

UNION BOSSES VS. MAGA

“IRRECONCILABLY HOSTILE TO REPUBLICANS”



October 2025

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Summary

President Donald Trump has reshaped the Republican Party into a champion of the working class, earning strong support from union households across the country. Yet union bosses and leaders, even those who claim to support the President, continue to oppose the administration and Republicans, funneling resources into partisan efforts that undermine the very workers they claim to represent.

This report exposes the growing disconnect between union leadership and the rank-and-file members they claim to represent. It reveals how union bosses are aggressively opposing President Trump’s agenda—even as they attempt to position themselves as allies.

Key Points:

- **Union leaders across the spectrum are actively working against the President's agenda**, despite strong support for Trump among their members in key states like Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin.
- **Millions in union dues are being weaponized against the President and Republicans**, with almost 90% of political contributions funding Democratic campaigns and resistance efforts—including significant spending to support President Trump’s 2024 opponents, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.
- **Union bosses are funding officials driving “lawfare” against the administration**, backing 45 lawsuits as of October 2025 and bankrolling those who sought to jail the President, including more than \$100,000 in contributions to New York Attorney General Letitia James.
- **Labor leaders oppose core pro-worker policies**, including tax relief, immigration enforcement, and government reform—policies that directly benefit their members.
- **Union rhetoric is steeped in class warfare**, but their actions serve elite interests and Democratic power structures, not the working class.

What follows is a deep investigation into how bosses from both public-sector unions and traditional hard-hat unions are leading the charge to oppose President Trump’s agenda while simultaneously attempting to curry favor.

The contradiction is glaring, and the consequences are real.

Overview

1. **Major labor unions are “irreconcilably hostile to Republicans,”** warns Vice President J.D. Vance. This hostility persists even as Donald Trump has reshaped the GOP into a pro-worker party, earning support from many rank-and-file union members and other forgotten Americans of the working class – while union bosses actively attack core pillars of the Trump agenda.

- Within hours of Trump’s re-election, union leaders launched a scorched-earth campaign – driven by incendiary rhetoric, class warfare themes, and distortions of the administration’s record – that escalated sharply after his inauguration.
2. **Union leadership has specifically targeted the President’s leading priorities**, largely siding against the will of the people and their own membership and reflexively employing hyperbolic assertions again couched in the language of class warfare. Unions have opposed:
 - Reforming and rightsizing government;
 - Pro-working family tax, economic, and energy policies; and,
 - Immigration enforcement.
 3. **Union resistance to the Trump agenda has gone far beyond rhetoric**, encompassing a very large toolkit of actions both before and since his election, including:
 - Systematic abuse of the legal system through forum-shopped lawsuits with the goal of obtaining nationwide injunctions.
 - Training, mobilization, and activation of union membership in astroturf and resistance activities nationwide, including the organization of and participation in protests and other activities that involved outright interference with law enforcement.
 - But perhaps most powerful, hundreds of millions of dollars in political contributions and in-kind contributions massively favoring the Democratic Party and candidates – including all-in support for the president’s 2024 opponent and donations to politicians who have led lawfare and resistance efforts.

Analysis

1. **Republicans under President Donald Trump have positioned the GOP as a pro-worker party.** The president has carefully triangulated between outreach to union members and other forgotten Americans of the working class.
 - President Donald Trump’s Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement in the Republican Party has focused on providing a voice for the forgotten men and women of the working class, and the president’s own instincts have involved triangulating between appeals to and advocacy for union and non-college-educated voters.
 - *Politico* has described the president’s “grip on the union rank-and-file.”¹ President Trump gave a speaking slot to Teamsters President Sean O’Brien at the Republican National Convention.
 - It’s worth noting neither O’Brien nor the Teamsters union officially endorsed Trump: an apparent case of union leaders chasing the rank and file as 58% of Teamsters surveyed supported Trump.²
 - Moreover, the Teamsters Retirees organization and Teamsters Black Caucus, along with 19 state and regional joint councils and locals, openly endorsed Kamala Harris with attacks on the Republican including:

