

WHERE DO YOUR UNION DUES GO?

A LOOK AT AFT SPENDING IN THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR



AMERICANS FOR FAIR TREATMENT

American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten said she is concerned about the effect political divisiveness has on teachers, but she leads a union that funds a web of highly partisan political organizations. AFT makes large donations to political and issue advocacy organizations that use negative attack ads to target Republicans and moderate Democrats, while promoting policies on the fringe of American political discourse.

For example, AFT gave \$350,000 to America Bridge 21st Century, a group created to attack Republican candidates during elections, and \$35,000 to the Sixteen Thirty Fund, which donates to groups that threaten to replace moderate Democrats with far-left candidates. AFT also funds organizations like People for the American Way, which fights to end the Senate filibuster.

These political contributions were financed by members' regular dues, not by members' separate PAC donations.

During its 2020-2021 fiscal year, AFT collected \$196.7 million in dues from school employees, a \$10 million increase from last year, despite having 13,390 fewer members. AFT members pay \$235 each year in union dues.

AFT spent \$49 million of members' dues on politics last year, according to the union's own reporting. The union spent an additional \$6 million on "Contributions, Gifts, and Grants," with much of this money going to political organizations. In total, this accounted for about 27% of AFT's spending in 2020-2021.

Only 36% of AFT's spending went towards representational activities, the category most closely related to labor representation. Another 27% was spent on union administration, such as general overhead and benefits for individuals employed by the union.

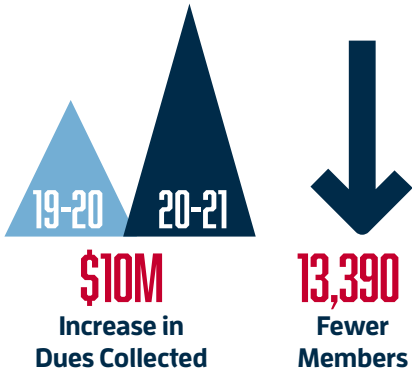
Large salaries went to top AFT officials, including Weingarten, who was paid \$449,562. Secretary-Treasurer Fedrick Ingram earned \$312,680, and Executive Vice President Evelyn DeJesus was paid \$284,972. Weingarten's two assistants, Michael S. Powell and Michelle Ringuette, earned \$248,568 and \$230,079, respectively, yet Ringuette spent the majority of her time on political activities, according to AFT. In total, AFT paid \$4.1 million last year to employees who engaged in political activities for the union.



