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How Restoring Workers' Rights Brings Fairness to All Pennsylvanians

For decades, public sector union leaders have used their unfair political advantages to block public policies that will help our state and citizens flourish. These special interests, backed by unique legal protections, sacrifice workers' rights in the interest of their mission to increase the size of government, their influence in it, and the amount of money they can take from it. Restoring workers' rights is critical for a fair and level playing field in Pennsylvania.

Government Union Leaders Trap Workers

Government unions represent all employees in a bargaining unit, regardless of a worker's union membership status. Union leaders lobbied for this privilege, and used it to force nonmembers to pay "fair share fees." The U.S. Supreme Court ruled the fees unconstitutional in *Janus v. AFSCME*. In response, union leaders have doubled-down on trapping workers in membership they often do not want.

- **Forced membership.** Many union members remain unaware fair share fees were eliminated—despite a [majority of union members supporting the change](#). Pennsylvania still has a Fair Share Fee Law and government unions can limit members from resigning until the last 15 days of a multi-year contract.
- **Forced dues.** Pennsylvania union leaders have modified union enrollment forms to make workers continue paying dues—even if they resign. [For example](#), the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers only lets members terminate dues payments if they make the request on their union membership anniversary.
- **Forced unionization.** Shortly after taking office, Governor Wolf signed an executive order unionizing 20,000 home care workers. Because these workers' income comes from Medicaid, this move took precious Medicaid funds from vulnerable Pennsylvania's and sent them to union leaders, who gave nearly \$4 million to Governor Wolf's campaign.
- **Limited democracy.** Union leaders never have to stand for reelection and restrict workers from pursuing new representation. As a result, [less than 1 percent of teachers and government workers](#) have voted for the union exclusively representing them.

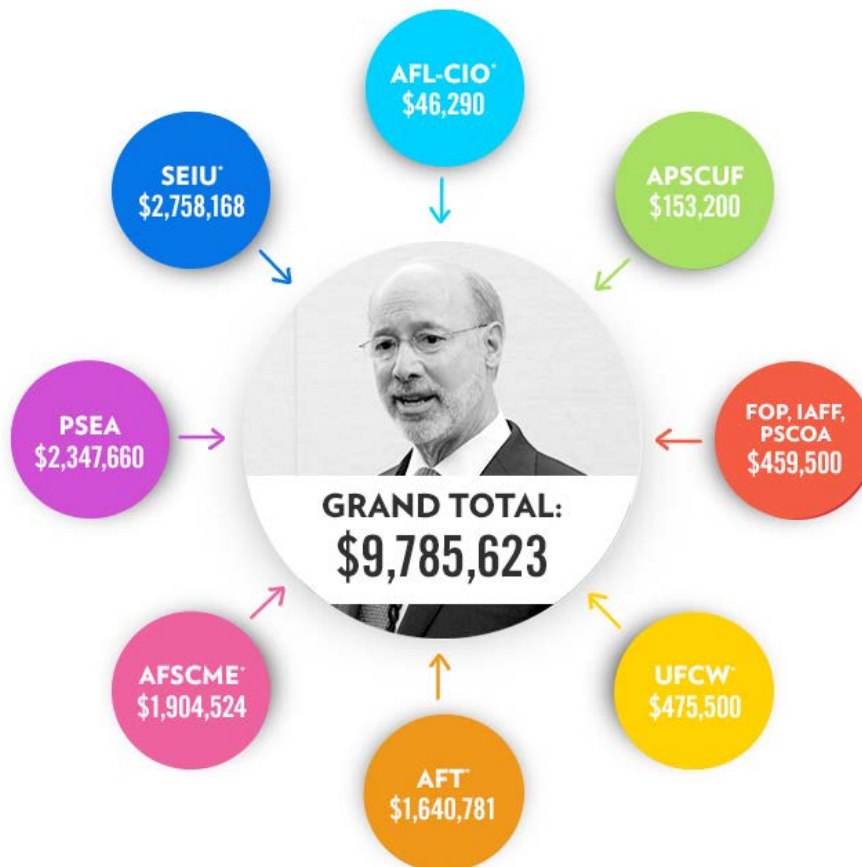
Government Union Leaders Exercise Unethical Political Advantages

Today, public sector unions spend more on politics than any other special interest in Harrisburg, thanks in part to their ability to use taxpayer resources to collect political donations. No other entity has this advantage. In fact, lawmakers can be prosecuted for using public resources for politics.

