

The Facts About Unions Dues and Political Campaigns

Questions & Answers

Are my dues being used to fund political candidates I do not support?

NO. Federal and various state campaign contribution laws prohibit dues dollars being used for political campaign contributions.

What are union dues used for?

Your dues dollars are used for union collective bargaining purposes. In other words, your dues dollars are used to police the current agreement through filing and progressing membership claims and grievances all the way through arbitration, to represent members in discipline hearings and their appeals and arbitrations, to retain subject matter experts to consult and assist with complicated local and national negotiation subjects, and to organize workers who understand that a union and a collective bargaining agreement can make their work lives better.

If my dues can't be used for political contributions, how do Unions contribute to political campaigns?

Unions participate in political campaigns through donations from a political action committee (PAC) fund, funded by voluntary union member contributions. The IBT's PAC fund – DRIVE (Democrat, Republican, Independent Voter Education) – makes contributions to political parties and candidates.

Exactly how does DRIVE get union members' money?

DRIVE contributions are funded entirely through voluntary donations from Teamster members, which includes BMWED. Usually these contributions are made through a voluntary recurring payroll deduction, in the amount authorized by the member. In other words, only the money voluntarily contributed to DRIVE by participating members is used for political campaign contributions.

To whom does DRIVE make contributions?

DRIVE offers contributions to candidates for both federal and state office. The underlying rationale for DRIVE making a contribution is that the candidate supports the advancement of wages, hours and working conditions as well as the improvement of quality of life for the Teamster membership and their families. These contributions have been made to Democratic and Republican candidates in the past. The distribution of contributions is different for each election cycle as different candidates seek DRIVE contributions.

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