

*United States Senate*

REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

Larry E. Craig, Chairman

Jade West, Staff Director



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*Big Labor's Big-Money Political Machine*

**Compulsory Union Dues & Campaign Finance**

*"To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical."* Thomas Jefferson

*Four Million 'Harry Becks' Voted In 1996*

In 1988, the Supreme Court determined that **79 percent of telephone lineman Harry Beck's compulsory union dues were spent on political and other activities unrelated to collective bargaining or union organizing**. His union, the Communications Workers of America (CWA), was required to return that portion of Mr. Beck's dues. Despite the *Beck* decision, however, millions of union employees are still forced to pay dues as a condition of employment while their union bosses continue to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on politicians and political causes that their rank and file members do not support.

According to Department of Labor statistics, 80 percent (8.2 million employees) of all private sector workers covered by a union contract are *required* under that contract to pay union dues as a condition of employment. **Like Harry Beck, nearly 4 million of these workers are forced to devote a portion of their paychecks to political activities they may not support:**

- In the 1992 presidential election, 45 percent of these workers voted for a candidate other than Bill Clinton, yet it is estimated that their **union bosses spent as much as \$300-\$500 million to get Bill Clinton and other Democrats elected**.
- **In the 1996 elections, unions spent an estimated \$400 million to promote their agenda**, while exit polls revealed that a majority of their own union members supported Republican policies (e. g., welfare reform, a balanced budget amendment, tax cuts) that the AFL-CIO and other unions actively opposed.

*Ex-Teamster Official Puts Price Tag at \$400 Million in 1992*

F.C. "Duke" Zeller, who for 14 years served as director of communications at Teamsters headquarters in Washington, D.C., estimates that unions spent about \$400 million in the 1992 election cycle. Moreover, in his book, *Devil's Pact: Inside the World of the Teamsters Union*, Mr. Zeller quotes former Teamsters vice president Gene Giacumbo who states that he was present at an executive board meeting in which union president **Ron Carey boasted of spending \$56 million in Teamster funds to help Bill Clinton get reelected.** If Mr. Giacumbo's recollection is correct, that figure represents more than 20 times the \$2.4 million in PAC contributions the Teamsters reported to the FEC for the 1992 election.

### ***Rutgers Economist Also Puts Price Tag at \$300 to \$500 Million in 1992***

In March of 1996, during testimony before the Committee on House Oversight, **Rutgers University economist Leo Troy also estimated that unions spent between \$300 million and \$500 million during the 1992 election cycle.** This amount includes both cash contributions from union PACs and "in-kind" or "soft" money contributions consisting of such activities as voter registration drives, telephone banks, transportation to polls, and campaign "volunteers."

In a letter to the committee chairman, Professor Troy stated, "According to figures reported by the FEC (reproduced in the Statistical Abstract of the U.S. of 1995), in 1991-2, union political action committees spent just under \$95 million. I estimate that "in-kind" expenditures could reasonably be a multiple of 3 to 5 times that amount."

### ***Nothing "Soft" About Big Labor Money***

By their own admission, union leaders place a high premium on in-kind political expenditures, making it easy to understand why soft money greatly exceeds PAC money. The following are excerpts from union newsletters and press accounts of soft money in action:

#### **Paul Patton for Governor Campaign (Kentucky 1995)**

- According to the November 20, 1995, *AFL-CIO News*, seven staffers were transferred from the federation's Washington, D.C. headquarters to Kentucky, where they "directed the work of nine activists released for the campaign by the Steelworkers, Teamsters, Operating Engineers, Musicians, Food and Commercial Workers, and the Communications Workers."
- The November 16, 1995 *Louisville Courier-Journal* reported that local union officials "used buses and vans to haul voters to the polls."

#### **Ron Wyden for Senate (Oregon 1996)**

- According to the February 6, 1996, *AFL-CIO News*, the union "sent Deputy Political Director Richard Walsh and 12 staff members to Oregon, supplemented by 25 staff members from affiliates," including, "Boilermakers, Bricklayers, Government Employees, Laborers, Letter Carriers, Postal Workers, Roofers, Sheet Metal Workers, Transportation Communications Union,

and Teamsters."

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