

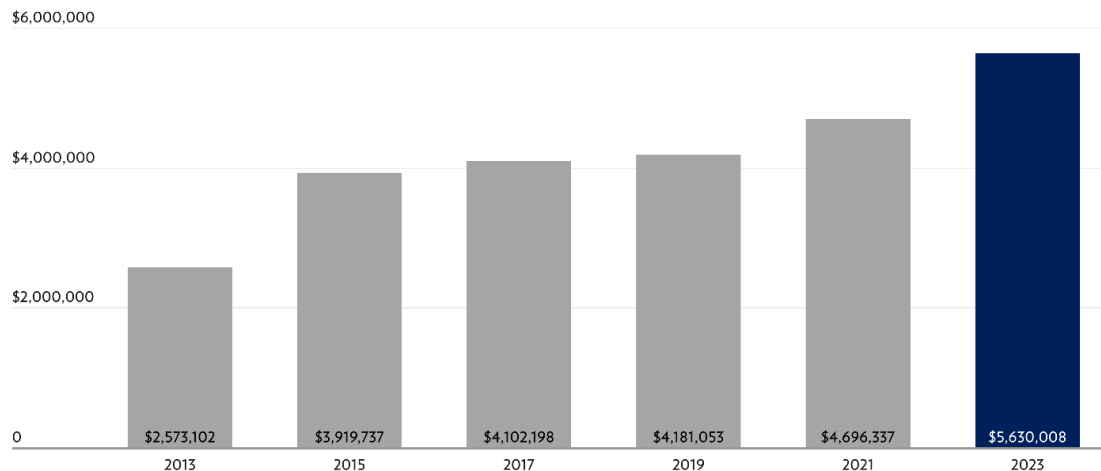
Government Union PAC Spending in 2023

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SUMMARY

- Pennsylvania government union political action committees (PACs) spent \$5.6 million in 2023, a record high for an odd-year election where there is not a presidential or midterm election.
- Of this \$5.6 million in PAC spending, Democratic candidates and Democrat-aligned PACs received 92.4 percent of direct contributions.
- Government unions spent heavily in support of Democratic candidates for statewide, state legislature, and local elected office. Democrat Sara Innamorato was the top recipient of government union PAC contributions, bringing in \$334,300 in 2023.
- Government union PAC contributions are the only PAC contributions collected via a taxpayer-funded payroll system. Lawmakers should require government unions to collect union dues and PAC contributions without the benefit of taxpayer resources.

Government Union PAC Spending in Odd-Year Elections



Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, "Campaign Finance Online Reporting."

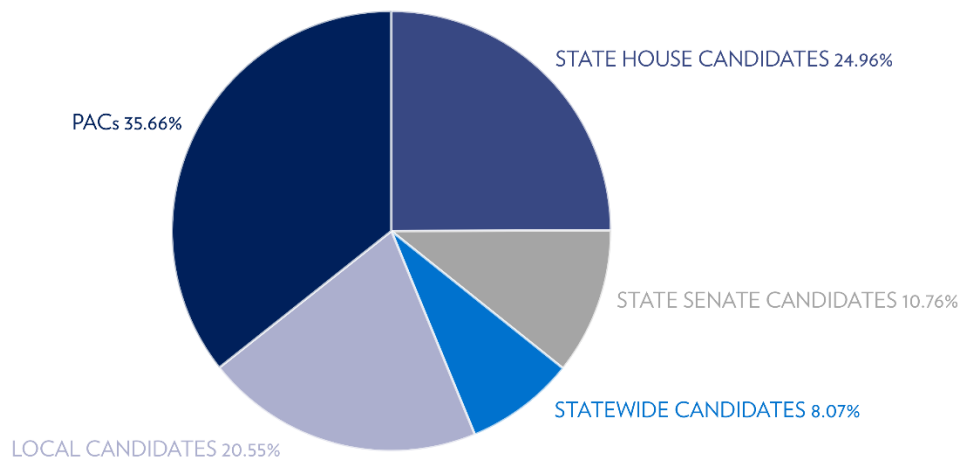
STATEWIDE RACES

- Contributions to statewide candidates accounted for \$371,825 of government union PAC expenditures.
 - Government unions invested heavily on Democrats, namely state Supreme Court Justice Daniel McCaffery (\$196,000) and Superior Court Judge Timika Lane (\$57,100). Malcolm Kenyatta, a candidate in the Democratic primary for Auditor General, received \$38,750.

STATE HOUSE RACES

- Government unions gave \$240,500 to the Pennsylvania House Democratic Campaign Committee, which fundraises for all Democratic House candidates. The Republican counterpart, the Pennsylvania Republican House Campaign Committee, received only \$3,000 from government unions.
- Four key House Democrats, Reps. Joanna McClinton (\$89,000), Matt Bradford (\$70,500), Heather Boyd (\$68,250), and Jordan Harris (\$47,000), were among the top direct recipients of government union PAC money. In total, 86.7 percent of contributions to House candidates went to Democrats.

Government Union Political Spending by Recipient, 2023



Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, "Campaign Finance Online Reporting."

STATE SENATE RACES

- State Senate candidates received \$495,531 from government union PACs, with Sen. Vincent Hughes, a Democrat and incumbent for Pennsylvania's District 7, receiving almost one-fifth (\$101,000) of all contributions.
- Senate Republicans received 31.6 percent of all contributions to Senate candidates, over twice the share of House Republicans. Despite this, government union contributions to the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee totaled \$72,500, compared to \$2,000 to the Republican Senate Campaign Committee.

