

Payroll Deduction/Paycheck Deception

AFT Pennsylvania opposes legislation prohibiting automatic payroll deduction of union dues or voluntary contributions for public employees. Outlawing automatic withholding silences teachers, public safety workers, nurses and other public servants in their workplaces and makes it difficult for them to advocate on issues that affect their students, their jobs and working Pennsylvanians. Payroll deduction laws shifts the balance of power by allowing unlimited corporate political spending while restricting spending on political and legislative issues by workers.

- **Payroll deduction laws interfere with collective bargaining between employers and employees.** Payroll deduction is not required by legislation, rather it is negotiated by organized workers and their employers. Paycheck “protection” deprives teachers, nurses, college professors, school bus drivers and other public employees of their right under PA Act 195 to negotiate with their employers over withholding dues and voluntary political contributions.
- **Union members cannot be forced to contribute to political campaigns.** By law, union dues cannot be used for political campaigns. Only separate, voluntary contributions by members can be used. Union members who do not want their dues used for political purposes can withhold that portion of dues, paying only their share of the cost of their union negotiating contracts on their behalf, enforcing their contractual rights and defending them.
- **Banning automatic payroll deduction does not save money** for state government, school districts or taxpayers. Automation and direct deposit have rendered arguments that payroll deductions cost taxpayers’ money superfluous.
- **Workers are not required to join a union membership, so when workers join a union, they pay dues by consent.** Advocates claim that laws banning payroll deductions give union members “a choice” about how union dues are spent. Through the democratic process, union members determine how their union dues are spent – by electing officers, board members and workplace representatives; by voting on programs, actions, constitutions and bylaws; and by being required to take affirmative steps to join and contribute to their union’s political action committee. Through union elections, board meetings and conventions, union members determine how their unions participate in political campaigns and legislative advocacy.
- **Paycheck deduction laws tilt the political playing field toward big corporations by imposing onerous restrictions and expenses on workers’ political activity while leaving corporations free to engage in unlimited spending on political campaigns and lobbying.** Government entities deduct and distribute payments on behalf of employees to insurance companies, credit unions, banks and retirement fund managers and charitable organizations, to name a few. These corporations spend millions of dollars every year lobbying legislators and regulators, and these political and lobbying activities would remain unrestricted by payroll deduction laws.

Payroll deduction legislation is being advanced by corporations, hedge funds and special interest groups like the Commonwealth Foundation to push an anti-worker and anti-union agenda in Pennsylvania. If passed, teachers, nurses, firefighters, police and other everyday heroes would not be able to negotiate for or communicate with members effectively or advocate on issues that matter to all Pennsylvanians, including school, college, public safety and infrastructure funding, better wages and benefits and workplace protections.