

## **UNFREE SPEECH:**

### ***Most Washington Unions Fund Political Campaigns with Compelled Dues***

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#### **Introduction**

State law governing labor unions currently permits a gross injustice by requiring workers to, as a condition of employment, be represented by a union that overcharges them for workplace representation and spends the excess on political activity individual workers may disagree with.

When faced with this criticism, some union officials will claim that, when it comes to politics, their particular union only spends money voluntarily contributed by union members.

After analyzing Public Disclosure Commission data on 87 individual Washington unions active during the 2011-12 election cycle, we found that:

- About 76 percent of union political funds came from union general fund transfers, not voluntary contributions;
- Only about 21 percent of the total funds came from voluntary individual contributions;
- The remaining funds came from other sources like contributions from union staff. Most typically, the funds in the “other” category came from national union PACs and were a mix of voluntary contributions and general fund transfers; and
- While 21 unions used only voluntary contributions for their political activity, 65 unions relied on general funds transfers of compulsory dues money for some or all of their campaign contributions.

Candidates or campaigns receiving funds from involuntarily funded union PACs or general funds should know that they are benefiting from what amounts to coerced political speech.

## Voluntary vs. Involuntary

Some Washington unions register a political action committee (PAC) with the state Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) and only spend money on political activity that individual union members voluntarily contribute into the PAC. Such contributions are made in excess of workers' required union membership dues.

Unfortunately, the practice is not widespread. Many unions with a registered PAC simply transfer money from their general funds– comprised of involuntarily collected membership dues– into the PAC. More commonly, unions contribute to political campaigns and candidates directly out of their general funds without registering a PAC.

The first chart below lists the funding sources of 87 individual unions active during Washington state's 2011-12 election cycle. Unions with no registered in-state PAC are indicated by an asterisk. Since unions soliciting voluntary political contributions from members would have to register a PAC with the PDC, unions funding political campaigns without a PAC are assumed to be using involuntary membership dues for their political activity.<sup>1</sup>

**GREEN** indicates that a union spent only voluntary member contributions on political campaigns. **RED** indicates that a union relied on involuntary general funds transfers for some or all of its political contributions.

In addition to the specific unions and union PACs listed below, some union PACs, like the Washington State Labor Council's Don't Invest In More Excuses (DIME) PAC, function by aggregating contributions from union locals across the state. Additionally, there are many political action committees that are not explicitly union-affiliated, but nonetheless rely heavily on involuntarily collected union contributions.

The second chart below lists general union/non-union PACs which received a significant percentage of their total funds from unions from 2011-2012.

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<sup>1</sup> "A political committee is any person, group, club, organization or collection of individuals [except a candidate or individual dealing with his or her own funds] expecting to receive contributions or make expenditures in support of or in opposition to any candidate or ballot proposition, including annexation and incorporations ballot issues. Although a group may be a civic, social or professional organization primarily, it also may be a political committee if it accepts contributions specifically for use in election campaigns." Washington State Public Disclosure Commission. "Starting Off on the Right Foot: Answers to Questions Frequently Asked by Political Committee Officers." Jan. 2014.

<http://www.pdc.wa.gov/archive/guide/brochures/pdf/2014/2014.PolCommittee.Right.Foot.pdf>

