



Follow the Money

THE REAL MONEY BEHIND THE NEW JERSEY
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION'S POLITICAL CLOUT

Part I of the Legal Corruption Series

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A M E R I C A N E N T E R P R I S E I N S T I T U T E

The Legal Corruption Series: Executive Summary

New Jersey is in a bad way. Our economy is weak and significantly underperforms other states. Our tax system is consistently ranked as the worst in the nation. Our public-sector pensions are in the worst condition of any state, and our unfunded liabilities are at least \$202 billion—almost six times the size of the \$35 billion annual budget.¹ We have the second-lowest bond rating of any state—save broke Illinois.² Businesses, taxpayers, and young adults are leaving our state in droves. Sadly, New Jersey’s future looks even worse.

How did New Jersey get into this position?

It was not happenstance. New Jersey is in this position because its largest public-sector union, the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), often working in concert with its public-sector union allies, has rigged the system for its own benefit. The consummate special interest, the NJEA has dominated the state’s political system for decades. It structured a legislative regime that allowed it to siphon off hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to spend itself to unmatched political clout. Predictably, New Jersey’s politicians—both Republicans and Democrats—have succumbed to this clout and largely given the NJEA what it wanted. Too often, New Jersey citizens and taxpayers have been left out of the discussion, and yet it is they who will foot the bill.

If New Jersey citizens and taxpayers knew what was really going on, they would be outraged. They would be outraged that a special interest was able to control state government to their detriment. They would be outraged that their highest-in-the-nation taxes are flowing directly into union coffers to be used against their own interests. They would be outraged that the future of the state—and that of their

children and future generations of New Jerseyans—has been mortgaged for the benefit of the few over the many.

The purpose of this research is to inform New Jersey’s citizens of what is really going on and how we got into this position. Using published research, contemporaneous media accounts, and the NJEA’s own publications to ascertain the facts, this study details the deliberate exploitation of New Jersey’s political system and the resulting consequences—to the benefit of the NJEA and the detriment of New Jerseyans.

There are five parts to the research:

- **Part I. Follow the Money: The Real Money Behind the New Jersey Education Association’s Political Clout.** Funded by hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, the NJEA’s severely underreported political war chest dwarfs the competition. The NJEA spends many times more on political action than is reported and is by far the most powerful special interest—and political force—in the state. Far too often, this results in taxpayer dollars being used against taxpayer interests.
- **Part II. “And You Will Pay”: How a Special Interest Dominates New Jersey Politics.** The NJEA used its clout to influence politicians of both parties and structure the political system to perpetuate its power and benefit itself. This extraordinary special-interest influence has shaped the current status quo in the state and threatens the state’s solvency.

- **Part III. Job Number One: The New Jersey Education Association's Role in New Jersey's Disastrous Pension and Benefits Crisis.** Again using its money and clout, the NJEA created the broken benefit system we have today. While the NJEA seeks to blame the state, the facts show that the NJEA structured the system to maximize benefits for its members and consistently fought reform efforts. It participated in pension-asset raids and financing schemes that greatly damaged the soundness of the system. It gained for its members premium-free, "Cadillac" health plans. Because it was politically convenient, it chose not to punish politicians for underfunding the state's retiree liabilities, thus contributing to \$202 billion in underfunding that threatens the future of the state. And it recently tried to lock this bankrupt system into the state constitution.
- **Part IV. Talk Is Cheap, but Good Education Costs: The Truth About New Jersey's High Tax Burden.** Using its money and clout, the NJEA has consistently pushed for higher taxes. At the local level, the NJEA consistently pushed for higher education spending and higher property taxes. Once high property taxes became a political problem, it pushed for higher state education spending and higher state taxes. The NJEA was a major force behind the

initiation of New Jersey's first sales and income taxes and continues to push for higher taxes to this day.

- **Part V. New Jersey Is Dying: A Special-Interest-Dominated Status Quo Is Hurting the State's Economy.** High taxes and cost-of-living have hurt the state's economy. The tax system renders the state inhospitable to businesses and uncompetitive with other states—particularly with neighboring New York and Pennsylvania. Consequently, economic and job growth are weak and significantly underperform both the nation and New York and Pennsylvania. Businesses, taxpayers, and most ominously, young adults are emigrating to more favorable states. Reform and economic growth are the only way out of this fiscal hole, but our special-interest-dominated political system allows for neither.

New Jersey citizens and taxpayers must wake up to what has happened in our state and why we are where we are. In the end, the best description of what has occurred is "legal corruption." Our political system has been thoroughly corrupted—so much so that the corruption itself has been made legal. Either we change the system and root out the legal corruption or it will bankrupt the state—along with the future of our children and the next generations of New Jerseyans.

Follow the Money

THE REAL MONEY BEHIND THE NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION'S POLITICAL CLOUT

Part I of the Legal Corruption Series

Mike Lilley

By all conventional measures, the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) has long been the top political spender in the state. Published reports from New Jersey's elections watchdog, the Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC), make clear that when it comes to the money that is spent directly on campaigns or lobbying the legislature, the NJEA is in a class by itself. As ELEC's Executive Director Jeff Brindle concluded, "When you combine NJEA's lobbying and campaign spending, no single interest group has ever come close."³

But these reports cover only a fraction of the NJEA's true political spending.⁴ Much, if not most, of what the NJEA does is political in nature—often cloaked in seemingly benign, nonpolitical garb. Only a deep dive into the functions and activities of the NJEA and its constituent parts reveals the true magnitude of the NJEA's political spending and thus the enormity of its political clout. Taking account of all the NJEA's political activity reveals that its political spending is many times larger than the reported amounts.

With this kind of money, the NJEA's political power dwarfs that of any other special interest—or even political force—in the state. It slants the political playing field sharply in its own favor and leads to outsized influence on politicians and policies. New Jersey's pension crisis and its highest-in-the-nation taxes, to cite two examples, are consequences of the

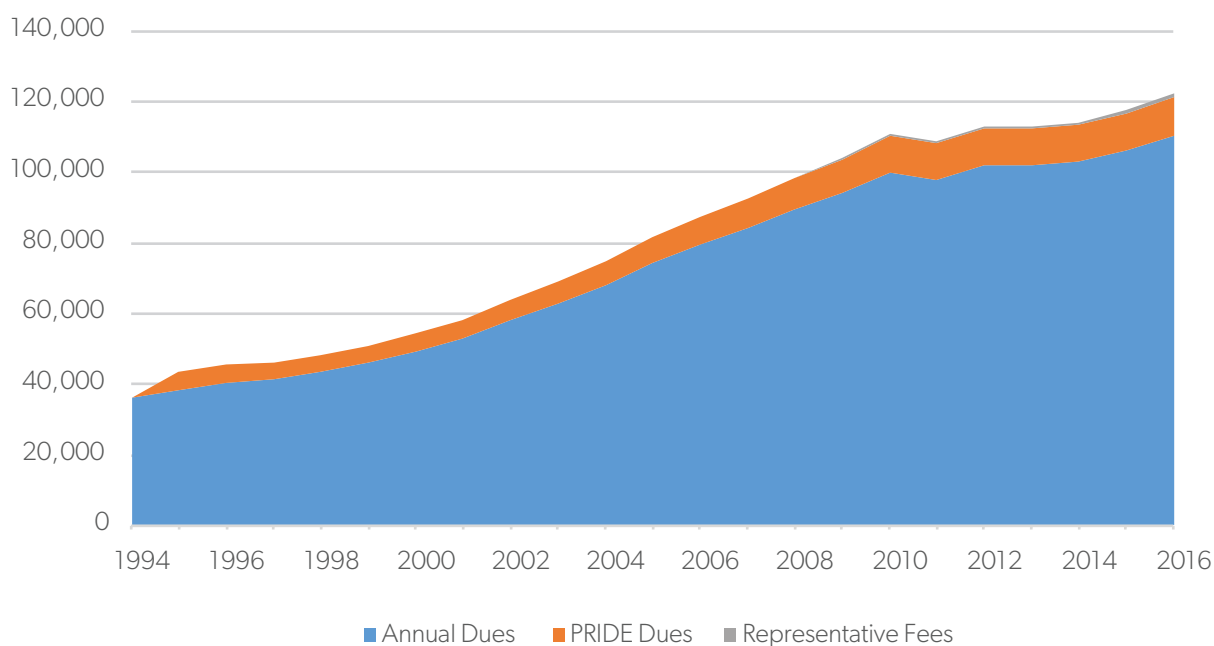
NJEA's dominant political influence. The NJEA's political clout and its real-world consequences for the state will be discussed in detail in Parts II–V of this series.

How the NJEA Gets Its Money

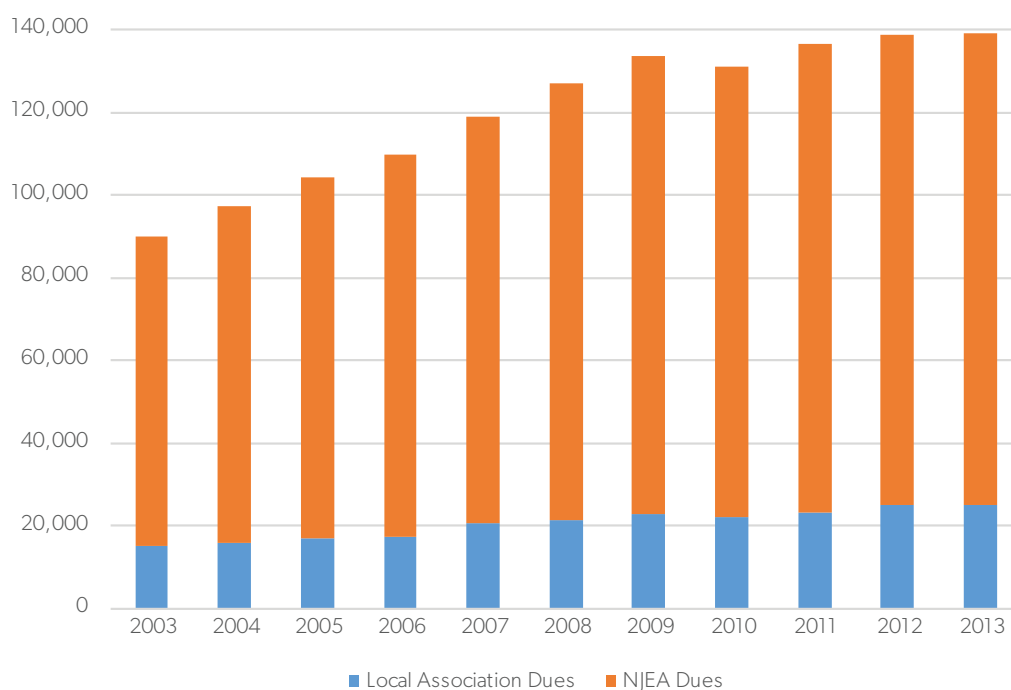
As will be discussed in Part II, the NJEA used its political clout to construct a funding system that funnels taxpayer dollars directly into its coffers. This system has three pillars: exclusive bargaining authority, agency fees, and the automatic withholding of teachers' dues. The legislature established each after prolonged NJEA lobbying.