LOCAL RACES

- A review of campaign finance [data](#) reveals government union PACs made significant investments into Democrats running for local office.¹
 - Innamorato, a former state representative and the new Allegheny County Executive, was the top recipient of government union PAC money in 2023, bringing in over \$334,000. Philadelphia Mayor Cherrille Parker and Helen Gym, the fellow Democrat she defeated in the mayoral

primary, received \$59,650 and \$50,400, respectively. In total, 98 percent of contributions to local candidates went to Democrats.

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES

- PACs were the largest recipients of government union PAC money, accounting for \$1.6 million, or nearly 36 percent of all contributions.
- Gym’s Super PAC, Fighting Together for Philadelphia (\$750,000), was the top PAC recipient, followed by Pennsylvanians for Judicial Fairness (\$730,000).
 - Pennsylvanians for Judicial Fairness, which attracted [funding](#) from left-wing dark money organizations,² supported McCaffery’s win to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Top 10 Recipients of Government Union Money

2023

Recipient	Total	Office	Party
Sara Innamorato	\$334,300	Allegheny Executive	Democrat
Daniel McCaffery	\$196,000	Pa. Supreme Court	Democrat
Vincent Hughes	\$101,000	Senate	Democrat
Joanna McClinton	\$89,000	House	Democrat
Matt Bradford	\$70,500	House	Democrat
Heather Boyd	\$68,250	House	Democrat
Cherelle Parker	\$59,650	Philadelphia Mayor	Democrat
Timika Lane	\$57,100	Pa. Superior Court	Democrat
Helen Gym	\$50,400	Philadelphia Mayor	Democrat
Jordan Harris	\$47,000	House	Democrat

Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, “Campaign Finance Online Reporting.”

DISCUSSION

- Government union PAC spending data shows government unions have an ever-increasing involvement in Pennsylvania’s elections. With their influence, these unions continue to support Democrats, almost exclusively.
 - In statewide races, government unions give generously to Democratic candidates and the Super PACs that support them with almost no contributions to Republican candidates.
 - Government union investment into the Pennsylvania House Democratic Campaign Committee far outweighs contributions to its Senate counterpart indicating an interest in maintaining the Democratic House majority.
 - Government unions were significant players in Democratic primaries and the general election for local office. Government union contributions accounted for over 56 percent of contributions to Gym’s Super PAC and fueled Innamorato’s November win as Allegheny County Executive.

- In the Senate, where Republicans hold a 28-22 majority, government unions offered more support to Republicans than in the House or in statewide and local offices. Despite more support for individual Republicans, contributions to the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee were 36 times more than contributions to the Senate Republican Campaign Committee.
- The 2024 election will determine control of both legislative chambers, as well as all three statewide row offices. Government union PAC cash holdings suggest that these unions are ready to make significant investments on behalf of Democratic candidates in 2024.

Pennsylvania Government Union PAC Cash on Hand, 2023 Cycle 7

Union	Cash on Hand
UFCW International*	\$6,103,534.42
American Federation of Teachers International*	\$4,780,057.51
International Association of Firefighters PAC*	\$3,658,131.63
National Education Association Fund for Children*	\$2,315,892.69
Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers Association	\$1,317,079.98
Pennsylvania State Education Association	\$1,080,849.22
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers	\$915,041.19
Association of Pennsylvania State College & University Faculties	\$296,441.37
AFSCME 13	\$265,008.07
SEIU Pennsylvania	\$201,131.40
Pennsylvania AFL-CIO	\$197,462.24
American Federation of Teachers Pennsylvania	\$161,095.12
Spirit of 1776 (UFCW)	\$154,740.00
SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania	\$95,065.45
1776 PAC (UFCW)	\$70,616.95
Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers	\$32,664.84
PPFFA	\$20,026.22
Fraternal Order of Police State Lodge	\$5,220.00
AFSCME Pennsylvania	\$0.00
AFSCME PEOPLE*	\$0.00
SEIU Local 668	\$0.00
SEIU International*	\$0.00

*National PAC
Source: Pennsylvania Department of State, "Campaign Finance Online Reporting."

CONCLUSION

- Government unions continue to exert undue influence over Pennsylvania's elections and public policymaking process. With this influence, government unions lobby against [educational choice](#), [fiscal responsibility](#), and popular reforms that would make Pennsylvania more prosperous.^{3, 4}
- To level the playing field, lawmakers should adopt reforms to hold government unions to the same rules as other special interests. Requiring unions to collect their own dues and PAC deductions outside of the public payroll system and requiring unions to stand for regular recertification elections would stop the unethical taxpayer funding of purely political activity and increase unions' accountability to their membership.

¹ Pennsylvania Department of State, "Campaign Finance Online Reporting," accessed February 2, 2024, <https://www.campaignfinanceonline.pa.gov/Pages/CFReportSearch.aspx>.

² Brian Schwartz, "Wall Street Execs, Spielberg, 'Dark Money' Groups Quietly Back Democrat Running for Pennsylvania Supreme Court," *CNBC*, November 7, 2023, <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/11/07/pa-supreme-court-race-wall-street-spielberg-dark-money-backers.html>.

³ Pennsylvania State Education Association, "Unions Release Letter to Gov. Shapiro and Lawmakers, Opposing 'Lifeline Scholarship' Tuition Voucher Plan," June 22, 2023, <https://www.psea.org/news--events/newsstand/press-center/news-release---june-22-2023/>.

⁴ SEIU Pennsylvania State Council, "SEIU Responds to Governor Shapiro's Budget Address," February 7, 2024, <https://www.seiupa.org/news/2024/02/07/seiu-responds-to-the-governor-shapiros-budget-address/>.