

# WHERE DO YOUR UNION DUES GO?

## A LOOK AT NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS (NYSUT) IN 2023



AMERICANS FOR FAIR TREATMENT

**New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)** represents over 678,000 teachers in New York. NYSUT is one of five merged teachers' unions that are affiliated with both the National Education Association (NEA) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT). As a union that represents public and private sector employees, NYSUT files a LM-2 financial disclosure form with the United States Department of Labor. So, what does this filing reveal about the union?

Most notably, NYSUT is in serious debt. According to its latest filing, **the union is in the red by \$61 million**. The union is liable for nearly \$300 million in retired union employee medical and pension obligations. Union employee retirement obligations account for approximately 88 percent of NYSUT's \$337 million financial liabilities. While NYSUT's financial position is not good, it has improved significantly over the past three years. Since 2021, the union has decreased its liabilities by nearly \$250 million and increased its net position by \$281 million.

With such large benefit liabilities, NYSUT spent a significant amount of money on employee benefits during the 2023 reporting period. Benefits for NYSUT employees accounted for over 26 percent of all expenditures, a total of \$48.9 million. Unsurprisingly, most of the benefits expenditures went to retired employees' medical and pension costs. These costs accounted for about \$34 million, making up almost 70 percent of all benefits expenditures.

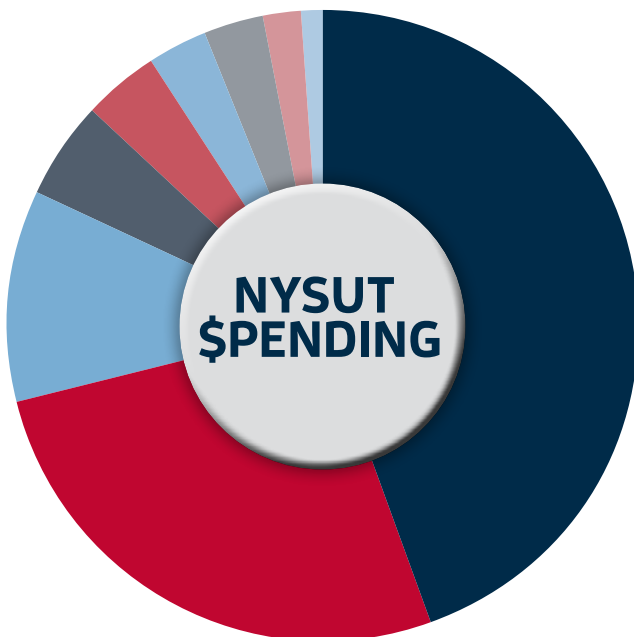
When considering costs for current NYSUT employees and other operating expenses, about 49 percent of NYSUT's expenses went toward running the union. Outside of employee benefits (26.4 percent), spending on investments and fixed assets (10.5 percent) and general overhead (3.9 percent) made up significant portions of NYSUT's operating costs. Executive compensation is one important part of operating the union. **NYSUT President Andrew Pallotta, who retired last year, brought in \$321,839 over the last reporting period, over five times the average salary of a New York public school teacher.**



**AFT president paid 5X more than average teacher salary**

Representational activities, the primary responsibility of a labor union, accounted for the second largest share of expenses after operating expenses. Over the latest reporting period, NYSUT spent \$82.3 million representing its members, approximately 44.5 percent of all expenditures. While representational activities only accounted for 44.5 percent of expenditures, dues collected from NYSUT's 678,103 members accounted for 74 percent of the union's revenue.

## NYSUT SPENDING 2023



- 45% REPRESENTATIONAL ACTIVITIES
- 27% EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
- 11% PURCHASE OF INVESTMENTS AND FIXED ASSETS
- 5% POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND LOBBYING
- 4% GENERAL OVERHEAD
- 3% DIRECT TAXES
- 3% UNION ADMINISTRATION
- 2% PER CAPITA TAX
- 0% CONTRIBUTIONS, GIFTS, GRANTS

# NYSUT DUES PAY FOR POLITICS

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. Like most unions, NYSUT spends membership dues money on political activities and lobbying. **The union reported spending \$9.5 million of members' dues on political activities and lobbying, compared to \$8.2 million last year.**

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 NYSUT members, *Janus* changes nothing about how union dues are spent: they are still routinely used for political purposes. NYSUT's political spending was primarily focused on supporting NYSUT and local unions' political goals, though **NYSUT did make multiple contributions to left-wing causes and organizations.** During the latest reporting period, NYSUT reported spending:

- \$3.7M** to NYSUT employees and officers as compensation for their political and lobbying activities.
- \$2.6M** to affiliated local unions in support of their political activities and lobbying efforts.
- \$743K** to various consultants for their assistance with union political activities and lobbying efforts.
- \$375K** to the Strong Economy for All Coalition, a coalition of New York unions and community organizations that advocate for higher taxes.
- \$143K** on printing supplies for union political activities.
- \$100K** to American Federation of Teachers, the second-largest national teachers union.

- \$90K** to the Working Families Party, a labor-funded progressive political party that runs candidates in state and local elections.
- \$52K** on Facebook advertising to support NYSUT's political activities.
- \$31K** to the New York State Association of Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislators, a progressive organization focused on promoting racial equity.
- \$30K** to PSC PAC, the political action committee of the Professional Staff Congress union that represents City University of New York employees.
- \$25K** to New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness, a non-profit organization that advocates for higher taxes.

NYSUT is politically active in other ways too. In 2022, the union endorsed all four Democratic candidates for statewide office. **The union also endorsed 179 Democrats out of the 212 state legislature seats up for election.** Additionally, the union recommended members vote for Democrat Chuck Schumer in the United States Senate race and all 26 Democratic candidates running for the United States House of Representatives.



NYSUT also makes direct campaign contributions through their affiliated Political Action Committee (PAC). During the 2021-2022 election cycle, NYSUT's PAC gave \$4,136,538 to candidates and committees for state, county, and local political offices. This giving was mostly directed to Democrats. NYSUT's PAC gave a combined \$376,900 to Democratic legislative campaign committees, compared to \$8,500 to Republican legislative campaign committees.

The NYSUT is uniquely affiliated with both the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), meaning that NYSUT members also pay dues to the two large national unions. For more information on NYSUT's affiliates, see the below links:

[NEA: Where do your union dues go?](#)

[AFT: Where do your union dues go?](#)

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