Per legislation passed in the 1960s, the NJEA established itself as the exclusive representative of teachers⁵ and was empowered to collectively bargain with local school boards. The NJEA also gained "dues check-off": the right to have teachers' dues deducted from their paychecks automatically (after gaining permission from teachers), so that teachers and school boards effectively became pass-throughs for property tax dollars to flow directly to the NJEA.

Finally, in the 1970s, the NJEA gained the right to impose "agency fees," whereby teachers who chose not to join the NJEA still had to pay up to 85 percent of regular dues for the privilege of being represented by the NJEA and its local affiliates in local collective

Figure 1. NJEA Revenue from Dues and Representation Fees, 1994–2016 (in Thousands of Dollars)

Source: Annual audited financial statements published in *NJEA Review*.

Figure 2. The NJEA's Take of Total Teacher Dues, 2003–13 (in Thousands of Dollars)

Source: New Jersey Education Association, IRS Form 990 "Parent" and "Group" filings, 2003–13.

bargaining.⁶ This arrangement effectively coerced teachers to join the NJEA, and predictably, less than 1 percent of teachers have opted not to join the union.⁷ As a result, the NJEA has benefited from the automatic, annual flow of property tax dollars, which from 1994 to 2016 totaled \$1.85 billion and reached \$121 million in 2016 (Figure 1).

Having guaranteed this annual flow of tax dollars, the NJEA then keeps the lion's share for itself to use as it sees fit. From its inception, the NJEA has required affiliates to collect "unified" dues so that the dues for the local associations, the NJEA, and the NJEA's national parent, the National Education Association (NEA), are withheld from teachers' paychecks at the local school district level. The NJEA has used this system to concentrate the money and the resulting political clout in its own hands, with 83 percent of collected dues going to the NJEA and only 17 percent to local associations.⁸ Figure 2 depicts the stark reality that almost five times more teacher dues are going to fund the NJEA and its largely political activities than the local associations and their activities.

This legislative regime and dues structure has allowed the NJEA to amass hundreds of millions of dollars—and the resulting political clout—with local school boards, teachers, and local associations acting as mere pass-throughs. In this way, the NJEA has been able to siphon tax dollars directly into its treasury and use the money to dominate New Jersey politics in the service of its own agenda.

Reported Political Spending

ELEC regularly publishes reports detailing overt political spending. As the data show, the NJEA is by far the largest political spender at both the state and local school district level.

State-Level Political Spending. For decades, the NJEA has been widely recognized as the biggest political spender in the state. In the 1980s, it was "the highest spending political action committee."⁹ The same was true in the 1990s: "The leading special interest PAC donor during much of this decade has been the

New Jersey Education Association, and this year is no exception."¹⁰

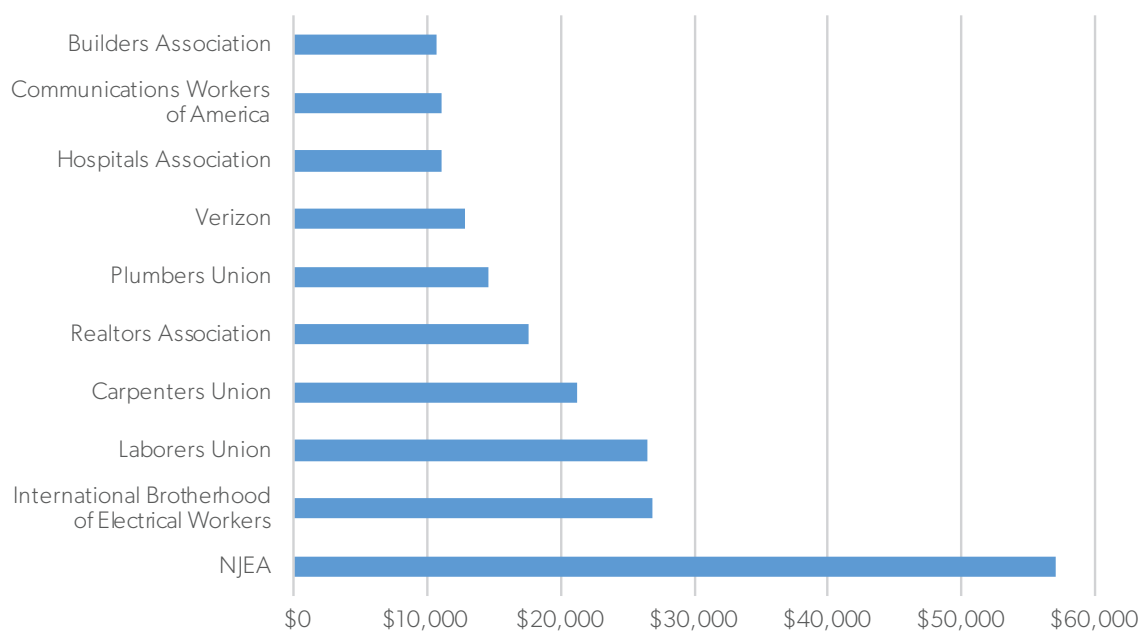
What was true then is even more true now. A 2014 ELEC report revealed that from 1999 to 2013, the NJEA spent \$57 million, more than twice the amount of the next-highest spender (Figure 3). The NJEA's direct campaign contributions made up \$16.7 million, lobbying (including state-level grassroots lobbying and issue advocacy) was \$24.8 million, and independent expenditures were \$15.6 million. During this 15-year period, NJEA spent almost one of every five political dollars in the state.

For good measure, the NJEA also set the single-year record for spending in 2013, with \$19.5 million spent.¹¹ As Brindle noted: "This is unprecedented. . . . NJEA spent 16 times more total on lobbying and elections combined in 2013 than it did 10 years earlier."¹²

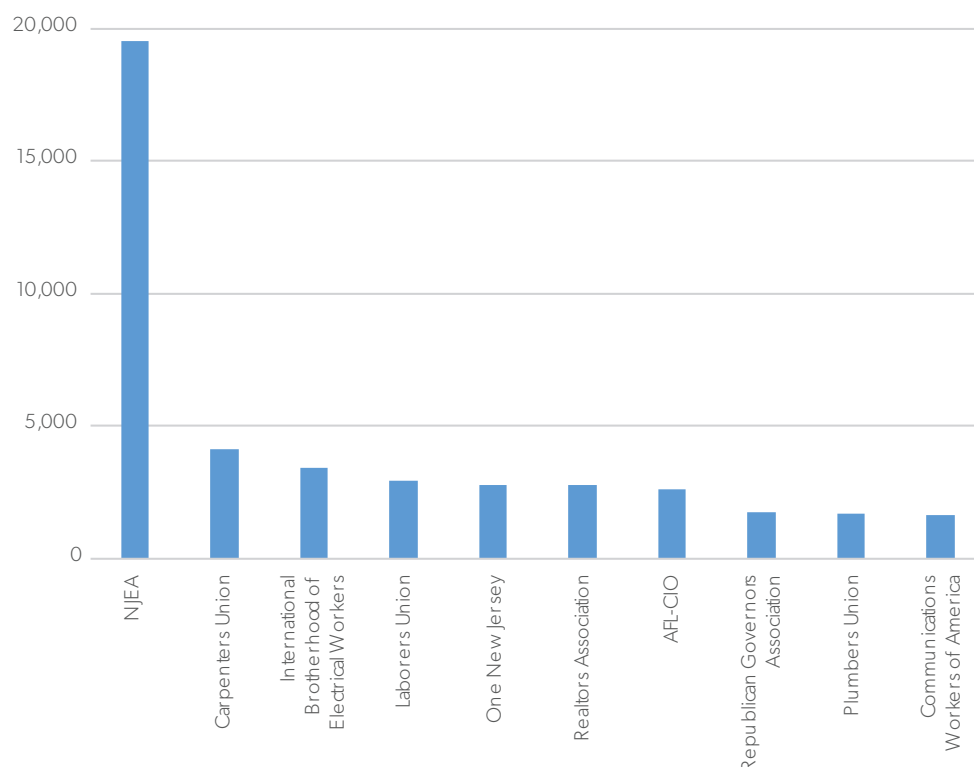
The year 2013 illustrates the NJEA's dominance of the current political landscape, in which independent expenditures and grassroots issue advocacy have become the favored vehicles for political spending. It was an important year in New Jersey politics, with a full slate of legislative elections and a gubernatorial election. Political spending that year totaled \$55.4 million, and \$19.5 million of that came from the NJEA, a whopping 35 percent of the total. The next-highest spender came in at \$4.1 million, or 7 percent (Figure 4).¹³

According to ELEC, in 2014, a year with no state legislative or gubernatorial races and in which non-education issues dominated the political landscape, the NJEA spent \$1 million, which made it the fourth-highest political spender.¹⁴ In 2015, the NJEA reverted to form with \$15.2 million in political spending and was by far the highest political spender.¹⁵ Thus, for the period 1999–2015, the NJEA spent a total of \$73.3 million. As Brindle said, no other political spender in the state comes close.