\$196M+
Total Dues Collected



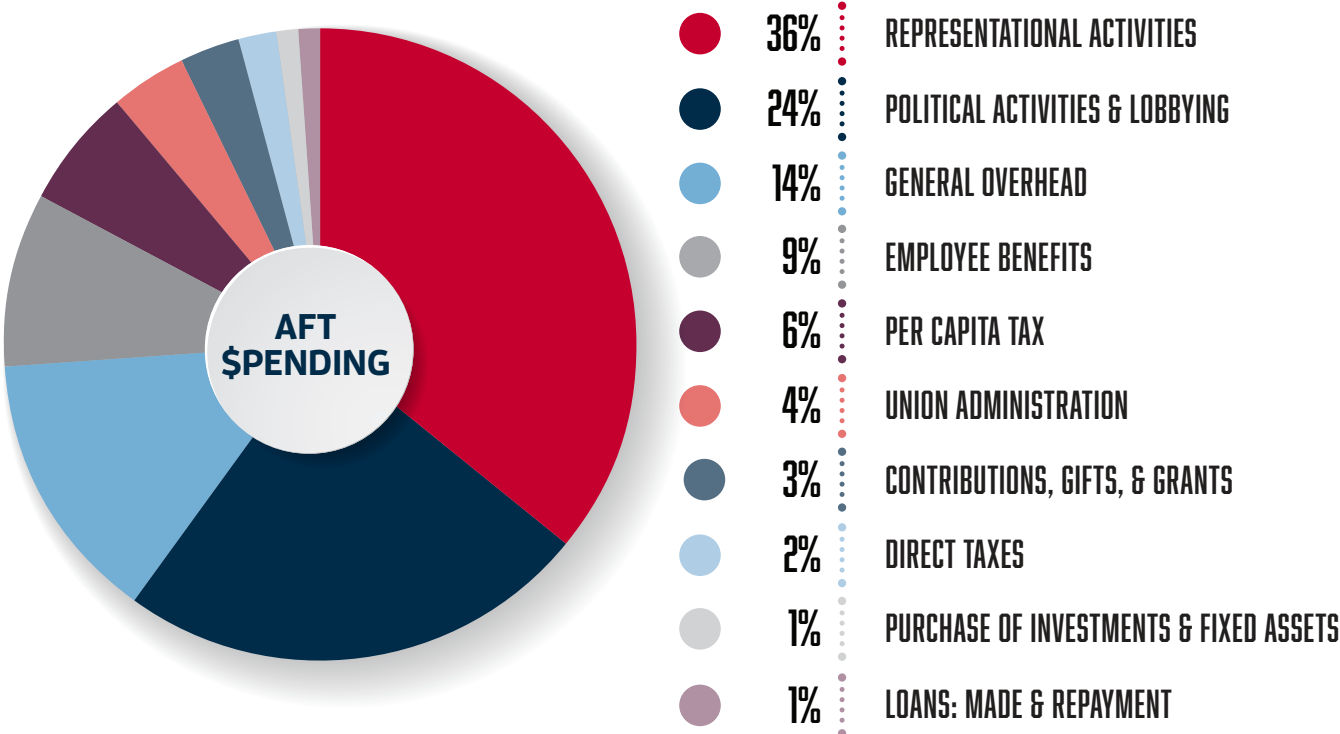
Yearly Dues



\$4M+
Paid to Union Employees who Engaged in Political Activities

THE BIG PICTURE

AFT Breakdown of Spending



POLITICAL SPENDING

AFT members fund many political causes with their union dues. In 2020-2021, AFT spent \$49 million on politics, most of which was directed to progressive causes. According to federal law, member dues can be used for a variety of political activities, such as issue advocacy, get-out-the-vote drives, election mailers, lobbying, and public marketing campaigns. This spending must be itemized and reported annually to the U.S. Department of Labor on an "LM-2" financial report.

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

So how were AFT dues spent on politics? In 2020-2021, AFT gave:



RECENT POLITICAL DONATIONS

\$11.3M

NYSUT's political advocacy funds, one of AFT's many political arms that almost exclusively contributes to Democratic candidates.

\$24M

AL Media, a campaign management firm that works for numerous Democratic candidates.

\$2M

NY4Kids, a political action committee run by employees of the United Federation of Teachers.

\$1.75M

Senate Majority PAC, an organization dedicated to building a Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate.

\$1.5M

House Majority PAC, an organization dedicated to building a Democratic majority in the U.S. House of Representatives.

\$1.5M

For Our Future, a Democratic Super PAC supported by billionaire activist and failed presidential candidate, Tom Steyer.

\$500K

Priorities USA Action, an organization aimed at advancing progressive causes.

\$350K

American Bridge 21st Century Foundation, a Super PAC dedicated to attacking Republican candidates.

\$250K

WorkingAmerica, a community affiliate of the AFL-CIO that advocates for progressive policies.

\$250K

Economic Policy Institute, a left-leaning think tank.

\$200K

Congressional Progressive Caucus Center, a far-left think tank.

\$200K

State Innovation Exchange, a strategy center committed to elevating progressive policy at the state level.

\$180K

Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, a 501c(4) dedicated to advancing progressive causes through ballot initiatives.

\$175K

Black Church PAC, which exclusively endorses Democratic candidates.

\$175K

Take Back 2020, a campaign to create a Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate.

\$100K

Color of Change PAC, which endorsed soft on crime Philadelphia District Attorney, Larry Krasner.

\$100K

DLCC, a partisan organization dedicated to electing Democrats in state and local governments.

\$75K

Capital and Main, a news organization with a progressive agenda.

\$70K

Democracy Alliance, a network of influential progressive donors.

\$50K

National Democratic Redistricting Committee, an organization led by Democrat Eric Holder, that advocates for partisan gerrymandering.

\$50K

MomsRisingTogether, which organizes progressive women for political advocacy.

\$50K

The American Prospect, a news organization that analyzes public policy through a progressive lens.

\$50K

JustStrategy, an organization that teaches companies how to protest in support of progressive causes.

\$50K

Strong Economy for All Coalition, a union-supported organization that advocates for tax and spend programs in New York.

\$50K

SuperMajority PAC, a women's organization created to oppose the Trump Administration's political agenda.

\$35K

Sixteen Thirty Fund, a super PAC that spends money to boost Democratic candidates and causes and is part of the larger progressive Arabella Network.

\$25K

Committee on States, the state government-focused arm of Democracy Alliance.

\$20K

Center for Media and Democracy, a progressive watchdog organization.

\$15K

People for the American Way, a radical organization that wants to end the Senate filibuster.

\$10K

AmericaVotes, which describes itself as the "coordination hub of the progressive community."

\$10K

United States Heartland China Association, an organization that aims to "build stronger ties" with the Chinese government.



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\$49M
spent on **political, legislative, and advocacy** work in 2020-2021