<b>Union PAC/General Fund</b>	<b>Funds Raised/ Spent</b>	<b>Voluntary Contri- butions</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>General Fund Transfers - Involuntary</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Union Staff Contri- butions</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Other Contri- butions</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<a href="#">AFSCME Affiliates (excluding WSCCCE)*</a>	\$1,997,150	\$0	0.0%	\$1,997,150	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Amalgamated Transit Union Affiliates*</a>	\$145,010	\$0	0.0%	\$145,010	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">American Federation of Teachers WA COPE</a>	\$26,329	\$25,596	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$733	2.8%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Assn. of Western Pulp and Paper Workers*</a>	\$450	\$0	0.0%	\$450	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Building and Construction Trades Councils*</a>	\$85,100	\$0	0.0%	\$85,100	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Carpenters Affiliates*</a>	\$206,715	\$0	0.0%	\$206,715	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Cowlitz Wahkiakum Central Labor Council*</a>	\$1,755	\$0	0.0%	\$1,755	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 1352 (Valley Professional Firefighters)</a>	\$20,322	\$700	3.4%	\$19,622	96.6%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 1488 (Lakewood)</a>	\$13,059	\$12,559	96.2%	\$500	3.8%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 1604 (Bellevue Firefighters)</a>	\$26,756	\$26,756	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 1747 (Kent)</a>	\$16,665	\$16,665	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 2088 (Tukwila Firefighters for Democracy)</a>	\$2,951	\$2,951	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 2099 (Snohomish Co. Fire Dist. 10 Voter Education Fund)</a>	\$11,500	\$0	0.0%	\$11,500	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 27 (Seattle)</a>	\$74,296	\$74,296	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 2781 (Mill Creek)</a>	\$23,574	\$4,000	17.0%	\$19,574	83.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 2876 (South Kitsap, Cit. for Stabilized Fire Service Funding)</a>	\$23,827	\$0	0.0%	\$21,727	91.2%	\$0	0.0%	\$2,100	8.8%
<a href="#">IAFF 29 (Spokane)</a>	\$30,768	\$30,768	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 2903 (Lacey)*</a>	\$15,150	\$0	0.0%	\$15,150	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 2919 (SeaTac, Active in Community Endorsement)</a>	\$4,634	\$4,072	87.9%	\$563	12.1%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 31 (Tacoma, Active in Democracy PAC)</a>	\$29,647	\$29,647	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 404 (Walla Walla)</a>	\$1,176	\$1,176	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">IAFF 876 (Spokane Valley)</a>	\$9,761	\$3,387	34.7%	\$6,074	62.2%	\$0	0.0%	\$300	3.1%
<a href="#">Intl. Association of Machinists 751*</a>	\$81,045	\$0	0.0%	\$81,045	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Intl. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 112</a>	\$1,457	\$1,457	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Intl. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 191*</a>	\$41,990	\$0	0.0%	\$41,990	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Intl. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 46</a>	\$140,815	\$1,258	0.9%	\$132,046	93.8%	\$6,830	4.9%	\$682	0.5%
<a href="#">Intl. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 48 (SW WA Electricians)</a>	\$102,290	\$0	0.0%	\$97,056	94.9%	\$0	0.0%	\$5,234	5.1%
<a href="#">Intl. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 483</a>	\$3,913	\$3,473	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$440	11.2%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Intl. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 77 (Joe Murphy PAC)</a>	\$65,883	\$61,304	93.1%	\$1,750	2.7%	\$2,629	4.0%	\$200	0.3%
<a href="#">Intl. Longshore &amp; Warehouse Union 19</a>	\$11,000	\$500	4.5%	\$10,500	95.5%	\$0	0.0%	\$500	4.5%
<a href="#">Intl. Longshore &amp; Warehouse Union 52</a>	\$2,129	\$2,129	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%