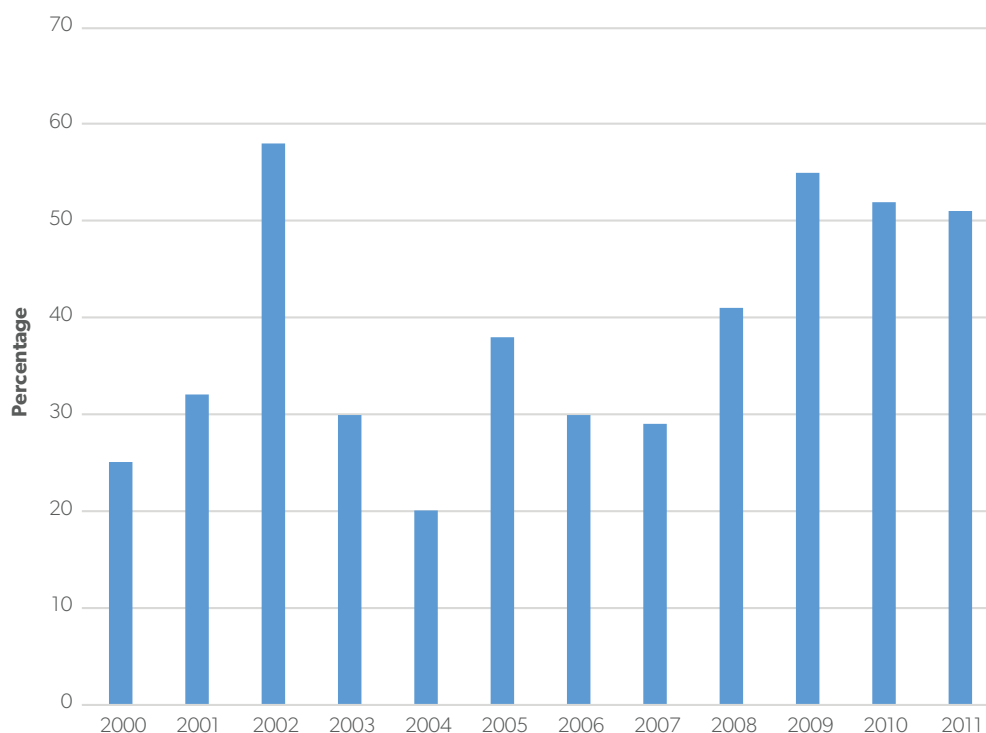
Local School District Political Spending. ELEC also did a study of spending in local school district elections from 2000 to 2009. It found that total spending in such elections had more than doubled from the previous decade. The NJEA was far and away the biggest spender at \$3.7 million, or 39 percent of

Figure 3. Top 10 Political Spenders in New Jersey, 1999–2013 (in Thousands of Dollars)

Source: New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission.

Figure 4. Top 10 Political Spenders, 2013 (in Thousands of Dollars)

Source: New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission.

Figure 5. NJEA School District Election Spending as a Percentage of Total Spending, 2000–11

Source: New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission.

the \$9.6 million total, with a range of 20–58 percent of the total each year (Figure 5).¹⁶ Similarly, ELEC reported that the NJEA’s local spending amounted to 52 percent of the total in 2010 and 51 percent in 2011.¹⁷ This is consistent with an ELEC study of the 1990s, in which the NJEA spent 40 percent of the total amount, by far the highest percentage of any group.¹⁸

ELEC did not break out spending by other groups from 2000 to 2009, but it did break out such spending for 2009, when the NJEA spent \$745,000, a record amount for school board elections. The next-highest spending group, individuals, came in at a mere \$177,000 (Figure 6).¹⁹

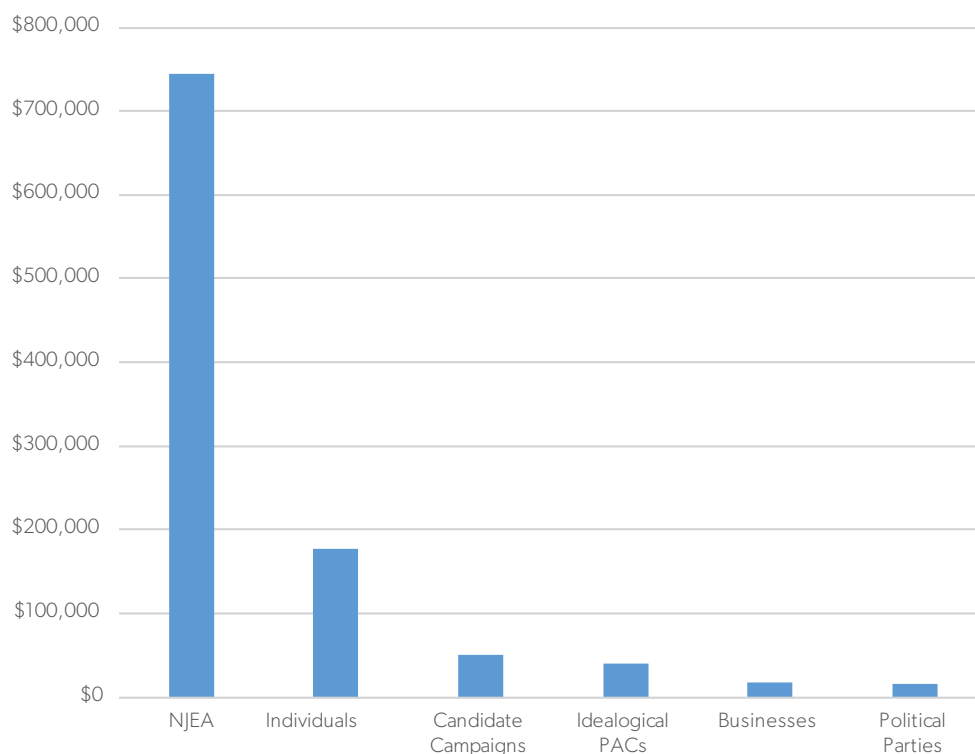
Covert Political Spending

The NJEA’s reported political spending is well-known. What is far less known—if not unknown—is the

extent of the NJEA’s covert political spending. The NJEA has been clever in using election reporting loopholes to disguise such spending, but when added up, this spending dwarfs all the NJEA’s reported political spending.

At the heart of the NJEA political effort is UniServ (short for “United Services”). The NEA created UniServ in 1971 to serve as the professional field staff in every state where the NEA has an affiliate (such as the NJEA in New Jersey).

Jointly funded by the NEA and the NJEA, UniServ representatives control the flow of NEA and NJEA resources, assist local associations in their operations, and ensure that NEA and NJEA policy objectives are transmitted down to the local level. Importantly, UniServ is essential to accomplishing the NEA and NJEA political mission by serving as the political operatives who organize, mobilize, and direct the legions of union foot soldiers.

Figure 6. Top Spenders in Local School District Elections, 2009

Source: New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission.

UniServ in New Jersey. In New Jersey, the NJEA describes UniServ as the “cornerstone” of the NJEA’s services to its members—that is, UniServ is the vehicle through which the NJEA connects with hundreds of local affiliates. As will be discussed later, now that the NJEA has moved from a “service model” to a more overtly political “organizing model,” UniServ is the cornerstone of that model, too. Commensurate with that shift, former UniServ political organizers now dominate the NJEA’s Executive Office.

Currently, UniServ has field representatives working out of 22 regional offices across the state, staffed with 112 dedicated professionals, who are assisted by another 120 professionals from other NJEA divisions at the NJEA’s headquarters. The scope and scale of the UniServ operation permit UniServ representatives to serve as the omnipresent eyes and ears—and muscle—of the NJEA at every local association in the state.

As such, UniServ representatives are involved in virtually every aspect of every local association’s activities.

Not all UniServ activities are political. UniServ representatives also assist with issues such as grievance adjudication, retirement consultation, and local association business management. However, as shown below, a UniServ representative’s job includes a heavy dose of political activity—including mobilizing members for political activities, administering NEA and NJEA resources such as Pride in Public Education (PRIDE) funds, organizing local associations and communities, participating in collective bargaining, and supporting local association and NJEA political goals through communications and public relations activities.

The NJEA does not break out how UniServ funds are spent, but the extent to which the NJEA and its local associations are involved in political activity is

the extent to which UniServ representatives are. And as the NJEA's political field organizer, UniServ will be integral to the NJEA's shift to an "organizing" model from a "services" model. Accordingly, the NJEA's spending on UniServ will be included as political spending with this caveat.

Political Organizing. Because much, if not most, of what the NJEA does is political in nature, UniServ's activities are heavily political. UniServ representatives are the means by which the NJEA mobilizes its army of political "volunteers" who contact legislators, turn out for rallies, staff campaigns, and otherwise provide the NJEA with its most powerful political weapon.

As NJEA President Dennis Testa said: "Our dollar contribution isn't the deciding factor. We provide phone banks and phone calls and people who are willing to go door-to-door across the state."²⁰ Leo Troy, professor of economics at Rutgers University–Newark, said that the NJEA's "political power is enormous not only because they contribute a lot of cash, but more important is the in-kind contributions, the free labor from the staff of the unions and the members of the unions."²¹

When it comes to these political operations, which are the muscle behind the NJEA's political power in the state, UniServ representatives are the political organizers and enforcers who ensure that the NJEA's policy priorities are executed at the local level. A classic example of this is when the NJEA uses a big issue of the day as an organizing tool to create political momentum to achieve or block a given policy, a common tactic that the NEA also uses.

Mobilizing Local Associations for State-Level Priorities. As part of a recent NJEA campaign to delegitimize New Jersey's new standardized tests (PARCC) and impede the implementation of a new teacher evaluation system (AchieveNJ), the NJEA created a playbook on best practices for organizing local associations and communities.