¹ <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-nightly/2024/10/22/trumps-grip-on-the-union-rank-and-file-00184958>

² <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/09/18/teamsters-favor-trump-harris-endorsement-00179879>

- “Our people and our citizens in Michigan can see through all the rhetoric and lies.” Kevin Moore, Michigan Teamsters President ³
- “Any labor leader thinking that Donald Trump is the candidate of choice should turn their union card in.” James Curbeam, Black Caucus ⁴
- ““We experienced four years under Donald Trump... (and) his anti-union appointees and policies.” Pascale Gianni, Teamsters Joint Council 25 (IL/IN) ⁵

Vice President J.D. Vance, for his part, appeared at a UAW picket line as a U.S. Senator and has termed workers’ struggle to afford “a nice life” a “failure of Washington.” ⁶

Yet according to an interviewer Sohrab Ahmari, Vance has in the past balanced these expressions of sympathy with workers with the caution that the existing labor movement is *“irreconcilably hostile to Republicans.”* ⁷ And the vice president was proved right when union leaders launched a scorched-earth campaign within hours of President Trump’s re-election, driven by incendiary rhetoric, class warfare themes, and distortions of the administration’s record — a campaign that escalated sharply after his inauguration.

- High-profile union leaders made clear in responding to the election results that their stance toward the administration would not be rapprochement but unremitting hostility and resistance.
 - AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler lamented “a blow for every worker who depends on our elected leaders to fight for our jobs, our unions and our contracts.” ⁸
 - Service Employees International Union (SEIU) president April Verrett insisted, “We will not allow anyone to take away our fundamental rights and freedoms...”
 - and UAW President Shawn Fain blustered, “Will our government stand with the working class, or keep doing the bidding of the billionaires?”
- But the rhetoric intensified immediately upon President Trump’s inauguration, starting with a January 20 statement by Verrett:
 - “As President Trump was sworn in today surrounded by billionaire friends who stand to benefit the most from his Project 2025 agenda, SEIU warned that working people will pay the price for his day one executive actions.... (I)t’s clear that Donald Trump intends to be president for the privileged few and not the many....” ⁹
- Eight days later, responding to a temporary freeze in grants, Verrett generalized that:
 - “Trump’s Project 2025 agenda to enrich billionaires by cutting services for working people is in full swing.” ¹⁰

³ <https://dpo.org/news/councils-representing-one-million-teamsters-endorse-kamala-harris/>

⁴ Id.

⁵ <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2024/09/18/teamsters-will-sit-out-of-presidential-election-but-one-chicago-area-local-endorses-vice-president-kamala-harris/>

⁶ <https://www.wtol.com/article/life/automotive/jeep/sen-vance-rep-kaptur-visit-toledo-uaw-picket-lines/512-bd3d4cc6-505a-482a-9680-e98d7d579010>

⁷ <https://www.newstatesman.com/international-content/2024/07/jd-vance-vice-president-donald-trump-republican-ticket>

⁸ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-2024-election-results>

⁹ <https://www.seiu.org/2024/11/seius-verrett-we-wont-back-down>

¹⁰ <https://www.seiu.org/2025/01/seius-verrett-trumps-order-to-freeze-federal-grants-hurts-working-families>

