

Florida Education Association

WHERE DO YOUR UNION DUES GO?

A LOOK AT FEA SPENDING IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 (Sept. 1, 2024 – Aug. 31, 2025)

Just 15 cents of every dues dollar went to representing teachers — less than the union spent running its own office. The Florida Education Association (FEA), Florida's largest labor union and the merged state affiliate of both the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, represents roughly 116,000 educators.¹ Of the \$71.2 million it disbursed in the fiscal year ending August 31, 2025, only \$10.4 million — 14.6% — went to representational activities², while \$32.2 million, 45 cents of every dollar, was shipped straight to its national parents before FEA spent a cent on Florida classrooms.³

The imbalance runs through the whole ledger. General overhead (\$10.5 million) actually exceeded representational spending⁴, and over the past decade FEA forwarded \$340.1 million to its national affiliates while spending just \$73.2 million representing members — more than four and a half dollars to Washington for every dollar spent on Florida teachers.⁵

FEA diverted \$1.9 million in dues to political activities and lobbying in fiscal 2025⁶, and \$27.3 million over the past decade — peaking at \$5.3 million in 2021.⁷ That includes \$675,000 paid to the FEA Advocacy Fund, a separate political committee tied to FEA.⁸ But the LM-2 figure tells only part of the story. Since 2015, that same committee has directed \$6.9 million in contributions into Florida politics, \$6.0 million of it to Democratic committees and candidates against \$817,000 to Republicans.⁹ Among the recipients is state Sen. Shevrin Jones, who has co-sponsored a bill to repeal the state's restrictions on gender-transition procedures for minors.¹⁰ In Tallahassee, FEA has also paid outside lobbying firms an estimated \$1.2 million since 2020, led by Converge Government Affairs of Florida.¹¹

FEA's payee records show \$493,523 spent at hotels and resorts — including \$120,155 at Orlando's Rosen Hotel & Resorts, \$82,199 at the Hilton Philadelphia at Penn's Landing, and \$62,323 at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront in Oregon.¹² The payroll tells the same story: President Andrew Spar collected \$390,336 — nearly seven times the \$56,663 average salary of the Florida teachers he represents, a figure FEA itself decries as 50th in the nation¹³ — and total staff compensation of \$11.5 million exceeded everything the union spent on representation.¹⁴

Florida's educators have noticed. FEA's membership peaked at 143,960 in fiscal 2020 and has since collapsed to 115,897 — a loss of 28,063 members, or 19.5% — including more than 20,000

members gone in a single year after Florida's 2023 union-accountability law forced public-sector unions to prove their support.¹⁵

A union exists to represent its members — at the bargaining table, in grievance proceedings, and in the workplace. FEA's own filings show an organization that spends less on representation than on its own overhead, ships nearly half of every dues dollar out of state, pays its president nearly seven times a Florida teacher's salary, and has lost one in five members in five years.¹⁶ Florida's teachers deserve to know that just 15 cents of each dues dollar funds the representation the union exists to provide.

FINANCIAL POSITION

FEA is financially comfortable. The union reported \$74.1 million in total assets against \$42.2 million in liabilities at the close of fiscal 2025, leaving \$31.9 million in net assets.¹⁷ Nearly all of its assets — \$62.7 million — sat in cash.¹⁸

The union's largest liability is a promise to its own staff: \$33.7 million in accrued payroll, leave, and post-retirement benefits owed to FEA employees¹⁹ — more than three times what the union spends in a year representing the members whose dues fund those obligations.²⁰

Item	Amount
Total Assets	\$74,145,212
Total Liabilities	\$42,242,431
Net Assets	\$31,902,781
Cash on Hand	\$62,655,204
Accrued Payroll, Leave & Post-Retirement (Sch 10)	\$33,686,870

SPENDING BREAKDOWN

Of the \$71.2 million FEA disbursed in fiscal 2025, the single largest category — by a factor of three — was \$32.2 million 'to affiliates of funds collected': dues money passed straight through to the union's national parents, the NEA and AFT.²¹ Representational activities received \$10.4 million, or 14.6% — third place in FEA's own budget, behind both the affiliate pass-through and the \$10.5 million the union spent on general overhead.²²

Over the decade the pattern is unbroken: \$340.1 million forwarded to national affiliates, \$73.2 million on representation, and another \$64.5 million in contributions, gifts, and grants.²³

The full breakdown of FEA's spending appears below.