The playbook, titled "Navigating AchieveNJ: An Organizing Playbook," contains a message to the political pros who will execute the policy down at the local level: "Note to UniServ field reps: This is a

template created by the AchieveNJ Organizing Committee that may be used to organize locals around evaluation." The stated goals of the campaign are to (1) organize teachers and (2) organize parents so that they are "empowered to take action to delay or even stop AchieveNJ and PARCC," which are decidedly political goals. The NJEA provides best practice guides, brochures, and infographics to be used in organizing efforts, as well as a guide to hosting outreach events with parents.²²

Similarly, in 2005, as part of a successful effort to defeat a Constitutional Convention, the NJEA mounted a statewide organizing effort: "From Sussex to Cape May, local associations worked with their UniServ field representatives to create an organizing plan that fit their communities."²³ Later, in 2010, in the midst of another political campaign to fight Governor Chris Christie, UniServ directed local associations and members to action: "Legislative alerts [with talking points and to-do lists] will be sent . . . to local presidents from their UniServ field reps."²⁴

Often working with the NJEA's government relations division, UniServ field offices routinely send out messages to local association presidents to have them get their members to public rallies for the various NJEA political priorities of the day, such as pension protection or education funding in the budget. Presidents are also urged to get their members to rallies for allied labor organizations such as the Communications Workers of America (CWA). Often, UniServ messages take the form of outright directives to local presidents.

A sampling of the message traffic from UniServ Regions 3/4 (in Camden County) to local association presidents from 2006 to 2011 reveals the constant drumbeat of political action:²⁵

- June 2, 2006: "We need a large turnout of NJEA members" at the Public Employee Rally at the New Jersey State House to save the pension contribution.²⁶
- August 1, 2006: UniServ thanks 15 members for volunteering for the Summer Organizing Campaign.²⁷

- September 26, 2006: “We need to recruit members to attend” the Joint Legislative Hearing on Constitutional Reform of property taxes. RSVP to UniServ.²⁸
- October 4, 2006: “We need to recruit 125–150 members to fill the auditorium” for the public hearing of the Joint Legislative Committee on Public School Funding Reform.²⁹
- November 7, 2006: UniServ thanks local presidents for organizing their members “in record numbers” and reminds them to continue their efforts: “This is just the beginning of some much needed grassroots organizing.”³⁰
- April 27, 2007: UniServ reminds local presidents to “Organize Now for PAC” as part of an ongoing campaign by local presidents and Legislative Action Teams (LAT) to increase PAC donations. UniServ cracks the whip: “Trenton [the NJEA headquarters] indicates that we have only increased our PAC contributors by three new contributing members.” The UniServ representatives “strongly urge” local presidents to do better and direct them to contact UniServ with a status update.³¹
- November 15, 2007: UniServ urges local presidents to have members call their congressional delegation over the veto of a federal education bill.³²
- June 6, 2008: UniServ urges local presidents to get members to an anti-pension-reform rally in Trenton and to approach superintendents to get releases for teachers to attend the rally. Call UniServ for help if needed.³³
- November 13, 2008: UniServ also acts as political eyes and ears for the NJEA. The regional office urges local associations to contact UniServ if they have been approached by the administration regarding district consolidation.³⁴
- November 26, 2008: With an eye toward compliance with the recent Paid Family Leave Act, UniServ advises all local leaders to be “alert” for any school board activity related to family leave, which should be reported to the UniServ office before a given deadline.³⁵
- May 14, 2009: UniServ tells local presidents to get at least four members to attend a Camden County Association rally and have them wear union T-shirts.³⁶
- September 15, 2009: “We must get our members involved in the re-election of Governor [Jon] Corzine. . . . It is imperative that you and your LAT team attend” the county LAT meeting.³⁷
- September 24, 2009: UniServ invited local presidents to a UniServ campaign party for Jon Corzine.³⁸
- November 17, 2009: UniServ reminds local presidents that attendance at NJEA-sponsored organizing workshops must be set up through UniServ representatives and that PRIDE reimbursement bills must also go through UniServ.³⁹
- February 23, 2010: UniServ urges all members to contact their legislators to oppose bills reforming pensions and benefits. Lobby days in Trenton are planned on March 8, 11, and 15, and local presidents are told to contact UniServ with their lists of attendees.⁴⁰
- March 10, 2010: UniServ issues a directive to local presidents to attend an urgent meeting for all local presidents statewide and to contact their legislators and put activities in place for members to contact their legislators regarding collective bargaining rights. UniServ representatives “will be contacting each local president at the end of the week for a report as to what was done regarding the bulleted directives. Presidents who fail to respond to our consultants will receive a personal phone call from

their UniServ office as to why an association would fail to carry out these directives.”⁴¹

- April 8, 2010: UniServ asks local presidents to get their members and their LAT committee to attend a CWA rally.⁴²
- April 15, 2010: A forwarded message from NJEA President Barbara Keshishian and Executive Director Vince Giordano urges local presidents to organize members to attend a “Citizens Rally for a Just Budget” in Trenton.⁴³
- October 7, 2010: “Please bring your family and friends and rally for our members at Lawnside” (a local district where members were working without a contract). RSVP to UniServ.⁴⁴
- October 26, 2010: After the UniServ representatives returned from an all-hands meeting at the NJEA headquarters, local presidents are directed to attend an “important meeting” regarding tenure reform.⁴⁵
- November 11, 2010: UniServ invites local presidents to an NJEA workshop titled “Organizing the Offense: Fighting Privatization.” Local presidents are encouraged to “bring and build your team of organizers to fight against the privatization of your members’ jobs.” RSVP to UniServ.⁴⁶
- January 13, 2011: UniServ issues a legislative alert for local presidents to have members contact New Jersey Senator James Beach regarding a voucher bill.⁴⁷
- January 19, 2011: UniServ notifies local presidents that the regional office received a message from the NJEA government relations department that Sen. Beach needs to be contacted regarding a voucher bill. Local presidents are urged to use their communications system to get their members to contact Sen. Beach.⁴⁸

- January 24, 2012: After school districts are permitted to move elections to November, local presidents are asked to find out what their school boards are thinking and get back to the UniServ office with any information.⁴⁹

Organizing Local School District Activities. At the district level, UniServ representatives mobilize members and organize the local community to support union-friendly candidates for school board seats and pass school budgets that have been collectively bargained. By ensuring a friendly school board, local associations essentially “elect their own bosses,” who will sit across the table from the union during contract negotiations.

There are several elements to this role. First, UniServ representatives are professional political organizers. They provide direct assistance to local associations by devising get-out-the-vote strategies for local election campaigns.

An example of this is a front-page article in the January 2006 *NJEA Reporter* titled “Now Is the Time to Prepare for School Board and Budget Elections.” The article notes that such elections are low-turnout affairs that are decided by a small number of votes. It adds: “With a targeted campaign, local associations can have a positive influence on the outcome. NJEA offers county-wide training sessions to local and county associations as they plan for elections. For help and advice with your campaign, contact your UniServ office.”⁵⁰

UniServ representatives also advise local associations on organizing their communities to help pass local school budgets. The centerpiece of this effort is the NJEA’s PRIDE campaign, which includes media advertising campaigns and community outreach efforts that seek to foster a positive image of public schools in the local community. The goal is to gain support for passing school district budgets and mobilize voters to back the NJEA’s state-level political initiatives.

PRIDE. PRIDE was created in 1994 as a political solution to a political problem. It is essentially an NJEA-directed, district-level political organizing and public relations campaign administered by UniServ.

At the time, the NJEA felt “besieged” and “under attack” as a result of a public battle with Governor Christine Whitman over her tax-cut proposals. Almost 50 percent of district school budgets had been defeated by fed-up property taxpayers.⁵¹

In response, NJEA President Dennis Testa came up with the idea of PRIDE as “a public relations campaign” that focused on “improving the public’s perception of New Jersey’s public schools.” Testa had also promised to turn lawmakers against Whitman’s tax cuts “through a campaign of grass-roots lobbying.”⁵² PRIDE served both purposes well.

Building on Testa’s idea, the NJEA Delegate Assembly approved the PRIDE campaign with the official goals:

1. “To pass more school budgets and elect pro-education school board members.
2. To improve the outcome of collective bargaining by making maintenance and improvement of quality schools the first school board priority rather than control the tax rate.
3. To increase positive legislative initiatives concerning public schools and minimize negative proposals.
4. To create an enlarged cadre of leaders and members actively involved in continuing a program of community organizing.”⁵³

Every one of these goals was political and part of the NJEA’s solution to its political problems.

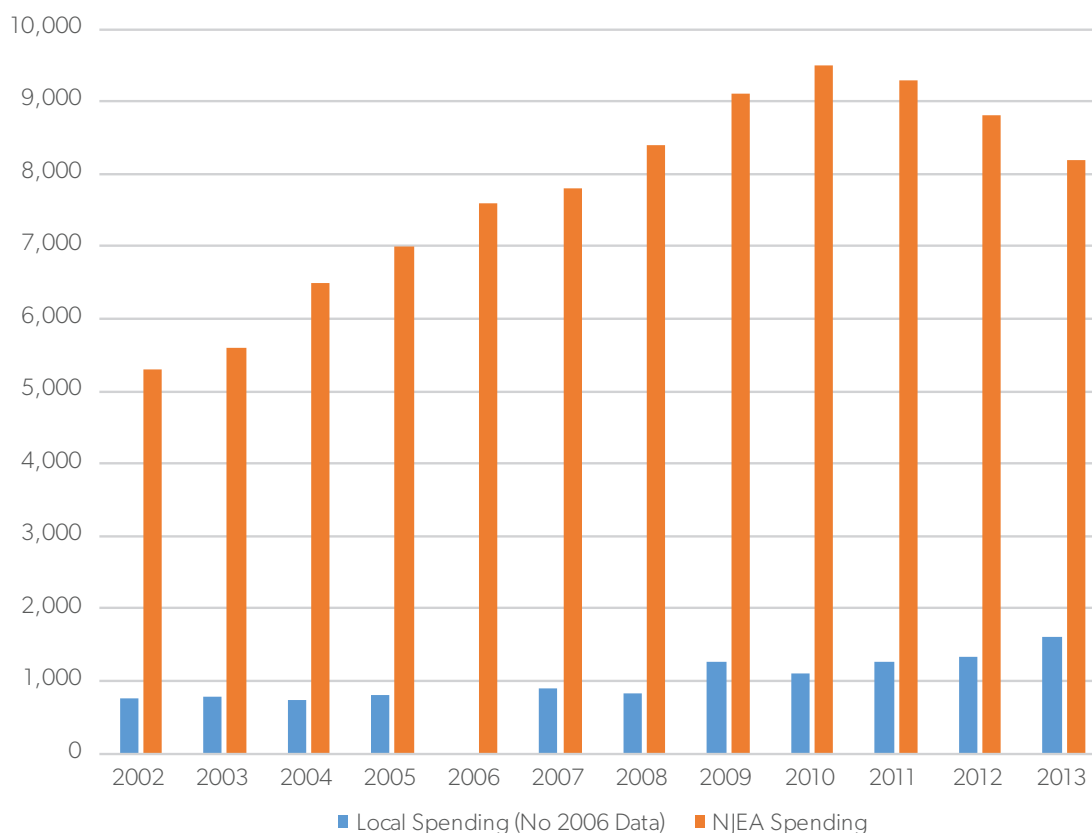
So important was the political mission behind PRIDE that the NJEA’s Delegate Assembly approved a special dues assessment of \$10 million to fund a “massive television and radio advertising budget” and local association initiatives.⁵⁴ To put that amount into perspective, in 1994, the NJEA collected \$36 million in regular membership dues. A well-funded PRIDE local organizing effort fit in well with the NJEA’s statewide campaign to alter New Jersey’s political landscape more to its liking.

