

WHERE DO YOUR UNION DUES GO?

A LOOK AT AFT SPENDING IN 2021-2022



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The **American Federation of Teachers (AFT)** represents over 1.6 million teachers throughout the country. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the AFT has taken on a prominent role in political and cultural debates. As a labor union that represents both public and private sector employees, the American Federation of Teachers files a Form LM-2 financial disclosure with the United States Department of Labor. An examination of the union's finances can help explain its political priorities.

The union is in a solid financial position, holding over \$152 million in assets and \$91 million in liabilities. Since 2020, AFT's net financial position has improved by nearly \$15 million. This position is likely to continue to improve, as AFT brought in \$15.1 million more than it spent during its 2021-2022 fiscal year.

AFT's revenue reached \$265 million during the 2021-2022 reporting period, an increase of \$12 million when compared to the previous year. The union collected \$211.7 million of this revenue from membership dues, **approximately \$15 million more in dues than last year**. This revenue increase was a result of increased dues, which increased from \$235 per year to \$240 per year.

Why did the union increase dues? AFT has lost over 10,000 members since 2020. A look at how AFT spends membership dues may help explain why the union is losing members.

Of the union's \$250 million in expenditures, 15.7%, or about \$40 million was collected on behalf of local affiliates and paid directly to the locals. The union paid an additional \$10.5 million in per capita tax to its affiliates.

Only 34% of AFT's spending went toward representational activities, the category most closely related to labor representation. Approximately 25% of expenses went toward running the union, covering employee salaries and benefits, general overhead, and administration costs. Employee retirement, vacation, and severance obligations make up almost 87% of the union's total liabilities.

Employee salaries make up a significant part of union administration costs. AFT President Randi Weingarten made \$488,000 during the reporting period, more than 8.5 times the average teacher's salary of \$56,483. Weingarten's salary has increased by \$34,500 since 2020. Other top earners include Secretary-Treasurer Frederick Ingram (\$402,565) and Executive Vice President Evelyn Dejesus (\$310,717).

AFT spent \$35.7 million of members' dues on politics last year, most of which went toward left-wing political causes. The union spent an additional \$7.1 million on "Contributions, Gifts, and Grants," with much of this money going to political organizations. In total, **political spending accounted for 17.3% of AFT's spending in 2021-2022.**



AFT president paid
8.5X
more than average
teacher salary

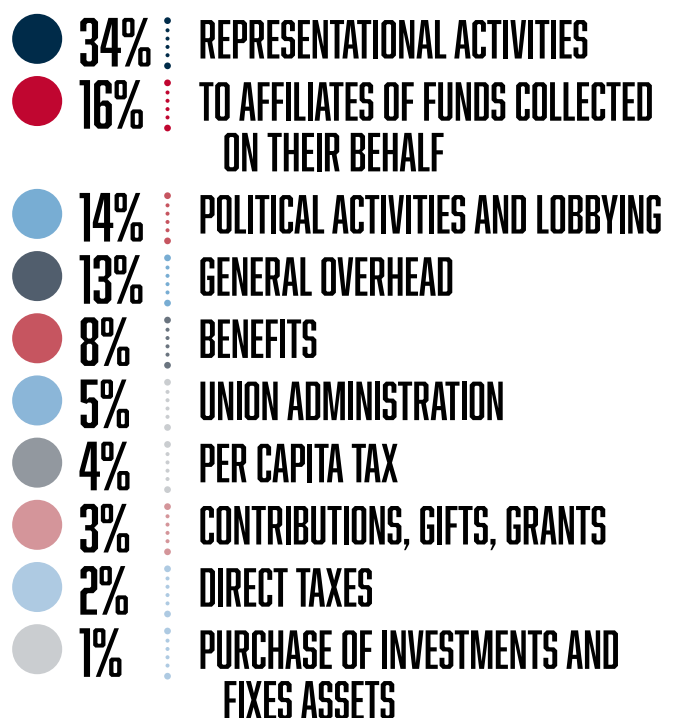
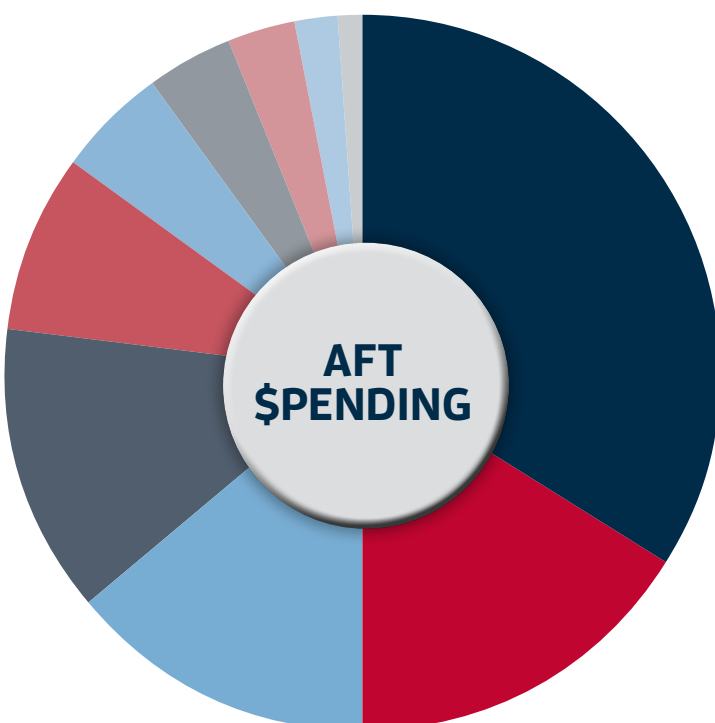