Category	Amount	% of Total
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To Affiliates of Funds Collected	\$32,197,012	45.2%
General Overhead	\$10,498,625	14.7%
Representational Activities	\$10,433,730	14.6%
Benefits	\$7,252,791	10.2%
Contributions, Gifts & Grants	\$4,739,857	6.7%
Union Administration	\$2,599,582	3.6%
Political Activities & Lobbying	\$1,935,829	2.7%
Direct Taxes	\$1,178,257	1.7%
Purchase of Investments & Fixed Assets	\$307,304	0.4%
Loans Made	\$104,200	0.1%
On Behalf of Individual Members	\$2,081	0.0%

What Do These Categories Mean?

To Affiliates of Funds Collected: Dues collected from members and passed through to affiliated unions — here, the national NEA and AFT.
General Overhead: Rent, utilities, office expenses, technology, and insurance — the cost of running the organization.
Representational Activities: Grievance handling, collective bargaining, contract negotiation, arbitration, and organizing — a union's core function.
Benefits: Health insurance, pensions, and other benefits paid for the union's own employees and officers.
Contributions, Gifts & Grants: Charitable and organizational contributions and grants (distinct from political spending).
Union Administration: Internal governance: officer elections, conventions, executive board meetings, and auditing.
Political Activities & Lobbying: Dues money spent on political campaigns, ballot measures, and lobbying public officials (LM-2 Line 51).
Direct Taxes: Payroll and other taxes paid directly by the union.
Purchase of Investments & Fixed Assets: Money used to buy investments, property, or equipment.
Loans Made: Loans the union extended to others.
On Behalf of Individual Members: Money disbursed on behalf of individual members.

POLITICAL SPENDING

FEA reported \$1.9 million in political activities and lobbying on Line 51 of its 2025 LM-2 — dues money spent on politics rather than representation.²⁴ Over the past decade that spending totaled \$27.3 million, averaging about \$2.7 million a year and spiking to \$5.3 million in fiscal 2021.²⁵

Year by year, the union's reported political spending:

Fiscal Year	Political Spending
2016	\$2,085,698
2017	\$1,878,128
2018	\$1,748,904
2019	\$2,985,788
2020	\$3,019,701
2021	\$5,347,301
2022	\$3,398,515
2023	\$2,728,247
2024	\$2,220,382
2025	\$1,935,829
TOTAL	\$27,348,493

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

The single largest political payee in FEA's records was the FEA Advocacy Fund, a separate political committee tied to the union: \$675,000. The payee schedules also show payments to politically active organizations, including \$25,000 to Florida Alliance, LLC (a hub for progressive donor coordination in the state), \$25,000 to the Florida State Conference NAACP, and \$15,000 to the Florida Conference of Black State Legislators.²⁶

PAC POLITICAL SPENDING

Beyond the political spending reported on its LM-2, FEA is tied to the FEA Advocacy Fund — a separate political committee — which has directed \$7.8 million into Florida politics since 2015, of which \$6.9 million went to political recipients and \$816,956.75 to vendors such as direct-mail and printing firms. That vendor money buys services, not candidates, and is excluded from every partisan figure here. The partisan tilt is heavy: \$6.0 million — 88.1% of every dollar that went to a recipient with an identifiable party — flowed to Democratic candidates and committees, against \$817,000, or 11.9%, to Republican ones, more than seven of every eight partisan dollars to one side of the aisle.²⁷

The Fund's largest recipients were party infrastructure and PAC-to-PAC transfers rather than individual candidates — and all five are Democratic:

Among the individual legislators the Fund has supported is state Sen. Shevrin Jones, one of the most outspoken members of the Legislature on gender ideology. After Gov. DeSantis signed the 2021 law banning transgender girls from girls' school sports, Jones called it 'yet another hate-driven attack from the governor and Republican legislators,' adding that 'transgender kids are just

kids.²⁸ In 2025, Jones co-sponsored the Health Care Freedom Act (SB 932/HB 823), which would repeal Florida's restrictions on gender-transition care — including puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones — for transgender minors and adults.²⁹

Recipient	Amount	Party
Florida Democratic Party	\$1,149,400	D
Committee for Progressive Leadership	\$795,000	D
Building the Bay PC	\$412,500	D
Florida 2020	\$395,000	D
Florida Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee	\$352,000	D
TOTAL — TOP 5	\$3,103,900	

\$6.9 million in political contributions, a fund named for the union's own advocacy — and, buried in the recipient list, a state senator pushing to unwind Florida's restrictions on gender-transition procedures for minors.³⁰

FLORIDA STATE LOBBYING (2020–2026 SESSION)

Florida Education Association appears as a principal in the Florida Lobbyist Registration Office quarterly compensation reports across 46 of 56 quarter-branch slots during 2020–2026. Across that window the principal hired 2 distinct lobbying firms employing 18 registered lobbyists, with total Florida state-capitol lobbying compensation estimated at \$1,249,975.