And it worked—at least initially. PRIDE provided the “assistance many locals have needed to work effectively for passage of the school budget” so that for the six years after PRIDE was created, school district budget approvals shot up to 77 percent from about 60 percent before PRIDE.⁵⁵ Testa also claimed that “more and more building members are involved in the political process.”⁵⁶

PRIDE Is Largely Political Issue Advocacy Directed by the State-Level NJEA. The NJEA’s internal monthly magazine, *NJEA Review*, regularly provides pictures of PRIDE events, with lots of smiling kids and parents, so an outside observer might be fooled into thinking that PRIDE funds are primarily used for benign local community outreach events. But the reality is that local associations’ PRIDE spending amounts to only 13 percent of overall PRIDE spending (Figure 7). The state-level NJEA controls 87 percent of PRIDE spending, and the NJEA is not organizing coffee klatches. More than 60 percent of all PRIDE spending goes to media advertising, and local associations are not cutting TV ads.⁵⁷

NJEA’s use of PRIDE-funded media advertisements is part of a broader trend in New Jersey politics, as identified by ELEC’s Jeff Brindle. Brindle believes that the nature of political lobbying has changed from traditional person-to-person lobbying to a predominantly “grassroots, issue advocacy” approach. This type of lobbying uses cable TV, radio, and print advertising, with messaging shaped by political consultants and pollsters, to mobilize the public on behalf of an issue, blurring the lines between lobbying and political campaigns. Groups use “hot button issues,” with new media “connecting people to politics, recruiting supporters, and mobilizing the public.” Brindle identifies the NJEA as a leader of this trend and gets to the heart of the NJEA’s intent: “It helps to have public opinion on your side” in a political fight. As with every other form of political spending, Brindle notes that the NJEA is far outspending other groups in this area.⁵⁸

In agreement with Brindle, the NJEA also recognized the importance of public relations in politics, telling its members: “Government policy, and the public opinion that shapes that policy, affects

Figure 7. PRIDE Money Spent by Local Associations (in Thousands of Dollars)

Source: New Jersey Education Association, IRS Form 990 “Group” filings; and annual audited financial statements published in *NJEA Review*.

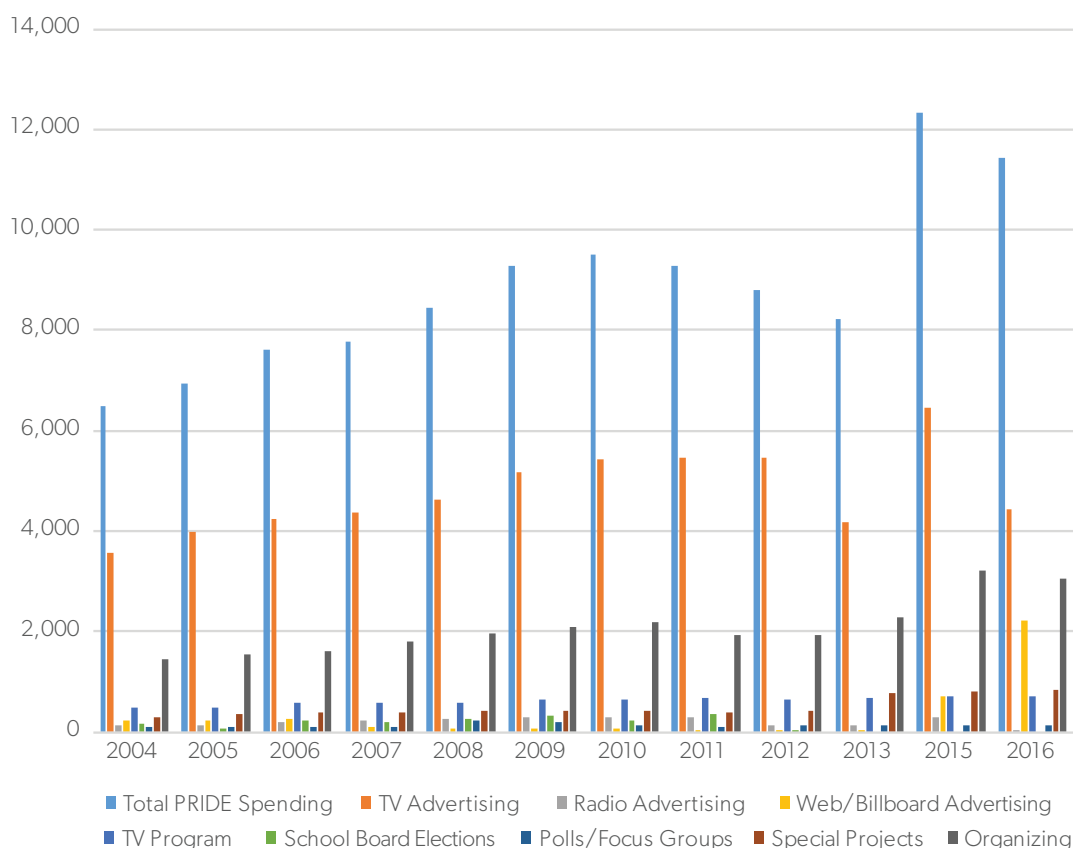
everything from your job security to your health and pension benefits to what happens in your classroom.”⁵⁹ In a political fight, it makes sense to have public opinion on your side.

So while PRIDE’s main purpose was local politics—winning more local school budget elections—it is predominantly an NJEA-directed, state-level issue advocacy and political organizing campaign. Twenty-seven percent of that effort is directly political: money spent on political organizing and school board elections. Sixty percent is mainly spent on television advertising, which is essentially political issue advocacy aimed at getting voters to pass local school budgets and support other state-level political initiatives. Per Brindle, the PRIDE expenditures for polling and focus groups also likely support issue-advocacy

efforts. All told, from 2003 to 2015, almost 90 percent of PRIDE spending was either directly political or issue-advocacy related (Figure 8).⁶⁰

The NJEA’s spending on PRIDE media campaigns certainly fits into Brindle’s definition of grassroots lobbying and issue advocacy. Likewise, the participation of any NJEA personnel—whether from UniServ, the communications division, the government relations division, or the Executive Office—in PRIDE’s issue-advocacy campaigns is also political by Brindle’s definition.⁶¹

The dominance of state-level political issue advocacy through the media was institutionalized in 2001 when the original Pride in Public Education Committee morphed into the Public Relations Committee, which was to advise the NJEA:

Figure 8. PRIDE Spending, 2003–15 (in Thousands of Dollars)

Source: NJEA annual budgets published in *NJEA Reporter*.

1. “On NJEA’s statewide advertising and public relations programs;
2. On affiliate organizations’ public relations projects and programs;
3. On programs to improve the external public’s perception of public schools . . . as transmitted by the media. . . ;
4. On media materials and organizational efforts to involve members and affiliate leaders in public relations, community action and NJEA campaigns for reaching parents and other citizens; and

5. On training opportunities for school personnel in public relations and community organizing.”⁶²

Yet the \$25 million reported to ELEC as the NJEA “lobbying” from 1999 to 2013 is but a fraction of the \$107 million spent on PRIDE during that time. As indicated by the NJEA’s 2003–15 budgets, at least 60 percent of this spending—or about \$65 million—likely was on political grassroots lobbying and issue advocacy. The official numbers clearly understate the NJEA’s actual spending.

This discrepancy is probably explained by a New Jersey election law loophole. New Jersey law requires that only state-level lobbying be reported to ELEC. All local lobbying, including all local issue advocacy,

is not required to be reported. To the extent that the NJEA characterizes the PRIDE campaign and UniServ's activities as local, this spending is not reported and thus not reflected in ELEC's political spending numbers for the NJEA. Given that the state-level NJEA controls almost 90 percent of PRIDE expenditures and that the NJEA's goals for PRIDE include influencing state-level legislation, this local versus state-level distinction appears blurred to the point of meaninglessness.

