

OBJECTIONS & TOUGH QUESTIONS

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(edited from AFLCIO version)

When we ask a worker to join the union we want to address their concerns in a way that is sincere, productive and keeps the conversation on track. For any objection we want to follow a similar pattern:

Formula for Overcoming Objections:

1. **Empathize/acknowledge:** "I hear what you're saying about" (cost of dues, previous bad union experience, etc.)
2. Briefly **answer** the question. If you don't have an answer, let them know you'll get back to them with more info.
3. **Redirect** the conversation back to their issue and motivation (or the benefit that you were connecting with them on): "You were telling me that (issue) is a concern and it's negatively impacting (motivation)."
4. **Ask again:** "How will (issue) get better if we don't act together? So are you ready to stand with your co-workers and recommit to the union?"

Suggested responses to potential tough questions.

"My friend told me I can stop paying dues if I want."

Your friend is technically correct. However, only members get the full benefits of our union like the right to vote in union elections and on contract ratifications, the right to attend trainings and go to our OSEA Conference. By staying (or becoming) a member you are showing your commitment to stand together with your coworkers and showing the district/employer that we have the power to win a fair contract/continue to bargain improvements to our wages and working condition.

"DO MY DUES GO TO POLITICIANS?"

No, dues money is not used for political contributions. Dues are spent on building member power: bargaining wages and benefits, representing members, enforcing the contracts, trainings, communications and organizing. We have a separate political fund (Education and Labor Advocacy Fund) that supports candidates who support workers. Members voluntarily make a separate contribution to our political action fund and can participate in choosing where that money goes and who gets endorsed.

"I DON'T SUPPORT XYZ CANDIDATE THAT THE UNION ENDORSED."

I understand your concern. We have over members so we are never going to all agree. But we all have a voice in the process. Our union and members care about issues that impact our jobs. The candidates we, the members, vote to endorse have been questioned and their voting records examined to make sure they support issues important to our jobs like education funding and labor issues. We need to have political power to keep education funding levels in Oregon sustainable, and protect our PERS. If you don't agree with some of the positions, join; become active and share your ideas. What would you like to see us address?

OBJECTIONS & TOUGH QUESTIONS, CONT.

"DUES ARE TOO EXPENSIVE. I CAN'T AFFORD IT."

I hear what you are saying. The cost of living makes things tough for all of us. However, dues are 1.8% of your pay. Those dues allow us to negotiate a fair return on our work. (Provide an example of an economic win in a recent contract if possible). Our dues collectively give us the resources to fight for the improvements and changes we deserve. Could any of us protect or raise our wages or benefits on our own? No. We only have the pay and benefits we do because we stood together to negotiate them. We need everyone on board to protect benefits and wages and make improvements at work. We see a return on our dues by what we've won in wages and benefits. What improvements would you like to see happen?

"THE UNION DOESN'T DO ANYTHING FOR ME. I DON'T GET IN TROUBLE AND I LIKE MY JOB."

It's great to hear that you are happy with your job! This is a good place to work now, and we have all worked hard to have a good contract that has made our jobs and working conditions better. Your job has been made better and more secure because we have stood together to win fair wages, benefits and good working conditions. Without our union contract we wouldn't have all the rights and opportunities we have. We need to continue to stand together to protect those things. What part of your job is the most important to you? What do you want to protect? I worked here when things were bad (insert issue). Then we did (insert solution) to improve it.

"I'M STILL MAD ABOUT (SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST with OSEA – or even a different union)"

I'm sorry to hear that. I can't speak to what happened then, but we can work together to make the future better. If we want to make improvements, we need to stand together. What would you like to see change? (Listen) What are you willing to do to make that happen? I'm happy to set up a meeting with you and our chapter officers to listen to your concerns. In the end we all must back each other up and stand together so that we're all treated fairly.

"I DON'T LIKE UNIONS"

Why not? What do you think of when you say "union?" (Listen carefully without getting defensive. Find out what the real issue is: past experience, political disagreement etc. and address that.) People have misconceptions about unions. Employers want us to think a union is a third party or people "out there" not connected with us. But our union is all of us standing together to have a say in our wages, benefits and working conditions. Everything that we have now is because our union and members have stood strong and bargained these rights and benefits. Having the power of our membership has made our employer take us seriously. Do you think you could make these improvements on your own? We all deserve more and the more we stand together for our future contracts the better we'll all do.

"I'LL GET THE SAME WAGES AND BENEFITS. WHY SHOULD I JOIN (or re-join, or continue to be a member)?"

If we do not stand together and maintain our membership to protect what we have now and improve in the future, we could lose big. Imagine public schools becoming charter schools. What about our chapter's contract that we've bargained improvements to for years? Management takes us more seriously in bargaining if our membership is strong and know that when we stand together, we're able to win what we deserve. If our membership is not strong, the district will take away things we've fought for and they won't agree to the increases or improvements we propose.