- The Administration’s first day also saw a first lawsuit, filed by the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) against an executive order reinstating a Schedule/Career class of political appointees. Union leaders strongly signaled that it was a first shot across the bow:
 - Shuler: “President Trump’s attack on federal workers began on his first day in office....”¹¹
 - NTEU president Doreen Greenwald: “a dangerous step backward to a political spoils system...”¹²
 - Lee Saunders, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME): “Putting the job security of non-partisan, dedicated public service workers in the hands of billionaires and anti-union extremists is unacceptable.”¹³ (Saunders’ union filed a separate suit days later.)
- The surprising initial exception to the early throwing down of the gauntlet was UAW President Shawn Fain, who published an op-ed in *The Washington Post* on Jan. 19, indicating his union was ready to “work with Trump”¹⁴ on trade issues including tariffs and trade negotiations.
 - But less than a week later, the UAW was chastising the Administration for “draconian restrictions”¹⁵ at the National Institutes of Health, referring to a government-wide hiring freeze and “unprecedented” pauses on travel and communications specific to HHS explained as allowing a “new team to set up a process for review and prioritization.”
- **In the following weeks and months, union leaders expanded on these early salvos with exaggerated language and inflammatory rhetoric intended to evoke class division** – frequently employing the imagery of “billionaires v. the working class,” leveling charges of authoritarianism and deprivation of freedoms, and distorting the administration’s record. Examples of union bosses singing in unison from this songbook include:
 - **Shuler:**
 - “Authoritarians always start with organized labor...We do not fall in line for autocrats.”¹⁶
 - “... an alarming and dangerous escalation of attacks on our most fundamental freedoms.”¹⁷
 - “President Trump’s...corporate billionaire Cabinet members still have outsized influence....”¹⁸
 - **Verrett:**

¹¹ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-liz-shuler-trumps-attack-federal-workers-has-begun>

¹² <https://www.nteu.org/media-center/news-releases/2025/01/21/skedflawsuit>

¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/21/labor-union-lawsuit-trump-administration>

¹⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2025/01/19/shawn-fain-uaw-trump-trade/>

¹⁵ <https://uaw.org/uaw-statement-on-nih-freezes/>

¹⁶ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-trumps-first-100-days-labor-movement-does-not-fall-line-autocrats>

¹⁷ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-stands-solidarity-unions-challenging-trump-administrations-attack-labor>

¹⁸ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-responds-doge-attacks-key-labor-rights-federal-agency>

- “Donald Trump has shown us that he stands with the Musks, the Zuckerbergs and the Bezos of the world.... But... working people.... are building power by joining together in unions and fighting back to win a brighter future. We won’t back down.”¹⁹
- “...unconstitutional tactic... ripped straight from a well-worn authoritarian playbook”²⁰
- “... this President (is) making it harder for us to put food on the table, pay rent, and take care of our loved ones—all so he can fund tax breaks for billionaires.”²¹
- **Fain:**
 - “Free speech is under attack. Unions are under attack.... (t)he billionaires... want more tax cuts for themselves.... That's not good for... the working-class people in America.”²²
- **Saunders:**
 - “AFSCME ... won’t let billionaires raid our communities without consequence.”²³
 - “...the first 100 days of this billionaire-run administration have been fueled by lies, broken promises, and a relentless assault on working people and unions.”²⁴
- **International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) President Bobby Olvera, Jr.:**
 - “...on Inauguration Day... billionaires like Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg were given front-row seats. Since then, President Trump has appointed the wealthiest cabinet in history...the voices of Main St. families and hometown workers are absent and silenced.”²⁵
- **American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Randi Weingarten:**
 - “The authoritarianism we have warned about is on full, disgusting and disturbing display.”²⁶
 - “...it’s time to put families, not ultra-wealthy donors, first.”²⁷
- **National Education Association (NEA) President Becky Pringle:**

¹⁹ <https://www.seiu.org/2025/01/seius-verrett-trumps-order-to-freeze-federal-grants-hurts-working-families>

²⁰ <https://seiu.org/2025/03/seius-verrett-demands-immediate-release-of-mahmoud-khalil-end-relentless-attack-on-free-speech>

²¹ <https://www.seiu.org/2025/01/seius-verrett-working-people-wont-let-president-trump-silence-us>

²² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/shawn-fain-uaw-face-the-nation/>

²³ <https://www.afge.org/publication/unions-sue-trump-administration-over-move-to-bust-federal-employee-unions/>

²⁴ <https://www.afscme.org/press/releases/2025/afscmes-saunders-a-historic-and-relentless-assault-on-working-people-and-unions-underscore-the-first-100-days-of-this-administration>

²⁵ <https://www.ilwu.org/its-about-policies-not-political-parties-or-politicians/>

²⁶ <https://www.aft.org/press-release/afts-weingarten-assault-sen-alex-padilla>

²⁷ <https://www.aft.org/press-release/aft-launches-multistate-six-figure-ad-buy-targeting-big-ugly-bill>

