



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 8

Presented to
The Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

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FGA Action

Good morning, Chair Manchester, Vice-Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Beau Euton and I am testifying on behalf of FGA Action in support of Senate Bill 8.¹

It is common sense that taxpayer dollars should never go to private organizations for the purpose of engaging in politics or advocacy for legislation. Taxpayer dollars should always be reserved for services for the public, not special interest handouts.

Unfortunately, Ohio taxpayers are footing the bill for labor unions' business. In jurisdictions across the state, public employees who are members of labor unions receive paid time off to conduct union business. In Columbus, one contract with the city allows the President and Vice President of the union to work full time for the union while still receiving their salary and benefits.² The same contract allows for an additional 600 hours of time for union business each year.³ In 2020, Columbus reported a total of more than 38,000 hours of union business at taxpayer expense, at a cost of more than \$1.1 million.⁴ In Akron, a teachers' union contract authorizes 125 days per year for union business.⁵

While some contracts specify what types of activities can be conducted during union time, others do not.⁶ This leaves the door wide open for union representatives to conduct partisan political activity on the taxpayer's dime. It defies logic to allow individuals who are supposed to be working for the public to be advocating for candidates, legislation, or policies instead of doing their jobs.

Government employee unions are extremely partisan organizations. Ohio government unions spent more than \$6 million on politics in the 2021-2022 election cycle, 95 percent of which went to Democrats.⁷ Nationally, 99 percent of union contributions go to Democrats, and national affiliates of Ohio unions like the American Federation for Teachers and the National Teachers Association are major contributors to the Democratic party and spent billions vocally supporting far-left policies.⁸

Fortunately, there's a solution. SB 8 would put Ohio on track to stop subsidizing partisan union activity. This bill would prohibit government funding for union members to lobby the legislature or engage in other political activities while on the clock. This would ensure that taxpayer dollars are never spent to campaign for a candidate or to lobby against popular policies like school choice.

Bottom line, government employees should use their work time to work for the taxpayers, not their labor union. This bill restores fairness and ends the practice of taxpayer-subsidized partisan political activity, and I urge the committee members to support it.

References

¹ <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/sb8>.

² City of Columbus, “Collective bargaining agreement between the City of Columbus and the Communications Workers of America Local 4502,” City of Columbus (2023), <https://www.columbus.gov/files/sharedassets/city/v/1/human-resources/labor-relations/cwa-2023-2026-cba.pdf>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Mark Flatten, “Tracking release time, state by state,” Goldwater Institute (2020), <https://www.goldwaterinstitute.org/tracking-release-time-2/>.

⁵ City of Akron, “Master agreement between the Akron Board of Education and the Akron Education Association,” City of Akron (2023), <https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/serb.ohio.gov/PDF/Contracts/2022/22-MED-03-0168.pdf>.

⁶ See contracts, for example: <https://www.columbus.gov/Government/Departments/Human-Resources/Labor-Relations>.

⁷ J.D. Davidson, “Public sector unions spent high in Ohio election cycle,” Center Square (2023), https://www.thecentersquare.com/ohio/article_5f293d2a-9913-11ee-882a-23a0cacde211.html.