NJEA President Michael Johnson summed up this blurring of lines by describing PRIDE's overlapping local and state-level political purposes:

Everything we do and have is a direct result of legislation or regulations which are driven by the legislature. We're involved in political action because it establishes every parameter that we work within. I would like to heighten our members' awareness of the need for political involvement. The local organizing effort in terms of educating the community about the quality of what's happening in their schools [that is, PRIDE] must continue.⁶³

Per Johnson and as envisioned by Testa when he started PRIDE, PRIDE's "local" spending serves both local and state-level purposes. For example, in 1995 PRIDE local grassroots organizing helped the NJEA get more school budgets passed and fight Whitman's tax cuts. Later, the NJEA likewise linked a statewide "effort to fight privatization with the efforts to pass school budgets."⁶⁴ And in 2004, Testa noted that PRIDE "has definitely improved that public perception of our schools and that has bolstered school budget passage rates while squelching any consideration for vouchers in our state."⁶⁵

True to PRIDE's stated goals, even the 13 percent of PRIDE spending that is actually spent by the local associations is, at its root, political. This is corroborated by the details of the PRIDE grant process. PRIDE grant requests state that to qualify for PRIDE funding, a grantee must include "a description of your plans to 'get-out-the-vote' to help pass your local school budget," and the grant request includes a Get-Out-the-Vote Plan Form for this purpose.⁶⁶

Likewise, the NJEA PRIDE reimbursement form refers to the "NJEA PRIDE Community Organizing Program"—that is, community *political* organizing—and requires that the local association provide all the personal contact information from the PRIDE event so that members can follow up with attendees and "reach out to them during negotiations or privatization attacks" (but only after consulting the UniServ representative). The resulting contact information databases are made available to local associations via UniServ representatives.⁶⁷ Similarly, the "Navigating AchieveNJ" organizing playbook provides instructions for how to construct a "PRIDE database" so that community members who attend PRIDE organizing activities can be contacted for "Get-Out-the-Vote promotions" to pass school budgets.⁶⁸

In PRIDE's two decades of existence, the NJEA has spent \$153 million⁶⁹—or about \$7.3 million per year—and the special dues assessment has now become permanent. PRIDE is a powerful, yet largely unreported, weapon in the NJEA's political arsenal.

PRIDE Is Run Through UniServ. As the NJEA's cadre of political field operators, UniServ representatives play a key role in administering NJEA PRIDE grants to local associations. For example, in the November 2016 *NJEA Review*, in a piece titled "Know. Lead. Act.," members are encouraged to host events with parents and residents in the local community. NJEA PRIDE grants are offered to fund these events, and members are directed to the NJEA website for guidance on how to host an event. UniServ's role is made clear: "Don't forget to reach out to your NJEA UniServ field representative to discuss your ideas."⁷⁰

Similarly, in 2004, NJEA President Edithe Fulton called on members to organize for "pass the budget" campaigns by accessing NJEA resources and staff "who can teach you how to get out the 'yes' votes." Again, UniServ's role is made clear: "Call your UniServ office to secure the help you need to win on April 20."⁷¹

Indeed, UniServ is the conduit through which PRIDE grants pass through the NJEA system. The local association PRIDE chairperson sends a completed PRIDE grant proposal to the regional UniServ

office, which reviews and approves the proposal and then sends it to the NJEA headquarters for final approval. Once the event is held, the local chairperson submits the reimbursement form to the UniServ office, which again reviews and approves it and sends it to the NJEA headquarters for final approval.⁷²

UniServ's political role is also illuminated by its key position in the NJEA's efforts to develop local associations' social media capabilities in support of local election campaigns. Once again, the idea is to use social media to foster relationships and goodwill in the community and thereby build support for local budget elections. To support this effort, the NJEA developed training programs to teach local associations how to leverage social media to communicate directly with members and the community.

The March 2012 *NJEA Reporter* provides a primer on how to use social media to help organize the local community to pass school budgets:

Work backwards from the date of the election and set deadlines for campaign goals. Start collecting parent information, such as cell phone numbers and email addresses. . . . Plan on promoting the Facebook site no less than eight weeks before the election. . . . Tailor messages around the good work that district staff are already doing and what things the school budget would allow staff to do in the future.⁷³

The same article also makes UniServ's role clear: "Local associations seeking to communicate support for board candidates or budget, bond and other ballot questions should work closely with their UniServ field reps."⁷⁴ Likewise, local associations requesting social media training from the NJEA must go through UniServ representatives.

Tellingly, in the NJEA's 1995 financial statements, \$800,000 of the original PRIDE expenditures were placed into the UniServ headquarters line item, underscoring the key role UniServ plays in administering PRIDE. These were later backed out and placed into a separate PRIDE line item.⁷⁵

Political Organizing: The Highland Park Example. A 2014 case from the Highland Park school

district exemplifies UniServ's political organizing role and the use of PRIDE. After contract negotiations had reached an impasse, the Highland Park Education Association (HPEA) and the NJEA mobilized members and sympathetic residents to pack a Board of Education meeting in which the resulting layoffs were being voted on. The NJEA and the regional UniServ representative played an active role in the campaign. The HPEA used UniServ-administered PRIDE grants to "actively engag[e] the community" and form a new parent-activist group to support the HPEA in its effort to achieve a contract settlement.

Based on the HPEA example, the NJEA provided advice for other associations facing similar challenges: "Work closely with your UniServ field rep. . . . Build alliances with parent and residential groups. Establish a PRIDE committee and apply for NJEA PRIDE grants to enhance your community outreach."⁷⁶ Thus, Highland Park serves as a classic example of political organizing to achieve local political goals, overseen by UniServ and using PRIDE funds.

Collective Bargaining Is Political, Too. Even the assistance UniServ representatives provide to local associations in collective bargaining negotiations is political in nature.

As an initial matter, the negotiation of a contract between elected representatives of the local district (the school board) and public employees is an inherently political exercise. Such contracts determine wages and benefits, as well as other work parameters, which necessarily allocate local tax dollars as part of an overall local district budget. These elected representatives' determinations of the resulting levels of local taxation and spending are political decisions, which have traditionally been subject to local voter approval in the annual local budget elections.

Research shows that public unions such as the NJEA exert significant influence over local public policy and spending through a combination of collective bargaining and traditional political activities, such as lobbying and electing union-friendly candidates. This reality allows "an unelected body, effectively a special interest, to negotiate over the ends of public policy."⁷⁷

To put it another way, no one would question whether a private entity lobbying a state legislator for an allocation of state funds is engaging in political activity. In fact, such a lobbyist would have to report this activity to ELEC. A local teachers association (a private entity) negotiating for higher wages and benefits (an allocation of local funds) is no different. The fact that the local association's monopoly bargaining position and the school board's duty to negotiate in good faith are required by law only enhances the local association's lobbying power. In this context, local associations are effectively "super lobbyists" at the local level.

The NJEA is clear about how it uses collective bargaining as one weapon in its political arsenal. In 1988, as part of an effort to increase teacher salaries, the NJEA declared: "NJEA continues its two-pronged attack to raise members' salaries through local collective bargaining and legislative action."⁷⁸ Legislative action at the state level to achieve the same allocation of public resources is collective bargaining at the local level. Both are political actions to achieve political ends.

Adding some institutional corroboration to this assertion, the NEA's Center for Advocacy houses the departments of government relations, campaigns and elections, and collective bargaining.⁷⁹ Likewise, the NEA's description of the center's activities reveals that "advocacy" means political advocacy at the federal, state, and local levels, which further confirms that the NEA recognizes the inherent political nature of collective bargaining.⁸⁰

Furthermore, the NEA views collective bargaining as a political challenge and seeks to arm its local affiliates with the political tools to succeed. At a 2007 NEA Salary Roundtable, the NEA underscored the political nature of collective bargaining by calling such negotiations "salary campaigns."⁸¹ Participants, including UniServ representatives, provided "field-tested tactics," which basically amount to a political organizing primer:

- Mobilize members with internal communications "buzz";
- Develop good public relations through information about the good work done by school

employees, town hall meetings, polling and focus groups, and various forms of campaign messaging;

- Humanize education employees and educate taxpayers and decision makers about the vital work they do;
- Prepare for negotiations by promoting collective member activity and coordinated local approaches to different employers;
- Find creative ways to push for higher pay, such as distributing salary schedules from districts with higher starting pay (a tactic courtesy of the NJEA); and
- Put salaries in a political context, such as "making it a civil rights, a women's, and a minority issue."⁸²

UniServ's substantial role in local contract negotiations is thus essentially political in nature. And the UniServ professionals are formidable "super lobbyists," indeed. UniServ bolsters local associations at the bargaining table with "specially trained and battle-hardened"⁸³ negotiating and organizing experts, who give the locals advice on strategy and provide extensive research on contracts in nearby towns.

Oftentimes, UniServ representatives help local associations come together to form Coordinated Bargaining Councils under UniServ direction, which share negotiating best practices and develop unified bargaining positions across districts. Having unified bargaining positions benefits the local unions because "contracts established by the most affluent communities end up setting the statewide standard."⁸⁴ Exploiting "inter-district rivalries" to drive higher salaries is a standard tactic developed by the NEA and pushed at the NEA's Salary Roundtable.

The political nature of collective bargaining becomes even more evident when local associations use political organizing to achieve their collective bargaining goals. The NJEA's annual Jim George Conference (named after a UniServ field representative)

includes seminars such as “Political Organizing for Collective Bargaining” to provide members “with ideas for using political organizing to achieve success at the bargaining table.” Another offering is “Using Social Media to Communicate with Members and the Community,” in which participants learn “strategies and best practices for creating a social media plan that helps your local achieve its goals—on the web and at the bargaining table.”⁸⁵

The money the NJEA has spent on UniServ underscores the importance of UniServ’s political activities to the NJEA. From 1995 to 2015, the NJEA spent \$480.8 million on UniServ. That amounts to 31 percent of the NJEA’s total operational expenditures,⁸⁶ which were \$1.5 billion in that time frame, by far the largest expenditure line item.⁸⁷ Adding together UniServ and PRIDE, the combined spending behind these two largely political efforts comes to \$633.8 million, or 42 percent of operational expenses, and more than \$30 million per year.

Move to an “Organizing Model” Means All Politics, All the Time. In the summer of 2016, the NJEA mounted a massive campaign to support the passage of a constitutional amendment to guarantee the funding of teacher pensions. At the center of this effort was the Summer Fellows Program (SFP), a “bold and unprecedented move to organize members” in the fight.

Given the political urgency of the pension amendment fight, the NJEA told 300 SFP participants that the NJEA “is shifting its style of unionism from that existing ‘service model’ to an ‘organizing model.’” The SFP organized and mobilized members and allies as part of a statewide campaign that included phone banks, door knocking, rallies, and lobbying the legislature. As the NJEA described, this new organizing model turned 45,000 members into political activists engaged in “swift, direct member action.”⁸⁸

The SFP now appears to be a permanent program to train a statewide cadre of political organizers in support of the NJEA’s political agenda.⁸⁹ It is unclear whether the NJEA’s spending on the SFP is reported as political spending.