- “We demand that our elected leaders stand up for what truly matters — protecting critical public services for students and rejecting massive giveaways to billionaires like Elon Musk.”²⁸
 - “...an unprecedented assault...on public education, but also on the fabric of the nation...a coordinated campaign to strip away the very tools that...preserve democracy.”²⁹
 - **Machinists International (IAM) President Brian Bryant:**
 - “The Trump administration’s reckless attempt to eliminate FMCS is yet another attack on working people and our rights....”³⁰
 - **American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) President Everett Kelley:**
 - “...this administration run by unelected billionaires attempted to end unions across nearly the entire federal government.”³¹
 - “This administration’s bullying tactics represent a clear threat ... to every American who values democracy and the freedoms of speech and association. Trump’s threat to unions and working people across America is clear: fall in line or else.”³²
 - **United Steelworkers (USW) President David McCall:**
 - “Workers all over the world have far more in common with each other than they do with the billionaire class, and we cannot allow greedy corporations to drag us into a race to the bottom on wages and working conditions.”³³
2. **Union leadership has specifically targeted the President’s leading priorities**, often siding against the will of the people and their own membership. Their opposition was marked by reflexive, hyperbolic assertions — frequently couched in the language of class warfare.
- **Equally important, these barrages and accompanying campaigns took no-compromise, won’t-back-down aim at priority Administration initiatives** on which leadership is willing to meet pro-union Republicans halfway might especially have considered a conciliatory approach. Unions have opposed:
 - **Reforming and “rightsizing” government:** The full range of President Trump’s efforts to reduce waste and fraud has come under withering, coordinated verbal attack, even though in one survey Americans estimated government wastes 59 cents of every dollar and favors evaluating all spending (Cato).³⁴

²⁸ <https://www.nea.org/about-nea/media-center/press-releases/nea-response-administrations-proposed-skinny-budget>

²⁹ <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/nea-president-representative-assembly-we-must-fight-forward>

³⁰ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-unions-sue-trump-administration-over-cuts-key-labor-relations-agency>

³¹ <https://www.afge.org/media-center/publications/the-government-standard/government-standard-marchapril-2025/presidents-message/>

³² <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/29/us/politics/federal-worker-unions-doge.html?searchResultPosition=2>

³³ <https://usw.org/press-release/united-steelworkers-and-german-igbce-issue-clarion-call-for-a-new-industrial-compact/>

³⁴ <https://www.cato.org/blog/americans-say-federal-govt-wastes-59-cents-dollar>

- **Department of Government Efficiency activities:**
 - “Unions and allies will vigorously fight DOGE’s attempt to put working people at risk through reckless actions that endanger workers and our families.”³⁵ - Shuler on DOGE
 - “...working people will not back down to these attacks on our health and safety from the Trump-Musk Administration...”³⁶ - Verrett on behalf of five unions
- **Establishment of a Schedule Policy/Career to increase accountability of career employees:**
 - “...won’t allow this attack on federal workers without a fight”³⁷ - Shuler
 - “...ready to defend federal employees who chose a career in public service...”³⁸ - Greenwald
 - “.... we’re not going to sit by and take these attacks.”³⁹ - Saunders
- **Removal of certain federal employee collective bargaining rights:**
 - “...union-busting, plain and simple”⁴⁰ “Straight out of Project 2025...”⁴¹ - Shuler
 - “...will not allow these continuous attacks to silence us. We will not back down...”⁴² - Verrett
 - “undermines our federal institutions and invites true waste, fraud and abuse”⁴³ - McCall
- **Plan to downsize and eventually eliminate the Department of Education:**
 - “...a radical plan, ripped from the pages of Project 2025”⁴⁴ - Shuler
 - “...an all-out attack on our nation's future ...”⁴⁵ - Verrett
 - “an illegal overreach of executive power...”⁴⁶ - AFGE Local 252 President Sheria Smith

³⁵ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/unions-expand-suit-block-elon-musk-accessing-private-data-dol-hhs-and-cfpb>

