

# ENDING TAXPAYER SUPPORT OF TEACHERS UNIONS IN IDAHO

## SUMMARY

Idaho law currently requires school districts to engage in collective bargaining with a teachers union if a majority of district educators select union representation. Approximately 83 school districts currently negotiate with a teachers union. Although union negotiations typically involve matters like compensation, conditions of employment, and grievance resolution, many district affiliates of the Idaho Education Association (IEA), itself an affiliate of the National Education Association (NEA)—the largest teachers union in the country—have successfully negotiated provisions that result in taxpayer support for teachers union activities. Idaho lawmakers can and should prohibit school districts from using taxpayer funds to promote teachers unions.

## GOVERNMENT COLLECTION OF UNION DUES

- At least 52 school districts use taxpayer-funded payroll systems to collect union dues. All told, these districts deducted \$369,000 in dues from the paychecks of 5,150 educators in April 2023 alone.
- About \$1 million per year of the union dues collected by Idaho school districts is forwarded to the NEA headquarters in Washington, D.C., and used to advocate for its far-left political agenda.
- About 10 percent of the funds spent by the NEA in a typical year are for “political activities and lobbying,” including direct political contributions and expenditures, some of which involve Idaho elections. This multi-step process circumvents existing Idaho law preventing employers from deducting PAC contributions from employees’ pay.
- Getting government out of the dues collection business would prevent taxpayer-funded payroll systems from being used to fundraise for private, partisan interest groups and give teachers more control over their union membership.
- Many states have already banned government collection of union dues. In 2023 alone, Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky ended government-administered union dues collection for teachers unions.
- The IEA already has what it describes as a “simple” “eDues” mechanism in place to collect dues and PAC contributions from members via electronic payments; it does not need access to payroll deduction, too.

## RELEASE TIME FOR TEACHERS UNION OFFICIALS

- In about 50 districts, teachers union contracts allow teachers also serving as union officials to take paid time off to perform union work or attend union events, all while continuing to receive their full, taxpayer-funded salary and benefits.
- For example, in Coeur d’Alene the union president “shall be released the equivalency of two days per week to conduct [union] business. The cost of the first 38 days shall be paid 100% by the district.”
- In Payette, the teachers union contract specifically permits taxpayer-funded union lobbying: “The District will provide annually, up to 10 days for the Association to use at their discretion in performing duties of officers, attending Delegate Assembly and testifying on legislative initiatives.”
- State law should limit teachers unions’ use of paid release time to core representational duties and require unions to fully reimburse districts for the cost of the lost time.

## UNION ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION

- The collective bargaining process provides teachers unions with an opportunity to try to obtain personal contact information of teachers they wouldn't otherwise have a legal right to under Idaho's Public Records Act. For example, the Jefferson County School District's union contract requires the district to provide teachers' home addresses and personal phone numbers to the union, even though this information is otherwise exempt from disclosure.
- To protect teachers' privacy and limit unwanted union contact, state law should prohibit school districts from disclosing more personal information about teachers to a union than is disclosable under the Public Records Act.

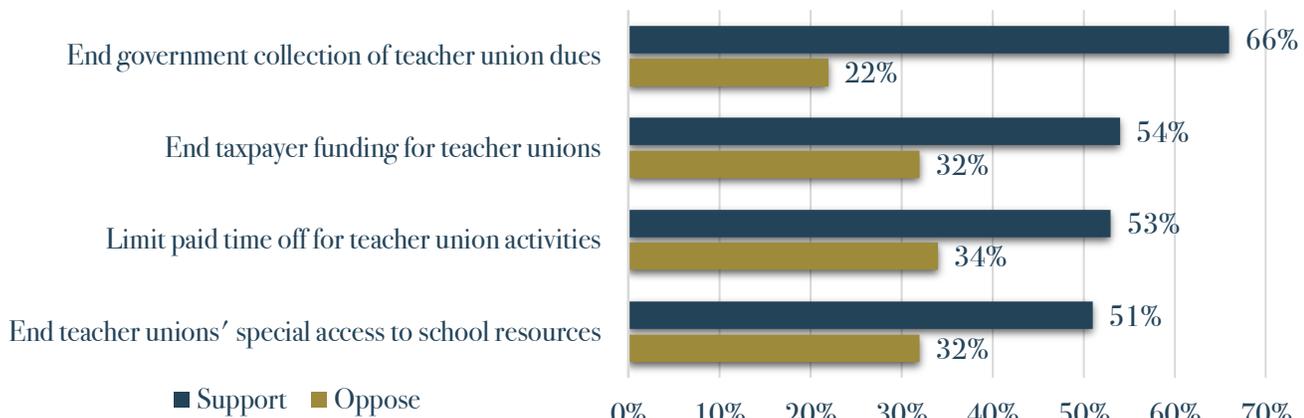
## UNIONS' PREFERENTIAL ACCESS TO SCHOOL RESOURCES

- Wherever possible, unions seek exclusive or preferential access to school facilities, communications systems, and events to communicate with teachers and solicit membership, all at taxpayer expense.
- For example, the Blaine County School District permits teachers unions to meet with (and solicit membership from) newly hired teachers for 30 minutes as part of the district's orientation process for new employees.
- The Lake Pend Oreille School District collective bargaining agreement gives the union the right to "use the internal school e-mail, intra-district mail, phones, and faculty boxes to communicate with members of the bargaining unit about Association business, as well as the right to use school facilities to conduct Association meetings."
- School districts should be prohibited from requiring or coercing teachers to meet, communicate, listen to, or otherwise interact with a teachers union. And if a district wishes to provide an incumbent teachers union with more generous access to its facilities or communications systems than available to the general public, it should provide comparable access to competing unions and nonprofit groups.

## SCHOOL DISTRICTS PAYING TEACHERS' UNION DUES

- The Boise School District has stopped just shy of paying teachers' union dues out of district funds, instead offering teachers a monthly salary enhancement for "professional activities" that just happens to approximate the cost of IEA dues. In principle, nothing would prevent a district from simply paying teachers' union dues outright.
- Idaho law should be changed to prohibit direct taxpayer funding of teachers unions, whether directly or through schemes like Boise's.

## VOTERS DON'T WANT TAXPAYERS TO SUPPORT TEACHER UNIONS



## CONTACT