

# Forced-Dues Money Dumped Into Federal Elections

## *Estimated Cost of Union Politicking in 2003-4: Nearly a Billion*

As many workers across the country know from bitter experience, the hierarchy of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU/AFL-CIO) is determined to squeeze as much forced-dues money out of them as it possibly can.

And some of these workers are fighting back to protect their wallets and pocketbooks. Because federal law empowers union bosses to get workers fired for refusal to fork over forced union dues or "fees," this is an uphill fight.

For example, last November cafeteria worker Arleen DeMaio and 12 of her colleagues at the Yale-New Haven Hospital in New Haven, Conn., filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) accusing New England SEIU bosses of illegally denying them the right to resign from the union.

Union kingpins were clearly loathe to follow the law because forced dues-paying workers who resign from a union have the right, under federal court precedents won by the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, to pay a forced, but reduced, union agency "fee" rather than full forced dues.

With a Foundation attorney's help, Ms. DeMaio and her colleagues eventually succeeded in forcing local SEIU bosses to rescind their unlawful restrictions on the right to resign.

But in most cases SEIU officials undoubtedly get away with lying to workers to extract more forced-dues money from them, because most are unaware of their rights vis-à-vis Big Labor.

### **'We Need to Dramatically Increase Our Political Activity in Florida'**

In recent interviews, SEIU International President Andrew Stern has made it clear why SEIU bosses are so eager to rake in more workers' forced-dues money that they are willing to risk getting caught breaking the law.

"We need to dramatically increase our political activity in Florida [as well as in other "battleground" states in this year's presidential election]," Mr. Stern told the *St. Petersburg* (Fla.) *Times* last month.

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, in July the SEIU brass began deploying an army of more than 2000 political



**AFL-CIO czar John Sweeney (pictured) and his lieutenants are spending hundreds of millions of**

**dollars in workers' forced-dues money to seize control over the White House and congressional leadership positions.**

organizers to "register and rally voters in so-called battleground states."

Mr. Stern acknowledged to *Business Week* that roughly "\$40 million will be spent" on taking these organizers "off the job to go to battleground states, to house them, and pay for salary [sic] and health care."

He also admitted in the same interview that 85% of the money that is paying for this giant electioneering scheme comes from "regular [forced] dues-paying members."

Mr. Stern vows to spend another "\$20 million or so" this campaign season on political propaganda mailings, partisan phone banks, and face-to-face electioneering in the workplace.

As a number of Right to Work Foundation cases have demonstrated, SEIU local bosses often tell rank-and-file workers that if they don't become union members and thus bankroll Mr. Stern's political projects, they can legally be fired.

Countless thousands of SEIU-"represented" workers are tricked by this falsehood and pay full dues to save their jobs while the SEIU political empire grows bigger and bigger.

Not just SEIU bosses, but bosses of many of the 59 other AFL-CIO-affiliated national and international unions are spending tens of millions of dollars apiece from forced-dues treasuries to influence federal elections.

The AFL-CIO umbrella organization itself has publicly admitted it will "spend \$45 million on the [2004] campaign," not including its reported PAC and 527 group contributions.

### **'With Everything We're Doing . . . We Can Get This Sucker Out'**

Back in March, AFL-CIO Political Director Karen Ackerman boasted: "With everything we're doing, along with what the locals are doing, we can get this sucker [President Bush] out."

Altogether, Organized Labor's reported and unreported federal political spending this year will come to \$925 million, or nearly a billion dollars, according to a conservative estimate recently made by the National Institute for Labor Relations Research.

(For details, see "The Union Political Machine in 2004" at [www.nilrr.org](http://www.nilrr.org) -- the Institute's web site.)

"Government imposed forced union dues are corrupting American politics and undermining our democratic institutions," charged Doug Stafford, vice president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"To solve this problem, forced dues must be abolished. This can be done through congressional approval of H.R.391/S.1765, the National Right to Work Act, and through enactment of state Right to Work laws in all 50 states."