³⁶ <https://www.seiu.org/2025/01/seius-verrett-working-people-wont-let-president-trump-silence-us>

³⁷ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-liz-shuler-trumps-attack-federal-workers-has-begun>

³⁸ <https://www.nteu.org/media-center/news-releases/2025/01/21/skedflawsuit>

³⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/21/labor-union-lawsuit-trump-administration>

⁴⁰ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-responds-president-trump-union-busting-federal-workforce>

⁴¹ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-federal-collective-bargaining-executive-order-very-definition>

⁴² <https://www.seiu.org/2025/01/seius-verrett-working-people-wont-let-president-trump-silence-us>

⁴³ <https://usw.org/press-release/usw-condemns-trump-attack-on-workers-rights/>

⁴⁴ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-responds-executive-order-dismantling-department-education>

⁴⁵ <https://seiu.org/2025/03/seius-verrett-dismantling-the-department-of-education-is-an-all-out-attack-on-our-nations-future>

⁴⁶ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FpeU9QGQIAmt5UR4gPSSz3HSpDCGyJZt/view>

- “See you in court”⁴⁷ - Weingarten
- **National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reductions:**
 - “a gift to corporations that want to slash worker protections to create more profits”⁴⁸ - Shuler
 - “the baseless assault on NIOSH puts workers and their communities in peril...”⁴⁹ - McCall
 - “gutting of critical safety programs by Elon Musk and (Trump) ...reckless action...”⁵⁰ - Bryant
- **Budget/“One Big Beautiful Bill” (OB BB):**
 - “...a massive tax giveaway to giant corporations and the ultra-wealthy on the backs of working people...”⁵¹ “a budget for the billionaires, plain and simple.”⁵² - Shuler
 - “...will rip healthcare from our families to line the pockets of the mega-rich.”⁵³ - Verrett
 - “This so-called reconciliation bill is in fact a big retaliation bill ...”⁵⁴ - Kelley
 - “A better name for this bill is the big, ugly betrayal.”⁵⁵ - Weingarten
 - “will devastate our schools... to finance massive tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy...”⁵⁶ - Pringle
 - “shower billionaires with massive tax breaks at the expense of our communities”⁵⁷ - Saunders

⁴⁷ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2025/03/20/trump-education-department-order-teachers-union-lawsuit/82563728007/>

⁴⁸ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-condemns-gutting-core-worker-health-and-safety-agency>

⁴⁹ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/labor-and-workplace-health-and-safety-groups-sue-restore-programs-national-institute>

⁵⁰ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/labor-and-workplace-health-and-safety-groups-sue-restore-programs-national-institute>

⁵¹ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-calls-congress-reject-budget-resolution-will-hurt-jobs-and-public>

⁵² <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-condemns-house-budget-negotiations-betrayal-working-people>

⁵³ <https://seiu.org/2025/05/seiu-verrett-house-republicans-who-voted-to-rip-healthcare-from-families-will-be-held-accountable>

⁵⁴ <https://www.afge.org/publication/largest-federal-employee-union-urges-senate-to-reject-reconciliation-bill/>

⁵⁵ <https://www.aft.org/press-release/big-ugly-betrayal-afts-weingarten-house-reconciliation-bill>

⁵⁶ <https://www.nea.org/about-nea/media-center/press-releases/nea-reacts-houses-passage-budget-reconciliation-bill>

⁵⁷ <https://www.afscme.org/press/releases/2025/afscmes-saunders-congress-is-charging-ahead-with-a-plan-to-shower-billionaires-with-tax-breaks-at-the-expense-of-our-communities>