The shift is part of the NJEA’s vision for the future as a political organizing machine: “We need to

take New Jersey back, and we can only do that with engaged, informed, involved members who see NJEA not merely as a service provider, but as an opportunity to organize.” And: “Democracy is about learning the process by which decisions are made and organizing with like-minded people and organizations to shape those decisions.” We do not despair when we lose, “we organize.”⁹⁰ In this new world of all politics, all the time, the NJEA goes so far as to say that for all its educator members, political action is “an unwritten part of the job description.”⁹¹

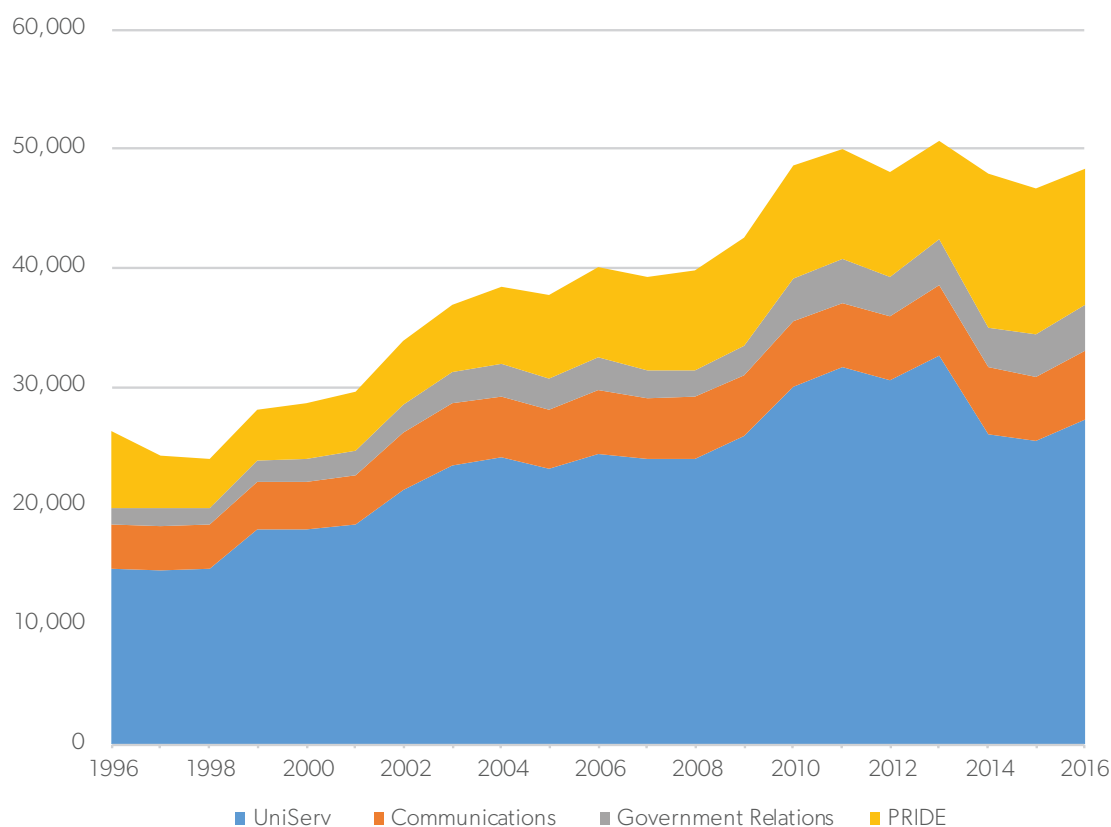
Moreover, the shift to an organizing model does not appear to be a short-term expedient. Until recently, political organizing was the province of UniServ, but since 2013, most of the senior UniServ positions have been moved to the NJEA’s Executive Office. As a result, in the NJEA’s most recent configuration, 7 of 11 professionals in the Executive Office are former UniServ political organizers, and their titles and functions appear to be very much the same. With the addition of three temporary field representatives and one unfilled organizing position, 11 out of 15 Executive Office positions are involved in political organizing. Unsurprisingly, inquiries about PRIDE grants are now routed to two political organizers in the Executive Office.⁹²

The end result is that political organizing infuses the NJEA from top to bottom, from the local associations all the way to the Executive Office. Political organizing now appears to be the NJEA’s core mission. All politics, all the time.

Other Political Spending

In addition to UniServ and PRIDE, the NJEA also spends significant amounts of money on other divisions that support the NJEA’s political efforts. This undoubtedly comprises some or all of the 120 professionals from other divisions who the NJEA describes as assisting UniServ at the NJEA’s headquarters.

Communications. The communications division is responsible for all aspects of the NJEA’s communications efforts, both internal and external. The division

Figure 9. NJEA Covert Political Spending, 1995–2015 (in Thousands of Dollars)

Source: Annual audited financial statements published in *NJEA Review*.

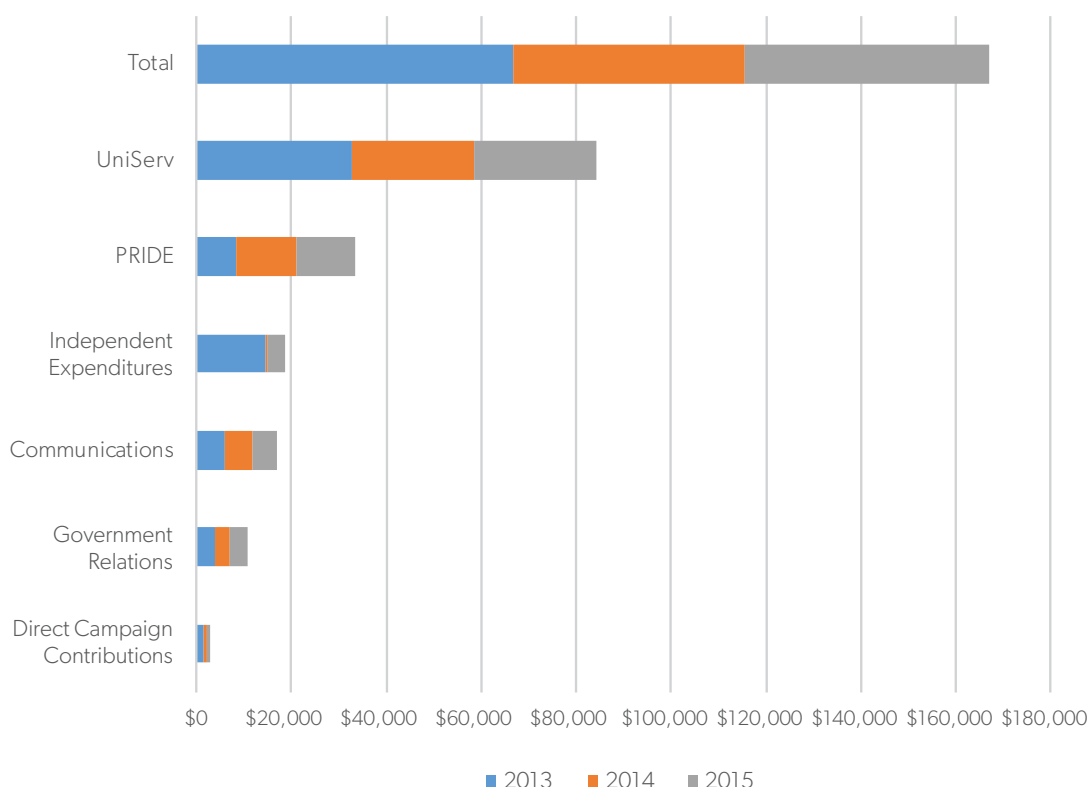
handles all media relations and uses the media to inform NJEA members, the public, and elected officials about the NJEA's objectives. Communications also helps local affiliate leaders use public relations and mass media techniques to fulfill organizational objectives.

From the above description, it is fairly easy to discern the political thread. For example, communications staff are the NJEA personnel who handle the tens of millions of dollars of PRIDE TV ads, which are aimed at winning district budget elections and supporting state-level political initiatives. Communications handles all contact with the media, and the NJEA's political activities are frequently in the news. So any spinning or amplifying of the NJEA's political initiatives in the media would come from communications. Finally, the division helps local associations

with the public relations and media aspects of their own communications efforts, which, as we have seen, are often political in orientation.

Similarly, ELEC requires that any state-level grassroots issue-advocacy expenditures be reported as political lobbying. Communications expenses (e.g., radio and TV ads) are the lion's share of this lobbying, so by ELEC's standards, the communications division's role in these efforts is political.

Interestingly, in the NJEA's 1995 financial statements, \$4.9 million of the original PRIDE expenditures was initially accounted for in the communications division and was later backed out and put into a separate PRIDE line item. That PRIDE political spending was so easily placed into the communications division line item indicates the political nature of the division's activities.⁹³

Figure 10. Total NJEA Political Spending, 2013–15 (in Thousands of Dollars)

Source: New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission; and annual audited financial statements published in *NJEA Review*.

The net result is that the extent to which the NJEA and its local affiliates are engaging in political activity is the extent to which the communications division engages in political activity. From 1995 to 2015, the NJEA spent \$100.9 million on the communications division.⁹⁴

Government Relations. Government relations coordinates all NJEA legislative activities and political campaigns and organizes members for political action. The staff provides training for NJEA members and helps them build relationships with elected officials at all levels of government. They also direct the NJEA's Political Leadership Academy, which provides members with the tools and information they need to run for political office.

As its title suggests, and from the NJEA's description, the government relations division manifestly engages in political activity. From 1995 to 2015, the NJEA spent \$52.8 million on government relations.⁹⁵

Adding together all these weapons in the NJEA's political arsenal—UniServ, PRIDE, communications, and government relations—total NJEA spending on divisions and campaigns involved in political activities from 1995 to 2015 was \$787.5 million, or 51 percent of operational expenditures, and more than \$38 million per year (Figure 9).⁹⁶ Note that this number does not include any Executive Office expenditures, even though a significant number of UniServ's senior political organizers were moved there in 2013.