The largest single Florida lobbying firm engaged by Florida Education Association over this window was Converge Government Affairs of Florida, Inc., paid an estimated \$1,069,977 (est., 50 quarters).

Note: Florida's quarterly compensation reports capture only OUTSIDE contract lobbying firms hired by a principal — they do not include compensation for in-house lobbyists employed directly by the union, which appear separately in the Florida lobbyist registration directory. Florida also reports compensation in tiered ranges below \$50,000 (\$0; \$1–\$9,999; \$10,000–\$19,999; \$20,000–\$29,999; \$30,000–\$39,999; \$40,000–\$49,999) and as exact dollar amounts rounded to \$1,000 above \$50,000, per FS 11.045. Range-based figures shown here use midpoint estimates. Older quarters drop off the Florida bulk-download page (only the most recent ~8 quarters are hosted); quarters that have rolled off are labelled "Not available in bulk download."

Period	Amount	Filing Type
2020	\$459,975 (est.)	Legislative + Executive (8 of 8 quarter-branch slots filed)
2021	\$240,000 (est.)	Legislative + Executive (8 of 8 quarter-branch slots filed)
2022	\$140,000 (est.)	Legislative + Executive (8 of 8 quarter-branch slots filed)

2023	\$60,000 (est.)	Legislative + Executive (4 of 8 quarter-branch slots filed)
2024	\$140,000 (est.)	Legislative + Executive (8 of 8 quarter-branch slots filed)
2025	\$160,000 (est.)	Legislative + Executive (8 of 8 quarter-branch slots filed)
2026	\$50,000 (est.)	Legislative + Executive (2 of 8 quarter-branch slots filed)
TOTAL	\$1,249,975 estimated 2020–2026 (46/56 quarter-branch slots reported; midpoint estimates of FS 11.045 ranges)	
Firm		Total Paid
Converge Government Affairs of Florida, Inc.		\$1,069,977 (est., 50 quarters)
Florida Legislative Associates LLC		\$179,998 (est., 4 quarters)

WASTEFUL SPENDING

FEA's vendor records show \$493,523 spent across a dozen hotels and resorts — booked as representation, overhead, and administration rather than disclosed as the travel perks they are.³¹

The tab starts at Orlando's Rosen Hotel & Resorts (\$120,155) but doesn't stay in Florida: \$82,199 went to the Hilton Philadelphia at Penn's Landing, \$62,323 to the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront in Oregon, and \$20,000 to the DoubleTree Denver — dues from Florida teachers spent at hotels their union visited on the other side of the country.³²

Vendor	Amount
Rosen Hotel & Resorts (Orlando)	\$120,155
Hilton Philadelphia at Penn's Landing	\$82,199
Drury Plaza Hotel Tallahassee	\$73,406
Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront (OR)	\$62,323
Embassy Suites by Hilton	\$55,704
Embassy Suites Orlando – International Dr.	\$34,997
DoubleTree Denver	\$20,000
Residence Inn Tampa Downtown	\$15,983
Embassy Suites Orlando North	\$7,984
Residence Inn Daytona Speedway/Airport	\$7,899
Courtyard by Marriott	\$7,236

TRYP by Wyndham Tallahassee	\$5,637
TOTAL	\$493,523

TOP COMPENSATION

FEA's three top officers together collected nearly \$1 million in fiscal 2025. President Andrew Spar led at \$390,336 — nearly seven times the \$56,663 average salary of a Florida teacher, a ranking (50th in the nation) that FEA's own press releases lament.³³ Vice President Carole Gauronskas collected \$302,658 and Secretary-Treasurer Nandi Riley \$284,683 — each more than five times the average teacher they represent.³⁴

Officer pay has surged since the current leadership took over. Between fiscal 2021 — Spar's first full year as president — and fiscal 2025, his compensation rose 58%, Riley's rose 60%, and Gauronskas's rose 41%, while consumer prices rose roughly 19% over the same period.³⁵