- **Pro-working family tax and energy policies:**
 - Bipartisan analyses ⁵⁸ indicate that lower- and middle-income taxpayers will benefit enormously from OBBB tax cuts along with “no tax on tips/overtime/Social Security” provisions. Yet again, labor leaders were in virtual unison that the bill amounted to “tax cuts/breaks for/to billionaires”) - Shuler,⁵⁹ Verrett,⁶⁰ Pringle,⁶¹ Weingarten,⁶² Saunders.⁶³
 - Shuler insisted Trump seeks to “rip away energy jobs” ⁶⁴ and “raise working people’s energy bills...” ⁶⁵
 - And a regional UAW leader slammed the repeal of EV tax credits in favor of “tax cuts for billionaires and corporations,” ⁶⁶ echoing Fain’s previous criticism of the proposal. ⁶⁷ Yet gas prices are down \$0.51 a gallon ⁶⁸ under Trump’s policies – the equivalent of an \$80bn+ tax cut.
- **Immigration:** Although Trump’s immigration policies are delivering for American workers – who, according to the White House, have accounted for all job gains since January ⁶⁹ – labor leaders have opposed his efforts, taken the side of controversial immigrants, and targeted ICE.
 - Shuler:
 - The executive orders Pres. Donald Trump signed amount to an unprecedented attack on immigrant workers and their families that will weaken our economy and our country.... “An immigrant doesn’t stand between you and a good job—a billionaire does.” ⁷⁰

⁵⁸ <https://www.finance.senate.gov/chairmans-news/one-big-beautiful-bill-new-tax-relief-overwhelmingly-benefits-working-class>

⁵⁹ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-how-gop-budget-will-harm-energy-affordability-and-kill-energy-jobs>

⁶⁰ <https://www.seiu.org/2025/01/seius-verrett-working-people-wont-let-president-trump-silence-us>

⁶¹ <https://www.nea.org/about-nea/media-center/press-releases/nea-response-administrations-proposed-skinny-budget>

⁶² <https://www.aft.org/press-release/big-ugly-betrayal-afts-weingarten-house-reconciliation-bill>

⁶³ <https://www.afscme.org/press/releases/2025/afscmes-saunders-congress-is-charging-ahead-with-a-plan-to-shower-billionaires-with-tax-breaks-at-the-expense-of-our-communities>

⁶⁴ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cios-liz-shuler-slams-house-budget-passed-dead-night-another-massive-giveaway>

⁶⁵ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-how-gop-budget-will-harm-energy-affordability-and-kill-energy-jobs>

⁶⁶ <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2025/06/23/tax-credits-that-bring-good-union-jobs-home-to-ohio-and-america-should-be-preserved/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.freep.com/story/money/cars/2024/10/10/uaw-fain-trump-ev-investments/75607463007/>

⁶⁸ <https://www.dailysignal.com/2025/07/18/trump-admin-hails-summer-gas-prices-dropping-4-year-low/>

⁶⁹ <https://x.com/PressSec/status/1940754759784288760>

⁷⁰ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-trumps-unprecedented-attack-immigrant-workers-and-their-families>

- “(T)he Trump administration’s mass deportation agenda has unnecessarily targeted our hard-working immigrant brothers and sisters...”⁷¹
- Williams: “Then there are the immigration raids, and Trump’s sheer lack of wanting to follow the rules and the law. It’s scary.... You’re seeing fascism.”⁷²
- Verrett:
 - “...relentless assault on immigrant communities... This administration’s pattern of using immigrants as political scapegoats to distract from their billionaires’ agenda is clear.”⁷³
 - “We demand the release of all people unjustly detained, and an end to the raids.”⁷⁴
 - “Abducting and detaining Mahmoud Khalil [Columbia student activist tied to Hamas]⁷⁵ is an outrageous assault on free speech, due process, and immigrant communities.... This blatantly unconstitutional tactic is ripped straight from a well-worn authoritarian playbook....”⁷⁶
- Shuler, Williams, Michael Coleman of the Internatl. Assoc. of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART); and Gwen Mills, president of UNITE HERE:
 - “(W)e categorically reject the vicious attacks on immigrant workers like Kilmar Abrego Garcia [*charged with human trafficking, but described in the statement as a ‘brother’ as he was a SMART apprentice*]⁷⁷ being carried out by the Trump administration. These dangerous anti-worker, anti-union tactics have been weaponized as a tool to sow fear and division and to distract from the corporate takeover of our democratic and economic systems.”⁷⁸
- National Teamster's Hispanic Caucus: “(A)t this moment, many of brothers, sisters and siblings who have immigrated to the United States of America live in fear of arrest, deportation, family separation, and/or the loss of a home or job.”⁷⁹

