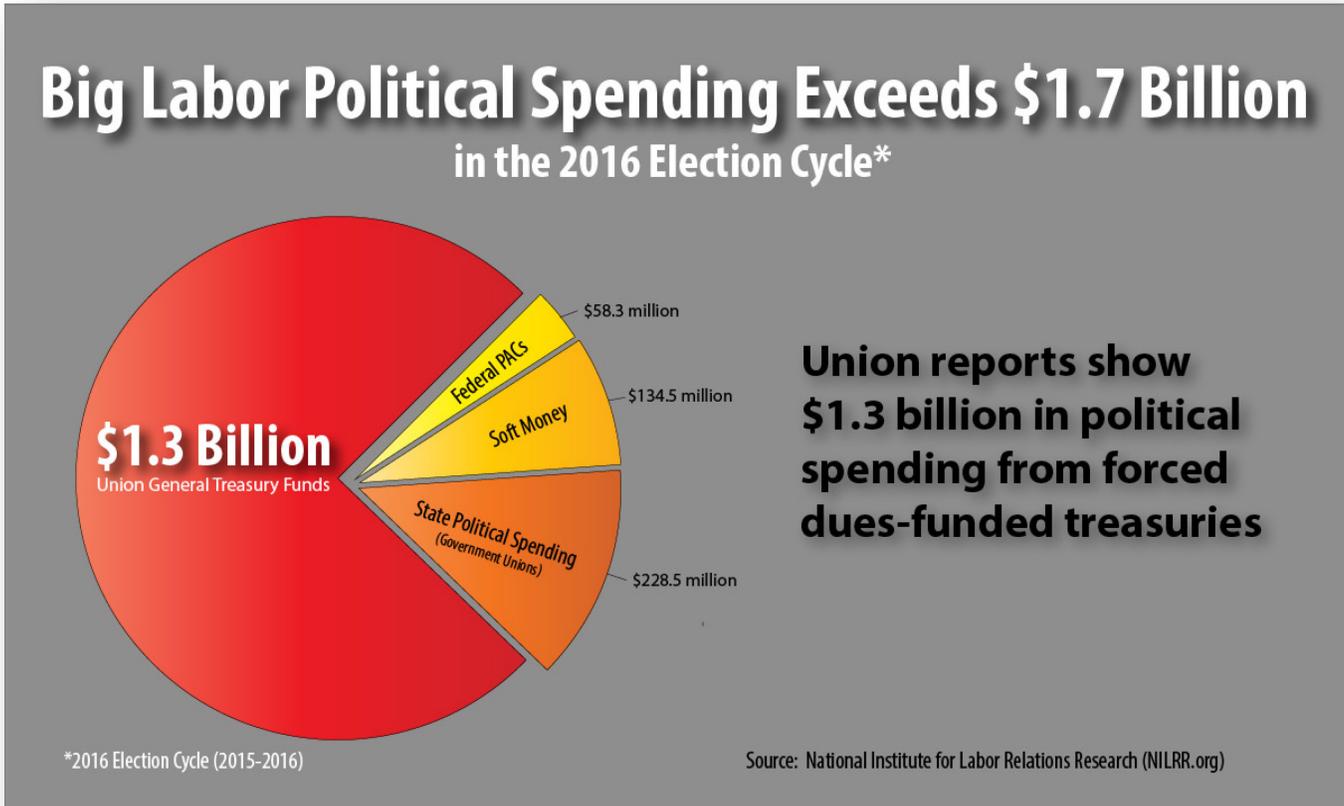


2016 Election Cycle Big Labor Spending Report



Data Source	2015	2016	2016 Election Cycle	%
Union General Treasury Funds	\$ 578,377,783	\$ 713,806,473	\$ 1,292,184,256	75%
FED PAC as defined by OpenSecrets.org			\$ 58,300,000	3%
Soft Money as defined by OpenSecrets.org			\$ 134,500,000	8%
State Political Spending Reports (Government Unions)	\$ 23,707,596	\$ 204,739,424	\$ 228,447,020	13%
Grand Total 2015-2016 Estimated Political Expenditures			\$ 1,713,431,276	100%

2016 Election Cycle Big Labor Spending Report

Based on required disclosures to the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) union officers admitted to spending \$578,377,783 and \$713,806,473 on “Political Activities” during the 2015 and 2016 reporting periods. Union officials spent \$1.3 billion directly from union treasuries (filled with forced dues and fees) to spend it on politics, dwarfing George Soros’ and the Koch Brothers’ reported combined political spending during the same period.

