



National Right to Work Committee®

Fact Sheet

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A COALITION OF EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS

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Organized Labor's Forced Dues-Funded 'In-Kind' Campaign Contributions Undermine Representative Government

Even as they disingenuously protest that they are penny-ante players in the federal campaign sweepstakes, union boss political operatives are pouring far more money into efforts to elect and reelect their favored candidates than any other special-interest group in America.

Moreover, Organized Labor uniquely obtains most of its campaign war chest by siphoning off dues and "fees" that millions of employees are forced under federal or state law to pay if they wish to keep their jobs.

Congress is responsible for the six provisions in the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) and Railway Labor Act (RLA) that now authorize the firing of eight million workers nationwide should they refuse to pay tribute to the union certified by federal bureaucrats as their "exclusive" bargaining agent.

A large share of workers' forced dues are commandeered to pay for "in-kind" support -- such as phone banks, get-out-the-vote drives, and "volunteer" campaign organizing work by union staff that remain on the union payroll -- for union boss-favored candidates.

In 2000, AFL-CIO political director Steve Rosenthal publicly claimed that his "in-kind" campaign-spending operation would have 1600 coordinators in the field in 35 states and was raising \$40 million for the 2000 elections.

But that was just the tip of the iceberg. As an AFL-CIO spokesman confirmed for *Washington Post* reporter Frank Swoboda in mid-February of that year, the \$40 million the AFL-CIO says it will spend on "in-kind" support for campaigns "does not include any money spent by the federation's 68 member unions."

The annual revenue for highly political AFL-CIO affiliates such as the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the United Autoworkers, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the American Federation of Teachers, etc., is more than 20 times larger than the AFL-CIO umbrella organization's. (For details, see page four.)

The \$40 million the AFL-CIO umbrella organization acknowledged it planned to spend was about 13 percent of its total receipts of roughly \$300 million over two years.

If the 25 politically active unions listed on page four contributed the same 13 percent of their receipts over two years (a reasonable hypothesis), then the total Y2K federal campaign war chest for the AFL-CIO conglomerate was more than \$900 million.

Even if these member unions earmarked only half that percentage, that was over \$457 million of "in-kind" federal political spending by the AFL-CIO and its international affiliates.

By comparison, in the 1997-98 campaign cycle all nonunion political action committees (PACs) contributed just \$175 million -- combined. Nonunion "soft" contributions to political party

committees in 1995-96 totaled \$252 million. And these were dollars freely given, not confiscated from employees who would be fired if they refused to pay up.

It is because Organized Labor's "in-kind" war chest consists mostly of forced-union dues and "fees" that many Americans consider it the worst form of political corruption in our country today.

The vast majority of union bigwigs' political activity is undisclosed, so gauging its exact size is impossible.

But add to Mr. Rosenthal's estimate of the AFL-CIO umbrella group's 1600 political field operatives another army, 22 times larger, to cover the entire AFL-CIO union conglomerate, and you get a total of 37,000 forced dues fed political operatives.

And even that is only half the size of what former Labor Secretary Robert Reich described as the AFL-CIO's "very effective ground war" in the closing weeks of the 1998 congressional elections.

On *Chris Matthew's "Hardball"* November 4, 1998, Mr. Reich, who is well attuned to the union hierarchy's goals and methods, reported: "The last two weeks, about 72,000 [paid AFL-CIO] organizers [were] out in the streets."

Union political operatives can afford to make this massive investment because Congress takes the money out of workers' pockets and puts it in Big Labor's campaign coffers -- but Congress has the power to end most of this corruption by abolishing forced-union dues and "fees" in private employment.

Total Annual Revenue of the Top 25 Unions Under the AFL-CIO Umbrella

Steelworkers:	\$674,236,422
Teamsters:	\$191,947,975
Electrical Workers:	\$335,777,798
Service Employees:	\$ 75,867,486
Laborers:	\$ 71,261,907
Communications Workers:	\$308,168,173
Auto Workers:	\$303,507,094
Paperworkers:	\$ 61,293,315
Operating Engineers:	\$ 48,118,601
Mine Workers:	\$ 61,654,970
American Federation of Teachers:	\$121,070,695
Air Line Pilots:	\$326,413,374
Boilermakers:	\$ 39,622,534
Glass, Molders:	\$ 17,320,007
AFSCME:	\$ 80,552,844
Flight Attendants:	\$ 13,355,148
Fire Fighters:	\$ 17,293,508
Retail, Wholesale:	\$ 37,526,859
Grain Millers:	\$ 2,976,177
Postal Workers:	\$106,676,601
HERE:	\$ 27,883,613
Painters:	\$ 96,665,031
OCAW:	\$ 152,222
Machinists:	\$152,597,721
UNITE:	\$107,690,730

The total annual revenue of the top 25 unions under the AFL-CIO umbrella was **\$3,279,630,805** in 1996, based on the LM-2 statements these unions used to report their total income to the government.

The AFL-CIO is a separate organization that receives its funding from these and 43 other international unions as well as thousands of state and local affiliates. The AFL-CIO's total revenue for 1996 was **\$149,247,956**.

[Research provided by National Institute for Labor Relations Research. All information is from their most recent LM-2 forms, Statement B.]

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An AFL-CIO spokesman confirmed for *Washington Post* reporter Frank Swoboda in mid-February 2000 that the \$40 million the AFL-CIO umbrella organization planned to spend on "in-kind" support for the 2000 federal campaigns did "not include any money spent by the federation's 68 member unions." At that time, \$40 million was about 13 percent of the AFL-CIO's umbrella organization's total receipts of roughly \$300 million over two years.

If only 25 of the most politically active of these 68 member unions contributed the same 13 percent of their receipts over two years (a reasonable hypothesis), then the total Y2K federal campaign war chest for the AFL-CIO conglomerate was **more than \$900 million**.