Below the officers sits a professional staff of more than 100 employees whose total compensation reached \$11.5 million — more than the union spent on all representational activities combined.³⁶

Employee		Total Compensation
1. Tanya Cornell — Chief of Staff		\$221,017
2. Amber Swords — Director		\$190,403
3. Primrose Cameron — Director		\$189,870
4. Mary Thomas-Proud — Manager		\$176,784
5. Anthony Roeder — Director		\$176,708
TOTAL EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION		\$11,478,009
Officer	Title	Total Compensation
Andrew Spar	President	\$390,336
Carole Gauronskas	Vice President	\$302,658
Nandi Riley	Secretary-Treasurer	\$284,683
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS TO OFFICERS		\$1,197,565

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

FEA spent \$7.3 million on benefits for its own officers and employees in fiscal 2025 — 10.2% of total disbursements, and roughly 70 cents for every dollar it spent representing members.³⁷ The largest components were \$3.5 million in retirement contributions routed to the National Education Association's plan and \$3.2 million in medical and dental costs.³⁸

Benefit Type	Amount
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Retirement (National Education Association)	\$3,495,910
Medical/Dental Insurance (FEA Claims Funding Account)	\$3,241,468
Retirement (Vanguard)	\$370,542
Disability Insurance (Reliance Standard)	\$43,513
Vision Insurance (Superior Vision)	\$34,079
Other Fringe Benefits (Thomas Howell Ferguson)	\$28,699
Life Insurance (NEA)	\$20,719
All Other Benefit Items	\$17,861
TOTAL BENEFITS	\$7,252,791

MEMBERSHIP DECLINE

FEA's members are leaving in historic numbers. Membership peaked at 143,960 in fiscal 2020 and has fallen every year but one since, hitting 115,897 in fiscal 2025 — a loss of 28,063 members, or 19.5%.³⁹

The steepest drop came all at once: between fiscal 2023 and fiscal 2024, FEA lost more than 20,000 members — roughly 15% of its entire membership in a single year — after Florida's Senate Bill 256 ended automatic payroll dues deduction and required public-sector unions to prove at least 60% dues-paying membership to keep their certification. When Florida teachers were forced to make an affirmative choice about their union, tens of thousands chose to walk away.⁴⁰

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
128,458	132,055	137,761	140,027	143,960	139,476	134,838	136,450	115,913	115,897

YOUR RIGHT TO LEAVE

Since *Janus v. AFSCME*, every Florida public employee has the constitutional right to resign union membership and stop paying dues — no fee, no penalty, and no loss of their job.⁴¹ Teachers who conclude that FEA spends their money on national affiliates, its own payroll, and politics rather than on representing them are free to walk away — as more than 28,000 of their colleagues already have.

Employees who want to understand their rights or need help leaving can find resources at americansforfairtreatment.org or by calling (833) 969-FAIR.

Data sourced from the Florida Education Association's Form LM-2 filing with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards (File No. 542-234), for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2025, and historical filings 2016–2025; Florida Lobbyist Registration Office quarterly compensation reports (Principal: Florida Education Association, 2020–2026), from bulk TXT downloads at floralobbyist.gov — per FS 11.045, compensation below

\$50,000 is reported in tiered ranges, figures shown use range midpoints as estimates and capture only outside contract lobbying firms, not in-house lobbyists; and NEA, Rankings of the States (2023–24 average teacher salary). State campaign finance filings (\$7,758,606.75 total spending; \$6,941,650 in political contributions, 88.1% Democratic / 11.9% Republican of the \$6,857,150 in party-identified contributions; \$816,956.75 to vendors, excluded from the partisan split) (FEA Advocacy Fund, 2015–2026).

NUMBERS TO HIGHLIGHT

Key statistics from FEA's FY 2025 (Sept. 1, 2024 – Aug. 31, 2025) LM-2 filing

14.6% Share of spending on representing teachers

\$32.2M Dues shipped to NEA & AFT — 45 cents of every dollar

\$340.1M Sent to national affiliates over the decade

\$390,336 President Spar's pay — ~7x a Florida teacher

50th Florida's national rank in teacher pay, per FEA itself

-19.5% Membership decline from 2020 peak

20,537 Members lost in a single year (FY2023–24)

\$27.3M Dues-funded political spending, 10-year total

\$11.5M Staff compensation — more than representation

\$493K Spent at hotels & resorts, coast to coast

\$6.9M FEA Advocacy Fund political contributions since 2015

88.1% Share of party-identified PAC dollars going to Democrats — \$6.0M against \$817,000