\$35.7M
spent on politics in
2021-2022



10,000
members lost
since 2020

WHO IS GETTING YOUR AFT DUES MONEY?



HOW WERE AFT DUES SPENT ON 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. This spending must be itemized and reported annually to the U.S. Department of Labor on an "LM-2" financial report.

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 AFT members, *Janus* changes nothing about how union dues are spent: **they are still routinely used for political purposes.** In 2022, AFT gave the following amounts:

- \$10M** to NYSUT's political advocacy funds that almost exclusively donates to Democratic candidates.
- \$8M** to local affiliates to support local political efforts.
- \$3.8M** to AFT employees and officers as compensation for their political and lobbying activities.
- \$2M** to For Our Future, a Democratic super PAC supported by billionaire activist and failed presidential candidate Tom Steyer.
- \$2M** to Senate Majority PAC, an organization dedicated to building and maintaining a Democratic majority in the United States Senate.
- \$1M** to House Majority PAC, an organization dedicated to building and maintaining a Democratic majority in the United States House of Representatives.
- \$1M** to Put Michigan First, an organization dedicated to reelecting Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer.
- \$750K** to Priorities USA Action, an organization that aims to advance progressive causes.
- \$637K** to Patriot Majority, a PAC that supports Democratic candidates.
- \$350K** to NewsGuard, a New York based "misinformation" watchdog group praised by CNN.
- \$310K** to AmericaVotes, which describes itself as the "coordination hub of the progressive community."
- \$300K** to Raise Up Massachusetts 2022, a progressive advocacy organization that supports the Massachusetts millionaire's tax.
- \$275K** to Red Wine and Blue, an organization that organizes suburban women to support progressive causes.
- \$250K** to Economic Policy Institute, a left-wing think tank.
- \$210K** to Democracy Corps, a Democratic polling firm founded by former Bill Clinton campaign strategist James Carville.
- \$200K** to the Congressional Progressive Caucus Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that advocates for progressive public policy.
- \$200K** to EMILY's List, an organization that helps elect Democratic, pro-choice women to public office.
- \$200K** to the Sixteen Thirty Fund, a super PAC that spends money to boost Democratic candidates and causes and is part of the larger progressive Arabella Network.
- \$180K** to Ballot Initiative Strategy Fund, a 501(c)(4) dedicated to advancing progressive causes through ballot initiatives.
- \$165K** to Avenue Solutions, a lobbying firm that has strong relationships with Democrats in Washington, D.C.

- \$150K** to CIVIC Nation, a nonprofit that helps organize and launch campaigns around progressive social issues.
- \$125K** to Power Rising Action Fund, an organization dedicated to organizing black women around progressive causes.
- \$125K** to BlueGreen Alliance, a collection of labor organizations and climate groups that advocate for progressive environmental policies.
- \$100K** to American Bridge 21st Century, a super PAC dedicated to attacking Republican candidates.
- \$100K** to iVote Fund, a group that supports Democratic candidates for state-level Secretary of State positions.
- \$100K** to In Union USA, a group that produces newsletters for union members in support of Democratic candidates for public office.
- \$100K** to National Democratic Redistricting Committee, an organization led by Democrat Eric Holder, that advocates for partisan gerrymandering.
- \$100K** to SIX Action, an organization that aims to build progressive power at the state level.
- \$100K** to the State Engagement Fund, a strategy center committed to elevating progressive policy at the state level.
- \$100K** to Stronger Fairer Forward, a 501(c)(4) that supports Phil Murphy, Democratic Governor of New Jersey.
- \$100K** to the American Independent Foundation, a left-wing investigative journalism organization.
- \$100K** to WorkersVote, an independent expenditure committee that spent nearly \$5 million supporting Democratic candidates during the 2022 election.
- \$100K** to March for Our Lives, a gun control advocacy group.
- \$100K** to MediaMatters, a left-wing watchdog organization dedicated to researching and reporting on right-wing news sources.
- \$80K** to Texas Pastors for Children, an advocacy organization that opposes school choice.
- \$75K** to the New York State Democratic Campaign Assembly Committee.
- \$70K** to Friends for Kathy Hochul.
- \$25K** to the NRDC Action Fund, the political arm of the National Resources Defense Council.

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