

Recommendations

Federal labor law and Washington state campaign finance law have attempted to protect a very basic constitutional principle: **Nobody should be forced to pay for someone else's politics.** In Washington state, the union hierarchy understood what they had to do to circumvent the law. They have been caught several times but all the fines and penalties have been against the union not the union leaders. So they continue to rip off their members and treat them as cash cows to fund their political agenda.

The entire enforcement system continues to put the legal burden on individual rank and file members rather than on the huge and powerful union hierarchy where it belongs.

Furthermore, the union hierarchy has nothing to lose. The penalties, however large, are not an effective deterrence. If union officials knowingly enable the union to break the law and are caught and fined, the money won't come out of their own sizeable paychecks. The penalties will be paid out of the union's only source of funds—members' paychecks.

This means teachers, whose money was used illegally for politics, will have to suffer the injustice of forking over more of their paycheck to pay the fines and court costs.

Our experience in Washington state compels us to ask Congress to consider several necessary reforms.

1. **Nobody should be forced to pay for someone else's politics. When our 1993 campaign finance reform law gave teachers the choice, the vast majority chose not to fund their union's political activities.**
2. **The practice of using payroll deductions for politics must end.** Political contributions should be *solicited independently* by the Political Action Committee and *paid independently* to that Committee. Not enough laws or oversight committees exist to stop lawbreakers who are tempted by money that is currently so easily obtained. Workers' paychecks demand and deserve more protection.
3. **Unions should be required to make an externally audited, annual report available to all its employees.** This report should reveal how teachers' money was spent, along with a clear notification of their right not to pay for politics. Currently, to protect their rights under the law, teachers are forced to **sue their own union** at their own expense just to see the financial records.
4. **The use of public facilities for politics must cease.**
5. **Strong, deterring penalties, against both the entity and the union officers, need to be enacted for all violations of these laws.**