Total NJEA Political Spending

We can get a sense of the magnitude of the NJEA's political spending by adding up both the reported and covert political expenditures. As ELEC's data reach back to 1999, we can construct a 17-year picture of this spending. Total reported political expenditures for this period came to \$73.3 million.⁹⁷

From 1999 to 2015, the NJEA spent \$687 million on its covert array of political tools—UniServ, PRIDE, and the communications and government relations divisions. That is 51 percent of the NJEA's total operational expenditures of \$1.34 billion.

Covert and reported spending do overlap some. The state-level lobbying spending reported to ELEC include expenditures for staff and communications, which are likely included in the NJEA's expenses reported for the communications and government relations divisions and the PRIDE campaign. That leaves \$38 million spent on independent expenditures and direct campaign contributions. Adding this to the \$687 million comes to a total of \$725 million spent by the NJEA via its array of political tools, or 54 percent of operational expenditures, and about \$43 million per year. And this still does not account for the thousands of NJEA "volunteers" who have worked on election campaigns during this time.

While the NJEA's political spending from 1999 to 2015 gives a much more accurate reflection of the NJEA's political clout during that time, looking at the NJEA's political spending from 2013 to 2015—the modern era of political campaigns with new media, grassroots issue advocacy, independent expenditures,

and the NJEA's move to an organizing model—tells us about the NJEA of the present. From 2013 to 2015, the NJEA spent \$167 million, or \$56 million per year, and more than half of the NJEA's \$331 million in total operational expenditures (Figure 10). Note the small role of direct campaign contributions, limited as they are by campaign finance laws, and the outsized roles of UniServ and PRIDE, the unlimited drivers of the NJEA's covert political spending.

The real political spending of the modern, all-politics-all-the-time NJEA model: \$56 million a year. That is a more accurate measure of the NJEA's enormous political clout—a clout that allows the NJEA to dominate New Jersey's political landscape and slant the playing field in its favor—as will be discussed in Part II.

Two decades ago, Education Commissioner Leo Klagholz identified the NJEA as "certainly the most powerful force in Trenton—not just in education, the most powerful force period."⁹⁸ Having spent hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on politics since then, the NJEA remains so today. No other political force even comes close.

About the Author

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Notes

1. In accordance with Government Accounting Standards Board statements 67 and 68. Joshua Rauh of the Hoover Institution uses a more conservative discount rate to arrive at an unfunded pension liability of \$161 billion, which when added to retiree health care liabilities of \$67 billion, equals \$227 billion. The Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research estimates unfunded pension liabilities at \$186 billion or \$253 billion with health benefits. This does not include unfunded liabilities of \$41 billion at the local government level. New Jersey Office of Public Finance, “State of New Jersey Debt Report Fiscal Year 2016,” March 10, 2017, 66 and 69.

2. The Pew Charitable Trusts, *Rainy Day Funds and State Credit Ratings*, May 2017, 10–12, http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/assets/2017/05/statesfiscalhealth_creditratingsreport.pdf.

3. John Mooney, “State Teachers Union Shatters Records for Political Spending,” NJ Spotlight, March 7, 2014, <http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/14/03/06/state-teachers-union-shatters-records-for-political-spending/>.

4. This is consistent with research from the *Wall Street Journal*, which indicated that at the federal level unions spend four times more on political activities than reported to the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Such spending includes mobilizing members to vote and supporting political activities. As described by a former FEC official, “We have always known that much of [unions’] influence comes from political mobilization, but we have never been able to put a number on it.” Tom McGinty and Brody Mullins, “Political Spending by Unions Far Exceeds Direct Donations,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 10, 2012, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304782404577488584031850026>.

5. “Teachers” is used here to describe all the various education personnel that are represented by the NJEA, including 125,000 teachers, 49,000 education support personnel, and 28,000 retired educators. New Jersey Education Association, “Fact Sheet.” <https://www.njea.org/about/press-room/>.

6. Dues check-off and agency fees also represent a substantial taxpayer-funded subsidy to the NJEA. First, local districts are providing the services necessary to administer the dues withholding for free. More importantly, most professional organizations must devote substantial resources to recruiting members and raising funds. Absent withholding and agency fees, the NJEA would have to do the same. For a large organization with 200,000 members, this is a subsidy worth tens of millions of dollars. As Patrick Colligan, president of the New Jersey State Policemen’s Benevolent Association, acknowledged, if unions were to lose agency fees, “they’ll have to market themselves to potential members.” Samantha Marcus, “N.J. Public Unions Defend Mandatory Dues Challenged in U.S. Supreme Court,” NJ Advance Media, January 11, 2016, http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/01/nj_public_unions_defend_mandatory_dues_amid_scutus.html.

7. The NJEA indicates that there are 2,041 nonmembers paying agency fees out of a base of more than 204,000 teachers. Bill Wichert, “Chris Christie Claims Nonmembers of the NJEA Must Pay 85 Percent of Annual Dues,” Politifact, April 5, 2012, <http://www.politifact.com/new-jersey/statements/2012/apr/05/chris-christie/chris-christie-claims-nonmembers-njea-must-pay-85-/>.

8. New Jersey Education Association, IRS Form 990 “Parent” and “Group” filings 2003–13.

9. Peter Kerr, “Campaign Donations Overwhelm Monitoring Agencies in the States,” *New York Times*, December 27, 1988, <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/12/27/nyregion/campaign-donations-overwhelm-monitoring-agencies-in-the-states.html>.

10. Joe Donoghue, “New Jersey Teachers Union Again Leads PACs in Donations,” *Star-Ledger*, October 23, 1999.

11. New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, “News Release,” press release, September 10, 2014, http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/press_releases/pr_2014/pr_09102014.pdf.

12. Mooney, “State Teachers Union Shatters Records for Political Spending.”

13. New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, “News Release,” press release, September 10, 2014, http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/press_releases/pr_2014/pr_09102014.pdf.

14. New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, “News Release,” press release, December 17, 2015, http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/press_releases/pr_2015/pr_12172015.pdf.

15. New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, “News Release,” press release, December 2, 2015, http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/press_releases/pr_2015/pr_12022015.pdf.

nj.us/pdffiles/press_releases/pr_2015/pr_12022015_b.pdf; New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, “News Release,” press release, August 25, 2016, http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/press_releases/pr_2016/pr_08252016.pdf; and New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, “News Release,” press release, March 2, 2017, http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/press_releases/pr_2017/pr_03022017.pdf.

16. The NJEA’s School Elections Committee spent this \$3.7 million in supporting the passage of school budgets. This amount does not include money spent on ads in statewide issue-advocacy campaigns that were aimed at influencing local elections. New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, “School Elections Campaign Financing: An Update,” December 2010, <http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/whitepapers/white21.pdf>; and New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, “News Release,” press release, December 10, 2012, http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/press_releases/pr_2012/pr_12102012.pdf.

17. New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, “News Release,” press release, September 10, 2014, http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/press_releases/pr_2014/pr_09102014.pdf. Local election spending data are relevant only up through 2011. A 2012 state law permitted school districts to move elections to November and forgo budget votes so long as they remained under legislated spending caps. This law resulted in more than 86 percent of school districts doing so, leading to a precipitous drop in school board election spending.

18. New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, “School Board Campaign Financing,” April 2002, 28, <http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/whitepapers/white15.pdf>.

19. New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission, “School Elections Campaign Financing: An Update,” December 2010, 9, <http://www.elec.state.nj.us/pdffiles/whitepapers/white21.pdf>.

20. Neil Reisner “Political Donations Target Status Quo,” *Record*, December 31, 1995.

21. Herb Jackson, “Unions a Force in NJ Politics Give a Big Boost to Democrats,” *Record*, September 3, 2001.

22. New Jersey Education Association, “Organizing Around Evaluation,” www.njea.org/achieve/njorganizing.

23. New Jersey Education Association, “NJEA Succeeds in Aggressive Organizing Plan,” *NJEA Reporter* 49, no. 1 (September 2005): 7.

24. New Jersey Education Association, “Visit Your Member Action Center,” *NJEA Reporter* 54, no. 2 (October 2010): 9.

25. Each message comes from the NJEA-UniServ-Regions 3/4 blog. New Jersey Education Association, “NJEA-UniServ-Regions 3/4,” njeauniserv3.blogspot.com.

26. UniServ, “Public Employee Rally—June 19, 2006,” June 2, 2006, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2006/06/public-employee-rally-june-19-2006.html>.

27. UniServ, “Summer Organizing Campaign,” August 1, 2006, http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2006/08/summer-organizing-campaign_01.html.

28. UniServ, “Constitutional Reform and Citizen’s Property Tax Convention,” September 26, 2006, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2006/09/constitutional-reform-and-citizens.html>.

29. UniServ, “Public Hearing—Tuesday, October 10th,” October 4, 2006, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2006/10/public-hearing-tuesday-october-10th.html>.

30. UniServ, “Many Thanks from UniServ!!!,” November 7, 2006, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2006/11/many-thanks-from-uniserv.html>.

31. UniServ, “Organize Now for PAC,” April 27, 2007, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2007/04/organize-now-for-pac.html>.

32. UniServ, “Override of Education Budget Vote,” November 15, 2007, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2007/11/override-of-education-budget-vote.html>.

33. UniServ, “Your Help Urgently Needed!,” June 6, 2008, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2008/06/your-help-urgently-needed.html>.

34. UniServ, “Regionalization and Consolidation Alert,” November 13, 2008, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2008/11/regionalization-and-consolidation-alert.html>.

35. UniServ, “Paid Family Leave Act,” November 26, 2008, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2008/11/paid-family-leave-act.html>.

36. UniServ, “Camden County Rally—May 21,” May 14, 2009, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2009/05/camden-county-rally-may-21.html>.

37. UniServ, “Welcome Back! Ready for Action!,” September 15, 2009, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2009/09/welcome-back-ready-for-action.html>.
38. UniServ, “UniServ Campaign Party!!!,” September 24, 2009, <http://njeauniserv3.blogspot.com/2009/09/uniserv-campaign-party.html>.
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