<b>Union PAC/General Fund</b>	<b>Funds Raised/ Spent</b>	<b>Voluntary Contri- butions</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>General Fund Transfers - Involuntary</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Union Staff Contri- butions</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Other Contri- butions</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<a href="#">Intl. Longshore &amp; Warehouse Union (excluding locals 19 &amp; 52)*</a>	\$36,290	\$0	0.0%	\$36,290	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Inland Boatman's Union Affiliates*</a>	\$29,820	\$0	0.0%	\$29,820	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Intl. Brotherhood of Boilermakers Affiliates*</a>	\$850	\$0	0.0%	\$850	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Intl. Union of Bricklayers Affiliates*</a>	\$1,000	\$0	0.0%	\$1,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Intl. Union of Elevator Constructors 19*</a>	\$550	\$0	0.0%	\$550	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Intl. Union of Heat and Frost Insulators Affiliates*</a>	\$3,600	\$0	0.0%	\$3,600	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Intl. Union of Operating Engineers Affiliates*</a>	\$101,900	\$0	0.0%	\$101,900	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Iron Workers Affiliates*</a>	\$22,150	\$0	0.0%	\$22,150	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Intl. Union of Painters &amp; Allied Trades Affiliates*</a>	\$8,350	\$0	0.0%	\$8,350	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">King County Labor Council COPE</a>	\$15,950	\$0	0.0%	\$15,950	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">King County Labor Council Non-PAC*</a>	\$29,400	\$0	0.0%	\$29,400	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">King County Police Officer's Guild</a>	\$25,000	\$0	0.0%	\$25,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Kitsap County Central Labor Council*</a>	\$870	\$0	0.0%	\$870	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Laborer's Intl. Union of North America Affiliates*</a>	\$151,994	\$0	0.0%	\$151,994	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Lacey Firefighters (Progress for Public Safety PAC)</a>	\$3,180	\$3,180	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">North Central Washington Labor Council*</a>	\$1,970	\$0	0.0%	\$1,970	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Northwest Washington Central Labor Council*</a>	\$760	\$0	0.0%	\$760	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Olympic Labor Council*</a>	\$2,715	\$0	0.0%	\$2,715	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Operative Plasterer's &amp; Cement Masons Intl. Assn. Affiliates*</a>	\$9,650	\$0	0.0%	\$9,650	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Office and Professional Employees Intl. Union 8</a>	\$7,121	\$6,093	85.6%	\$0	0.0%	\$1,028	14.4%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Pierce County Labor Council COPE</a>	\$8,830	\$0	0.0%	\$8,830	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Professional &amp; Technical Employees 17</a>	\$63,249	\$18,465	29.2%	\$0	0.0%	\$39,934	63.1%	\$4,850	7.7%
<a href="#">Seattle Police Officer's Guild</a>	\$37,047	\$37,047	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Service Employees Intl. Union 1199NW</a>	\$370,510	\$870	0.2%	\$369,640	99.8%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Service Employees Intl. Union 1948 (Public School Employees)</a>	\$202,544	\$0	0.0%	\$202,544	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Service Employees Intl. Union 6</a>	\$12,300	\$0	0.0%	\$12,300	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Service Employees Intl. Union 775</a>	\$846,114	\$0	0.0%	\$827,582	97.8%	\$0	0.0%	\$18,532	2.2%
<a href="#">Service Employees Intl. Union 925</a>	\$502,555	\$0	0.0%	\$502,555	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Service Employees Intl. Union WA State Council</a>	\$1,092,177	\$0	0.0%	\$1,092,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$177	0.0%
<a href="#">Sheet Metal Workers 66</a>	\$49,001	\$90	0.2%	\$48,911	99.8%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Snohomish County Labor Council*</a>	\$8,550	\$0	0.0%	\$8,550	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%

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<a href="#">Southeast Washington Central Labor Council*</a>	\$4,850	\$0	0.0%	\$4,850	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Southwest Washington Central Labor Council*</a>	\$15,990	\$0	0.0%	\$15,990	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Spokane Regional Labor Council*</a>	\$32,279	\$0	0.0%	\$32,279	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Street Pavers 440</a>	\$6,540	\$0	0.0%	\$6,540	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Tacoma Police [Committee on Political Support Cops]</a>	\$10,430	\$10,430	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Thurston Lewis Mason Central Labor Council*</a>	\$24,250	\$0	0.0%	\$24,250	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">United Food &amp; Commercial Workers 1439</a>	\$988	\$698	70.7%	\$0	0.0%	\$290	29.3%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">United Food &amp; Commercial Workers 21</a>	\$217,594	\$94	0.0%	\$217,500	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">UFCW 365 [WA Public Employees Assn.]</a>	\$33,652	\$3,732	11.1%	\$29,380	87.3%	\$540	1.6%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">United Food &amp; Commercial Workers 367</a>	\$13,712	\$13,655	99.6%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$57	0.4%
<a href="#">Unite Here 8</a>	\$164,189	\$0	0.0%	\$21,550	13.1%	\$0	0.0%	\$142,639	86.9%
<a href="#">United Assn. 32</a>	\$44,430	\$0	0.0%	\$44,430	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">United Assn. Affiliates [excluding local 32]*</a>	\$38,100	\$0	0.0%	\$38,100	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">United Auto Workers Affiliates*</a>	\$1,000	\$0	0.0%	\$1,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">United Steelworkers [excluding local 12-369]*</a>	\$800	\$0	0.0%	\$800	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">United Steelworkers 12-369</a>	\$305	\$305	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">United Transportation Union Affiliates*</a>	\$25,050	\$0	0.0%	\$25,050	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">WA State Council of County and City Employees</a>	\$278,050	\$0	0.0%	\$226,250	81.4%	\$0	0.0%	\$51,800	18.6%
<a href="#">WA State Council of Fire Fighters [FAST PAC]</a>	\$212,687	\$212,687	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">WA State Council of Police Political Support [WACQPS]</a>	\$59,928	\$0	0.0%	\$56,328	94.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$3,600	6.0%
<a href="#">WA State Machinists Council</a>	\$191,006	\$153,460	80.3%	\$36,522	19.1%	\$0	0.0%	\$1,025	0.5%
<a href="#">WA State Troopers</a>	\$86,730	\$86,730	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Washington Education Association</a>	\$3,059,701	\$1,559,957	51.0%	\$1,475,269	48.2%	\$24,476	0.8%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Washington State Nurses Association</a>	\$3,463	\$2,863	82.7%	\$0	0.0%	\$600	17.3%	\$0	0.0%
<a href="#">Washington Teamsters Legislative League</a>	\$378,439	\$0	0.0%	\$241,600	63.8%	\$0	0.0%	\$136,839	36.2%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$11,707,349</b>	<b>\$2,413,050</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>\$8,852,368</b>	<b>75.6%</b>	<b>\$77,500</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>\$364,935</b>	<b>3.1%</b>