Methodology

The **total \$1,713,431,276** in union political expenditures is derived from four reporting regimes. **“Union Treasuries”** data is generated from the U.S. Labor Department’s labor organization financial disclosure requirements, often called **“LM Reports”** (see **“Union General Treasury Funds”** below for more details). **“FED PAC as defined by OpenSecrets.org”** is derived from PAC expense reports created using the research tools available on the website OpenSecrets.org (see **“FED PAC as defined by OpenSecrets.org”** below for more details). **“Soft Money as defined by OpenSecrets.org”** is derived from Soft Money expense reports created using the research tools available on the website OpenSecrets.org (see **“Soft Money as defined by OpenSecrets.org”** below for more details). **“State Political Spending Reports (Government Unions)”** is derived from public sector union reported expenses revealed by research tools available at FollowTheMoney.org (see **“State Political Spending Reports (Government Unions)”** below for more details).

Union General Treasury Funds

Union treasury funds accounted for 75% of the \$1.7 billion total in this report. Labor union officials report on the U.S. Department of Labor’s Union Financial Disclosure Form LM-2 the amount of expenditures each year in categories called **“schedules.”** Schedule 16 is **“POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND LOBBYING.”** These USDOL disclosure reports are signed by union presidents and union secretary-treasurers. Union officers are subject to criminal penalties for willful failure to file a required report and for false reporting. False reporting includes making any false statement or misrepresentation of a material fact while knowing it to be false, or for knowingly failing to disclose a material fact in a required report.

The self-reported **“SCHEDULE 16 – POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND LOBBYING”** disbursement amounts for the filing years 2015 and 2016 were used in this research. It is worth noting that the source of these disbursements includes dues or fees collected from men and women who could be fired for refusing to pay.

Additionally, LM-2 reporting often contains schedule underreporting where political expenditures may appear on other schedules such as **“SCHEDULE 17 – CONTRIBUTIONS, GIFTS, AND GRANTS.”** (No Schedule 17 disbursements are included in this NILRR tally of labor political spending.)

2016 Election Cycle Big Labor Spending Report

The following are examples of such likely misreporting disclosed on the National Education Association National Headquarters' 2016 LM-2 report. The NEA reported following arguable political disbursements on SCHEDULE 17 – CONTRIBUTIONS, GIFTS, AND GRANTS:

2016 NEA Contributions, Gifts, and Grants Amount

\$135,000	CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE
\$484,600	CENTER FOR POPULAR DEMOCRACY, INC
\$750,000	NC CITIZENS FOR PROTECTING OUR SCHOOLS
\$312,160	DEMOCRACY ALLIANCE
\$397,500	AMERICA VOTES

From USDOL instructions for “SCHEDULE 16 – POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND LOBBYING: A political disbursement or contribution is one that is intended to influence the selection, nomination, election, or appointment of anyone to a federal, state, or local executive, legislative or judicial public office, or office in a political organization, or the election of Presidential or Vice Presidential electors, and support for or opposition to ballot referenda. It does not matter whether the attempt succeeds. Include disbursements for communications with members (or agency fee-paying nonmembers) and their families for registration, get-out-the-vote and voter education campaigns, the expenses of establishing, administering and soliciting contributions to union segregated political funds (or PACs), disbursements to political organizations as defined by the IRS in 26 U.S.C. 527, and other political disbursements. Also report the labor organization's direct and indirect disbursements to all entities and individuals during the reporting period associated with dealing with the executive and legislative branches of the Federal, state, and local governments and with independent agencies and staffs to advance the passage or defeat of existing or potential laws or the promulgation or any other action with respect to rules or regulations (including litigation expenses). It does not matter whether the lobbying attempt succeeds.”

USDOL reports do not require all unions to file reports. In fact, the fastest growth has been in unions that exclusively “represent” state and local government employees which are not covered by USDOL disclosure reports. Therefore, the USDOL numbers exclude most of the state and municipal employee unions.

FED PAC as defined by OpenSecrets.org

All 2016 Election Cycle PACs identified as “Labor” by OpenSecrets.org accessed on 4/11/2017.

Soft Money as defined by OpenSecrets.org

All 2016 Election Cycle **Soft Money** as identified as “Labor” by OpenSecrets.org accessed on 4/11/2017.

2016 Election Cycle Big Labor Spending Report

State Political Spending Reports (Government Unions)

NILRR used only government unions (NILRR excluded postal unions and federal employee unions from this number because postal and federal unions file USDOL LM reports) political activity from state and local disclosures reports, as gathered by FollowTheMoney.org, to understate political spending and reduce duplication from DOL LM-2 reporting.

On balance, then, the aggregate \$1.7 Billion in political and lobbying expenditures by labor unions in the 2016 election cycle reported here is likely an understatement. Nothing here is to be construed as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress or any state legislature.

To obtain more detailed information about how any or all of the above figures were derived, contact the National Institute for Labor Relations Research (NILRR.org): 703-321-9606.