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- ¹ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedule 13 / Item 20 (Membership), FY 2025.
 - ² Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Lines 50 and 68, FY 2025.
 - ³ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Line 63 (To Affiliates of Funds Collected), FY 2025.
 - ⁴ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Lines 53 and 50, FY 2025.
 - ⁵ Form LM-2 historical filings 2016–2025 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Lines 63 and 50.
 - ⁶ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Line 51 (Political Activities and Lobbying), FY 2025.
 - ⁷ Form LM-2 historical filings 2016–2025 (File No. 542-234), Line 51.
 - ⁸ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedule 16 (Political Activities and Lobbying payees), FY 2025.
 - ⁹ State campaign finance filings (FEA Advocacy Fund, 2015–2026).
 - ¹⁰ Florida Senate Bill 932 (2025 Reg. Sess.), co-sponsored by Sen. Shevrin Jones; the 'Health Care Freedom Act' repeals restrictions on gender-transition care for transgender minors and adults.
 - ¹¹ Florida Lobbyist Registration Office quarterly compensation reports (Principal: Florida Education Association, 2020–2026); per FS 11.045, range midpoints used for sub-\$50K figures.
 - ¹² Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedules 15, 18, and 19 (itemized payees), FY 2025.
 - ¹³ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedule 11, FY 2025; NEA, Rankings of the States (2023–24 Florida average classroom teacher salary).
 - ¹⁴ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedule 12 (Disbursements to Employees), FY 2025.
 - ¹⁵ Form LM-2 historical filings 2016–2025 (File No. 542-234), Item 20 (Membership).
 - ¹⁶ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Lines 50, 63, and 68, FY 2025; Schedule 11, FY 2025.
 - ¹⁷ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement A, Lines 29, 34, and 35, FY 2025.
 - ¹⁸ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement A, Line 22 (Cash), FY 2025.
 - ¹⁹ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedule 10 (Other Liabilities), FY 2025.
 - ²⁰ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Line 50 (Representational Activities), FY 2025.
 - ²¹ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Line 63, FY 2025.
 - ²² Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Lines 50 and 53, FY 2025.
 - ²³ Form LM-2 historical filings 2016–2025 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Lines 63, 50, and 52.
 - ²⁴ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Line 51, FY 2025.
 - ²⁵ Form LM-2 historical filings 2016–2025 (File No. 542-234), Line 51.
 - ²⁶ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedule 16 (Political Activities and Lobbying payees), FY 2025.
 - ²⁷ State campaign finance filings (party breakdown, FEA Advocacy Fund, 2015–2026).
 - ²⁸ 'Gov. DeSantis signs transgender athlete bill into law on first day of Pride Month,' CBS News, June 1, 2021 (Sen. Shevrin Jones called the law 'yet another hate-driven attack from the governor and Republican legislators.')
 - ²⁹ Florida Senate Bill 932 / House Bill 823 (2025 Reg. Sess.), the 'Health Care Freedom Act,' co-sponsored by Sen. Shevrin Jones and Rep. Anna V. Eskamani.
 - ³⁰ State campaign finance filings (FEA Advocacy Fund).
 - ³¹ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedules 18–19 (General Overhead and Union Administration payees), FY 2025.
 - ³² Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedules 15, 18, and 19 (itemized payees), FY 2025.
 - ³³ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedule 11, FY 2025; NEA, Rankings of the States (2023–24 Florida average teacher salary); Florida Education Association, 'Florida Teacher Pay Remains Stagnant as State Holds at 50th in National Rankings' (feaweb.org).
 - ³⁴ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedule 11 (All Officers and Disbursements to Officers), FY 2025.
 - ³⁵ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedule 11, FY 2021 and FY 2025; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI-U, 2021 through 2025.
 - ³⁶ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedule 12, FY 2025.
 - ³⁷ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Statement B, Line 55 and Schedule 20 (Benefits), FY 2025.
 - ³⁸ Form LM-2 (File No. 542-234), Schedule 20 (Benefits), FY 2025.
 - ³⁹ Form LM-2 historical filings 2016–2025 (File No. 542-234), Item 20 (Membership).
 - ⁴⁰ Florida Senate Bill 256 (2023 Reg. Sess.); Form LM-2 historical filings 2023–2025 (File No. 542-234), Item 20.
 - ⁴¹ Janus v. AFSCME, Council 31, 138 S. Ct. 2448 (2018).