\*Does not have a registered Washington political action committee and is assumed to be using involuntary general funds.

Union-Funded PACs	Union Funds
Working Washington PAC	100.0%
Joint Labor Committee of Tacoma	100.0%
WSLC DIME PAC	99.3%
Forward Washington	93.7%
Northwest Alliance for Progress	89.0%
Working Families for the 44th District	88.4%
Sustainable Future PAC	88.2%
One America Votes	87.4%
Progressive Leadership PAC	85.3%
Working Families for the 28th District	79.9%
Reykdal Education and Leadership PAC	78.2%
Working Families for the 25th District	76.5%
UPTHEPAC	76.2%
WSLC PPP Committee	65.6%
FUSE Votes	64.4%
Working Families for the 41st District	61.8%
Working Families for the 2nd District	61.7%
Working Families for the 35th District	59.7%
Working Families for the 30th District	59.2%
Working Families for the 1st District	56.3%
Our Washington	48.8%
Strong Economy for the 44th District	48.2%
Working Families for the 26th District	47.6%
Strong Economy for the 17th District	45.8%
Working Families for the 10th District	43.2%
Working Families for the 45th District	42.9%
The Kennedy Fund	30.8%
Harry Truman Fund	30.1%
Strong Economy for the 30th District	29.2%
Working Families for the 17th District	25.5%

## Alternatives for Workers

Federal courts are at least somewhat aware of the compelled political speech that can occur by permitting labor unions to collect dues and representation fees from workers as a condition of employment. Supreme Court rulings like [Abood v. Detroit Board of Education](#) [1977], [Chicago Teachers Union v. Hudson](#) [1986] and [Communications Workers of America v. Beck](#) [1988] have determined that workers cannot be forced to pay for every kind of activity the union can think of charging them for.

Workers who wish may resign their union membership at any time, but even union non-members are still governed by the terms of the union contract. Consequently, non-members may still be required to pay a “representation fee” to cover the cost to the union of providing the employee with workplace representation, grievance assistance and contract negotiation.

There are at least seven reasons, however, why the current system inadequately protects workers from being forced to support political activity against their will.

1. Under Washington law, union-represented workers pay an amount equal to full membership full dues by default.<sup>2</sup> Employees must affirmatively choose not to support union politics, instead of opting in.
2. Many union-represented workers are unaware they may opt out of paying for union political activity. Union officials have a financial incentive to keep members

<sup>2</sup> [RCW 41.80.100](#) and [RCW 41.56.113](#).

from learning of their rights.

3. Workers are often required to annually renew their objection to paying for anything other than workplace representation.<sup>3</sup>
4. Unions frequently only permit workers to opt out or renew their objection during a limited [typically 30-day] time window.<sup>4</sup>
5. Unions sometimes retaliate against employees seeking to resign union membership or will simply refuse to process their requests.<sup>5</sup>
6. Because workers must resign their union membership in order to pay the reduced representation fee, they must also give up their ability to participate in any union governance, including the ability to vote on their employment contract, even though they must still pay for the cost to the union of negotiating and administering the contract.<sup>6</sup>
7. Even paying only for workplace representation alone can force workers to support political speech or a viewpoint they do not share. As Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy recently observed, collective bargaining by unions of government employees “necessarily affects the size of government” and is “a question on which there are fundamental political beliefs.”<sup>7</sup>

The free speech rights of individuals will continue to be violated until union workers are permitted to completely sever their compelled financial obligations to a union.