- **Political spending.** Union leaders spend only a portion of a member's dues—which total hundreds of dollars annually—on actual representation. For example, [only 19 percent](#) of teachers' dues fund representation.

- Since 2007, the top government unions have spent **\$72 million of members' dues** on “political activities and lobbying,” not to mention millions more in “contributions and gifts” to ideological and political organizations.
- Unions have donated an additional **\$58 million** in political action committee (PAC) donations to political candidates and elected officials. These PAC contributions are separate from union dues, but are also collected using public payroll systems at taxpayer expense.
- In total, top government unions have spent **\$130 million** on politics since 2007.
- **Judicial election spending.** In 2015, government unions heavily influenced **Pennsylvania judicial races** by directly contributing half a million dollars to Democratic candidates. They gave another \$1.5 million in PAC and dues money to a SuperPAC that ran ads attacking Republican Supreme Court Candidates.
 - Recently the court has decided key cases on redistricting, welfare reform, and unionization.
- **Back-door negotiations.** Government union leaders negotiate contracts with the very public officials they help elect.
 - For example, unions PACs **spent \$10 million** electing Governor Wolf, with whom they negotiate costly government contracts that preserve their existing perks. These negotiations are exempt from transparency laws, despite costing billions.

Government Union Contributions to Gov. Wolf Since 2013



Union Leaders Prevent Policies that Help Pennsylvanians Prosper

- **Fighting educational opportunity.** Union leaders routinely resist school choice, which allows children to thrive in the learning environments chosen by their parents, not their ZIP codes. Using public resources to lobby against charter schools, education tax credit scholarship programs, and innovative Education Scholarship Accounts allows union leaders to trap children in the schools they have unionized.
- **Fueling high taxes.** Unions prioritize [electing big-government candidates](#). This is no surprise since union revenue grows when government grows. They've supported most tax-increases in state budgets, including \$750 million in [enacted tax hikes](#) on working families since just 2015.
- **Opposing pension reform.** Union leaders have long fought moving to a defined-contribution or 401(k)-type retirement plan, which would help save Pennsylvania's sinking pension systems. Erie union leaders even [lied to their members](#) to hide an offer of a defined-contribution plan made by the employer.
- **Resisting liquor privatization.** Despite the debt-ridden Liquor Control Board restricting consumer access and driving up costs, union leaders have [lobbied](#) to retain this antiquated state-run system—even running afoul of disclosure laws.
- **Denying the dignity of work.** Despite Human Services accounting for 40 percent of state spending, union leaders oppose reforms such as Medicaid and food stamp work requirements, which ensure funding goes to needy populations by moving able-bodied individuals towards self-sustaining employment and independence.

Key Reforms

- **Enforce the *Janus* court decision.** The *Janus* case was a huge step toward advancing workplace fairness, but it is only partly in effect in Pennsylvania. To enforce worker's rights, lawmakers must eliminate unconstitutional state Fair Share Fee laws and ensure government workers are notified of their rights.
- **Promote the right to resign.** Eliminating “maintenance of membership” contract provisions will free workers to exercise their constitutional right to resign at any time.
- **Establish regular union elections.** To guarantee accountable, democratic representation, public sector employees must gain the right to [regularly vote](#) for their workplace representation.
- **Paycheck protection.** Paycheck protection legislation will guarantee public resources can never be used to collect funds used on politics.

Restoring fairness and integrity in government includes reforming public sector union rules of engagement. Taxpayers, workers, and union leaders should all be on a level playing field. Given union leaders long-standing—and [renewed](#)—attempts to misinform workers, public sector workers must be proactively and routinely educated of their rights.