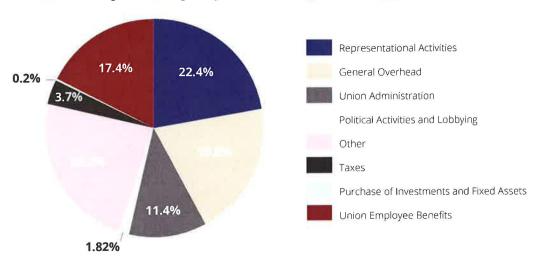
legislative, and advocacy work in 2019-2020

EXHIBIT I - TESTIMONY OF DAVID R. OSBORNE



AFSCME Council 13 Spending in Pennsylvania, 2019

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees 13 Spending, 2018-19



1. The big picture

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) represents state and local government employees, with District Council 13 representing over 50,000 Pennsylvania workers.

Based upon AFSCME 13's financial reporting,¹ **22%** of the union's spending went to the "representational activities" most directly related to labor representation, such as collective bargaining negotiations, handling grievances and arbitration proceedings. About **49%** of AFSCME 13's overall spending simply went to running the union: salaries; union employee health and retirement benefits; general overhead (including expenses such as security guards); multiple union leadership conferences; and purchase of investments and fixed assets (the last includes land, buildings and cars).

2. Dues money pays for politics

Government workers should know the *Janus v. AFSCME* U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2018 simply means that **non-union workers** no longer have to pay fair share fees to the workplace union as a condition of employment. **How-ever, for employees who remain AFSCME 13 members,** *Janus* **changes nothing about how union** *dues* **are spent: they can still be used for political purposes.**

In 2018-19, AFSCME 13 spent nearly **\$580,000** on "political activities and lobbying." This includes a variety of "soft" political activities, such as get-out-the-vote drives, election mailers, lobbying of legislators and public marketing campaigns. These must be itemized and reported annually to the U.S. Department of Labor on an "LM-2" financial report. (We've provided the latest one, released in September 2019, below).

So how were some of your dues spent on politics?

- \$385,863 on union officer and employee compensation for their political and lobbying activities;
- \$50,000 to the Keystone Research Center, which promotes progressive public policies in coordination with the Economic Policy Institute;

- Over \$63,000 in political mailings and advocacy materials to members, including items such as social media marketing on Facebook and robocalls;
- \$25,000 to public relations consulting firm Shelly Lyons to lobby the legislature; and
- \$25,000 to Wolf Inaugural 2019, the privately funded organization responsible for bankrolling Gov. Tom Wolfs inauguration celebration. (The money was simply classified as a non-political "contribution.")

All told, AFSCME 13 since 2010 has spent almost **\$8.7 million on "political activities and lobbying."** Most government employers collect this political money directly from workers' paychecks via payroll, at taxpayer expense.

3. Who is getting your dues money?

The dues paid to the national parent union AFSCME – \$2.8 million collected and transmitted by AFSCME 13, and which every member must pay – supported a variety of political and ideological advocacy groups and causes around the country. Contributions to political organizations totaled at least **\$14 million in 2019**, according to AFSCME's financial report, but millions more were also logged as "contributions, gifts and grants" to those groups.

Here are just a few big-ticket examples of the progressive and partisan causes your AFSCME dues funded in 2019.²

- Ballot iniatives to impact public policy and politics, including \$190,000 to the <u>Ballot Initiative Strategy Center</u> and \$10,000 to Coloradans for Prosperity, which bankrolled Proposition CC to lift state spending limits.
- Notable political and ideological organizations and political action committees (PAC) receiving union dues included:
 - ♦ Over \$2.5 million to For Our Future
 - \$145,000 to <u>Democracy Alliance</u> and \$500,000 to affiliated <u>State Engagement Fund</u>
 - ♦ \$370,833 to America Votes
 - ♦ \$300,000 to ProgressNow
 - ♦ \$250,000 to Priorities USA Action
 - ♦ \$250,000 to American Bridge 21st Century
 - ♦ \$150,000 to the <u>Center for American Progress</u>
 - ♦ \$100,000 to the Progressive Caucus Action Fund
 - ♦ \$100,000 to Emily's List
 - ♦ \$100,000 to the National Democratic Redistricting Committee
 - ♦ \$40,000 to the <u>Sixteen Thirty Fund</u>
- Nearly \$1.3 million in donations to political candidates directly, or supporting PACs, and an additional \$500,000 to Milwaukee 2020 to organize the Democratic National Convention. Additional donations were overwhelmingly pro-Democrat:
 - ♦ Only about \$37,000 was given to Republican committees and parties.
 - ♦ Over \$1.2 million was given to Democratic committees and parties, with an additional \$500,000 each going to the Senate Majority PAC and House Majority PAC.

4. Your dues rise every year

According to the most recent form LM-2, covering July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019, AFSCME 13 collected \$26.7 million in dues from government workers. During this time, they gained membership and increased dues revenue by \$1.7 million. This is largely because of an increase in government union employment and annual increases in salary, of which 1.5% is taken for dues. This offsets the loss of fee payers, which was reported in the previous LM-2 filing, covering July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 (after the *Janus* decision).

[1] Form LM-2 Labor Organization Annual Report, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 13, U.S. Department of Labor File Number 071-060, Year 2018-2019.

[2] Form LM-2 Labor Organization Annual Report, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, U.S. Department of Labor File Number 000-289, Year 2019.