## Methodology

All data used in this report came from the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission. Union PACs report both contributions and expenditures to the PDC, but campaign spending by unions without a PAC is only recorded by the campaigns receiving the funds.

When analyzing a union PAC, we examined only the source of the PAC’s funds, not its expenditures. When analyzing a union making political contributions from its general fund, we used the PDC’s election search feature to attempt to find all contributions attributed to the union from 2011 to 2012.

While every effort was made to determine which unions were engaged in this practice, it is possible some small unions contributing to campaigns out of their general funds were omitted from our report.

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<sup>3</sup> United Auto Workers. “Union Security Agreements.” <http://www.uaw.org/story/union-security-agreements-0>

<sup>4</sup> Sherk, James. “Workers Can Opt-Out of Union Dues.” The Heritage Foundation. 2 July 2013. <http://www.heritage.org/research/commentary/2013/7/workers-can-opt-out-of-union-dues>

<sup>5</sup> National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation. “Nonunion Nurses Win Settlement with Washington State Nurses Association for Repeated Rights Violations.” 8 June 2012. <http://www.nrtw.org/en/press/2012/06/nonunion-nurses-win-settlement-washi>

<sup>6</sup> Association for Union Democracy. “Questions and answers about legal rights and organizing.” October 2001. <http://www.archive.uniondemocracy.org/Legal/faqs.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Justice Anthony Kennedy. Comments made during the oral argument of *Harris v. Quinn*. 21 January 2014. [http://www.supremecourt.gov/oral\\_arguments/argument\\_transcripts/11-681\\_8mj8.pdf](http://www.supremecourt.gov/oral_arguments/argument_transcripts/11-681_8mj8.pdf)

One union, Professional and Technical Employees Local 17, received no rating. Nearly two-thirds of the funds in PTE 17's PAC came from employees of the union itself. No other union PAC relied so heavily on contributions from union staff. While likely voluntary, their salaries are paid by involuntary union member dues.

Another organization, the Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs [WACOPS], was not included in the report. WACOPS' members are comprised of local police unions which voluntarily choose whether to affiliate with the organization, but WACOPS is more of a professional association than a formal union.

Furthermore, while our analysis includes every union PAC registered in Washington, we did not attempt to analyze contributions coming from out-of-state union PACs. Several unions contribute funds to local Washington campaigns solely from their national PAC. The analysis of these funds— which potentially total hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional funds— falls outside the scope of this report.

Even if a particular union's reported PAC contributions are all from voluntary sources, it is possible the union is spending even more funds on other types of political activity which do not need to be reported to the Public Disclosure Commission. For instance, internal membership communications do not need to be reported. In other words, union officials may contact members with election-related mailings or phone calls without having to report funds spent on those activities to the PDC.

It is also important to note that a very few small, local unions do not have union security clauses in their contracts requiring all represented workers to pay union fees. Such unions are not typically engaged in noticeable political activity. Still, it is possible that some of these unions spending out their general funds are included in our results.

Lastly, to determine the percentage of union funds in third party, union supported PACs, we traced PAC contributions back to their source. For instance, the [Forward Washington PAC](#) received three contributions from 2011 to 2012: [1] \$2,700 from the SEIU Washington State Council, [2] \$700 from the Washington Federation of State Employees and [3] \$2,700 from the [Progressive Leadership PAC](#), which was funded primarily by labor unions and [Fuse Votes](#) which was, in turn, heavily funded by labor. All told, 93.7 percent of the funds contributed to the Forward Washington PAC from 2011 to 2012 originated from labor unions.

## **Conclusion**

While some unions make a point to use only voluntary contributions on politics, the vast majority of union funds spent on politics in Washington are collected from mandatory dues. Under current state law, union workers are unable to easily or effectively abstain from supporting union political activity. Political candidates should refuse to accept contributions forcibly deducted from workers' paychecks.