

# WHERE DO YOUR UNION DUES GO?

A LOOK AT THE VIRGINIA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (VEA) SPENDING IN THE 2017-2019 FISCAL YEARS



AMERICANS FOR FAIR TREATMENT

The Virginia Education Association (VEA) represents over 40,000 teachers throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. VEA is associated with the National Education Association (NEA), a national union that represents over 3 million members across all 50 states. As a nonprofit organization, the VEA must file a Form 990 financial disclosure form with the IRS.

In 2019, the latest available filing, the VEA brought in \$12.6 million in revenue, with 82 percent of this coming from membership dues. From 2017 to 2019, membership dues accounted for between 77 and 85 percent of VEA's revenue. Most of the remaining revenue came from contributions and grants, a total of \$1.8 million. The \$12.6 million in revenue represented a sharp increase when compared to the 2018 total of \$11.9 million but a decrease compared to the 2017 total of \$13 million.

Expenses steeply decreased from 2017 to 2019, dropping from \$12.3 million to \$10.5 million. In turn, the union's net financial position increased by more

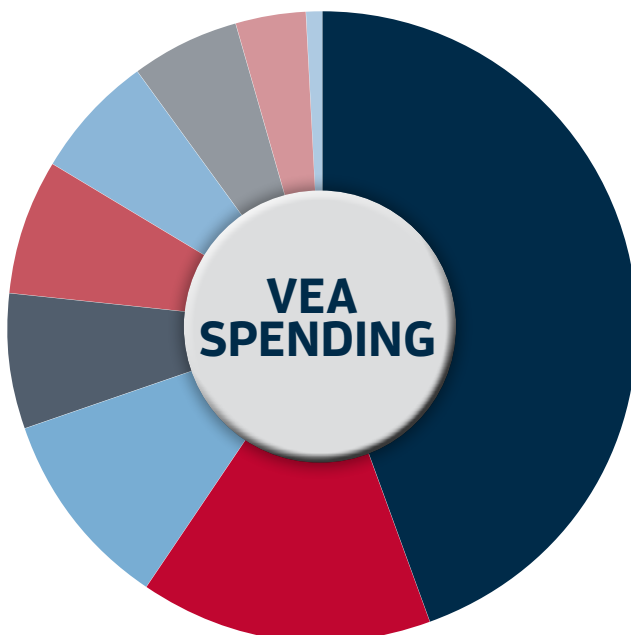
than \$2.3 million over the three-year span despite a spike in liabilities in 2018. Most of VEA's assets are held in cash and publicly traded securities. As of 2019, the union's largest liability was federal income tax. While the organization is tax exempt, it is holding \$4.2 million in case of "uncertain" federal income tax obligations.

The second largest liability is the pension for union employees. Currently, the union's pension obligation sits at \$2.3 million, down from over \$4.7 million in 2017.

Union employee salaries and benefits were the largest expense category, accounting for over half of all expenses in each year from 2017 to 2019. Pension plan accruals were another large expense category, totaling 11 percent of all spending in 2019. According to the latest filing, VEA had 66 employees. **Executive Director Brenda Pike was the highest earning employee, making \$194,136 in base compensation**, plus nearly \$32,000 in retirement and nontaxable benefits. Her total compensation of \$225,861 is nearly **five times higher** than the average teacher salary in Virginia.



## VEA SPENDING 2019



- 44% : OTHER SALARIES AND WAGES
- 15% : PENSION PLAN ACCRUALS AND CONTRIBUTIONS
- 10% : OTHER EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
- 7% : ALL OTHER EXPENSES
- 7% : OFFICE EXPENSE AND TRAVEL
- 6% : LEGAL FEES (NON EMPLOYEES)
- 6% : ELECTION EDUCATION CAMP
- 4% : GRANTS AND OTHER ASSISTANCE
- 1% : MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

Outside of compensation and benefits for its employees, VEA spent \$655,987 on legal services, \$452,367 on office expenses, and



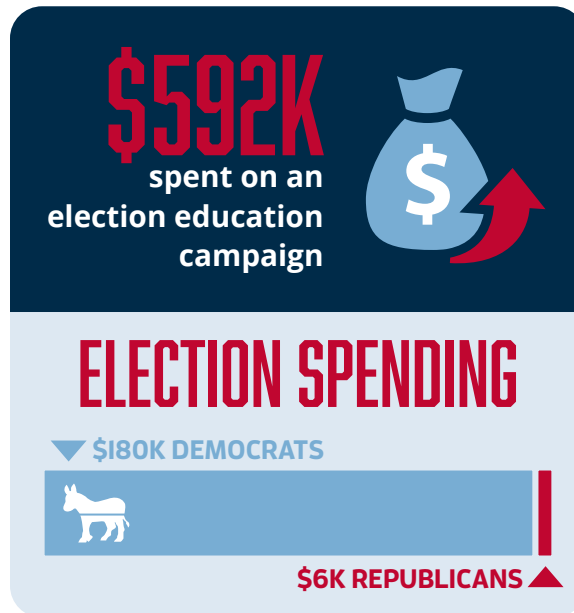
\$270,039 on travel during 2019. **Membership support accounted for less than one percent of all expenditures in 2019.**

## VEA POLITICAL SPENDING

The union did not complete Schedule C of the 990, which covers political campaign and lobbying activities. However, it reported spending \$34,507 on lobbying fees paid to non-employees in addition to **\$592,650 spent on an election education campaign.**

This spending is just the tip of the iceberg for VEA. The union's website shows its position on issues, offers the union's legislative agenda, and provides members with legislative scorecards. The VEA website also hosts equity program resources that were previously on the Virginia Department of Education's website. **These resources were removed from the Department**

**of Education's website for promoting "discriminatory and divisive concepts."**



In addition to this, the union is affiliated with the Virginia Education Association Fund for Children and Public Education, a 527 group that is allowed to **raise unlimited amounts of money to influence elections.** According to campaign finance reports, from 2017 to 2019, the VEA Fund for Children and Public Education spent \$213,958 on elections. Of this, 84 percent, or \$180,334 went to Democratic candidates

and causes. Only \$6,950 went to Republicans, with the remaining money going to causes that are not explicitly partisan.

Virginia Education Association members also pay dues to the National Education Association. For more information on how those dues are spent, please visit the following link:

**NEA: Where do your union dues go?**

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