



Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters

Strength in Numbers 95,000

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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT



Pennsylvania has become a hub of concentrated anti-union campaigns, by five differently branded front groups

In the lead up to the Supreme Court's Janus V. AFSCME decision, many pundits and political observers claimed it would be the death of the labor movement. Right-wing front groups, namely the State Policy Network, pledged multi-million-dollar campaigns targeting union members with misleading statistics and lies about their union in order to get members to drop their union. Boasting a national annual budget of \$83 million dollars, the State Policy Network (SPN) creates cookie-cutter blueprints for its state affiliates, such as the Freedom Foundation, the Mackinac Center and the Commonwealth Foundation. SPN groups across the country have grown financially over the past 5 years and are increasingly boasting about full-scale campaigns targeting union members via home visits, phone calls, mailings, digital ads, blast messages to their work emails and most recently by filing frivolous lawsuits aimed at draining union resources. While certainly a threat to take seriously because of their financial backers, in reality these campaigns have been much smaller than reported and the impact of these groups to-date has been a complete failure.

Pennsylvania has become a hub of concentrated anti-union campaigns, by not one, not two, but five differently branded front groups using these tactics to try to destroy the labor movement. Mark Janus has also taken a personal interest in the state writing multiple emails targeting Pennsylvania workers and speaking at the Pennsylvania Leadership Conference. The Commonwealth Foundation oversee this network in Pennsylvania which includes The Fairness Center, Americans For Fair Treatment, Free To Teach, and The Commonwealth Chamber of Entrepreneurs. Union members have also seen additional communication from other SPN connected front groups including My Pay, My Say, Opt Out Today, and the Liberty Justice Center who have branded their campaign Stand With Workers. Despite these efforts, Pennsylvania's labor movement hasn't just survived the Janus decision, it has thrived. These groups have failed to convince union members, the general public, and elected officials.

- Since leaked fundraising documents showing their "Project Goliath" and "Permanent Freedom Infrastructure" campaign, which was aimed at destroying the labor movement, the Commonwealth Foundation and connected front groups have spent more than \$32.4 million in Pennsylvania.
- The total failure of the Commonwealth Foundation led union member opt-out campaigns have led the front group to switch tactics and pursue frivolous lawsuits. Despite union members having numerous

differently branded front groups targeting them with messages to leave their union, membership increased in Pennsylvania. According to the latest report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, overall membership is at 13.4% in 2018, up from 13% last year in 2017.

- Lawsuits from the Fairness Center, Americans For Fair Treatment and Liberty Justice Center are also failing in Pennsylvania despite it being a target for anti-union litigation. A lawsuit against homecare workers right to have a voice on the job, which was highly promoted lawsuit by the Commonwealth Foundation, failed after holding up these worker protections for a workforce comprised of mainly women and people of color for years. Of the cases in Pennsylvania where decisions have been rendered, none of them were favorable to the Fairness Center or the Liberty Justice Center. Attorney General Josh Shapiro has publicly named the Liberty Justice Center and The Fairness Center pledging to do all he can to defend these anti-worker suits.

- The Labor Movement remains a potent and vital force for pro-worker elected officials notching up a series of strong electoral victories in the face of all these attacks. The labor movement has largely been credited in Pennsylvania with lifting up victories for candidates like Congressman Conor Lamb and defeating candidates like former State Senator Scott Wagner. State Senator Wagner made one of the key focuses of his campaign attacking labor, saying if workers knew how much he made they would organize his trash company Penn Waste. Ultimately, State Senator Wagner's anti-union stance and bad business practices led to his defeat.

- The Commonwealth Foundation's agenda is failing in Harrisburg and beyond. In January, the Commonwealth Foundation pushed for passage of House Bill 785 and Senate Bill 371, further attacks on collective bargaining. The legislation failed to even make it the House floor because of internal divisions within the Pennsylvania House Republican caucus. In addition, Commonwealth Foundation connected economists advocated for abolishing the minimum wage and at one point during their testimony stated raising wages is "the type of policy historically supported by racists who seek to harm minorities." The economist concluded that racists win when the minimum wage goes up. The Commonwealth Foundation lobbied heavily for an expansion of tax write offs for the rich and corporations through the Education Income Tax Credit only to have their secretive Commonwealth Kids LLC outed showing how they directly profit off of Pennsylvania children. The legislation was vetoed.

- The broader labor movement has revitalized the strike and its ramifications have been felt throughout Pennsylvania. In 2018, a record number of union members went on strike. Led by the Red for Ed movement, made up of teachers, support staff, and students in public schools, strikes swept across a half-dozen states including Pennsylvania with teachers using their right to strike for leverage in Pittsburgh, East Stroudsburg, and Harrisburg during contract negotiations. Two-thirds of the country supports teachers' right to strike for better funding and stronger contracts. It is no surprise as to why the Commonwealth Foundation have called for making it illegal for teachers to strike. In Erie, Pennsylvania workers led this biggest manufacturing strike during the Trump era when 2,000 workers walked off the job. Uber and Lyft drivers from Philadelphia participated in a global day of action to support worker protections for rideshare employees.

- Philadelphia has seen some of the strongest new labor laws and innovative protections in the country. After a six-year campaign, Philadelphia airport workers led by SEIU 32BJ doubled their pay through numerous high-profile rallies and strikes. Nearly

3,000 healthcare workers were organized by PASNAP since 2015 in the City. Unite HERE workers from Philadelphia confronted Marriott executives about sexual harassment leading to concrete wins across the country protecting women hotel workers in multiple hotel chains. The Fair Workweek law passed by the City of Philadelphia is the strongest one in the nation and was led by a coalition of labor, community activists, and progressive organizations. Philadelphia also passed an initiative calling for a \$15 minimum wage and has City Council Members have introduced a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. The second ever organized campaign staff also originated in Pennsylvania after Congressional candidate Jess King ratified a staff contract with the Campaign Workers Guild.

Workers can see right through the Commonwealth Foundation, and their various branded outfits, false argument that you can somehow drop out of the union and reap benefits without paying dues. Workers understand they only get what they get at the bargaining table if they're strong. Unions win higher wages for their workers – 10% to 20% more pay than nonunion workers over the past 80 years. Workers in unions earn approximately 13.2 percent more than a peer with similar education, occupation, and experience in a non-unionized workplace in the same sector. And it's not just better pay—unionized workers enjoy a huge advantage in benefits and rights on the job.

Furthermore, union members know that the Commonwealth Foundation is part of the same right-wing network that has fought for decades to cut their wages, pensions and health care. PA Spotlight has worked to talk with thousands of members across Pennsylvania educating on this network. It doesn't matter how many brands or front groups the organization has propped up since the Janus decision, Pennsylvania was birthplace to the labor movement and forging forward with innovative protections for workers, both organized and non-union.