⁷¹ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-demands-immediate-release-seiu-california-president-david-huerta>

⁷² <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2025/05/unions-donald-trump-2026-election-kilmar-abrego-garcia.html>

⁷³ <https://www.seiu.org/2025/02/seius-verrett-ripping-away-tps-for-haitian-immigrants-is-a-direct-attack-on-working-families-our-economy>

⁷⁴ <https://www.seiu.org/2025/06/statement-seiu-president-april-verrett-on-david-huertas-release-from-federal-custody>

⁷⁵ <https://nypost.com/2025/03/10/us-news/columbia-agitator-mahmoud-khalil-was-probed-as-national-security-threat-as-trump-calls-ice-bust-first-arrest-of-many/>

⁷⁶ <https://seiu.org/2025/03/seius-verrett-demands-immediate-release-of-mahmoud-khalil-end-relentless-attack-on-free-speech>

⁷⁷ <https://www.foxnews.com/us/kilmar-abrego-garcia-indicted-human-trafficking-charges-ordered-appear-before-judge-nashville>

⁷⁸ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/labor-leaders-urge-salvadoran-government-release-illegally-deported-union-member>

⁷⁹ <https://www.nthcibt.org/>

- Multiple union leaders spoke out in solidarity with SEIU executive David Huerta, who organized an effort to interfere with ICE officers and was detained after pushing an officer.⁸⁰
 - “The labor movement stands with David and we will continue to demand justice for our union brother until he is released.”⁸¹ - Shuler
 - “(I)mmigrant communities are being terrorized by heavily militarized armed forces. The Trump regime calling in the National Guard is a dangerous escalation to target people who disagree with them. It is a threat to our democracy.”⁸² - Verrett
 - “This is yet another example of the reckless and dangerous way deportations are being carried out, targeting hard-working community members. They are now trying to silence union leaders who dare to speak up.”⁸³ - Saunders
 - “Teamsters Local 572 stands in solidarity with all those affected by today’s events and calls for an end to the militarization of immigration enforcement that terrorizes communities and disrupts lives.”⁸⁴ - Local 572, Carson, CA
 - “The coordinated ICE raids across Los Angeles today were violent and intentionally cruel.... Among those harmed was our union brother David Huerta.... His detention was an attack on every worker who has ever stood up for what is right.”⁸⁵ - Peter Finn, Teamsters Joint Council 7 (CA/NV) and Chris Griswold, Joint Council 42 (S. CA)
3. **Union resistance to the Trump agenda has gone far beyond rhetoric**, encompassing a very large toolkit of actions both before and since his election.
- **Systematic abuse of the legal system through forum-shopped lawsuits with the goal of obtaining nationwide injunctions.**
 - Per Shuler, labor’s “short-term strategy was, of course, a legal strategy,”⁸⁶ which was an understatement: the first suit against Trump actions came January 20 with a barrage to follow.

⁸⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4LwwSFj7VQ>

⁸¹ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-demands-immediate-release-seiu-california-president-david-huerta>

⁸² <https://www.seiu.org/2025/06/statement-seiu-president-april-verrett-on-david-huertas-release-from-federal-custody>

⁸³ <https://www.afscme.org/press/releases/2025/afscmes-saunders-demands-the-immediate-release-of-labor-leader-david-huerta>

⁸⁴ <https://www.teamsters572.org/teamsters-local-572-condemns-violent-ice-raids-and-injury-of-seiu-president-david-huerta/>

⁸⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/teamstersjc42/posts/joint-statement-from-peter-finn-president-of-teamsters-joint-council-7-and-chris/1290411829755096/>

⁸⁶ <https://www.yahoo.com/news/president-afl-cio-says-she-110000712.html>

- In all, as of October 2025 at least 45 **lawsuits** had been brought by unions in carefully selected venues and involving, among other matters:
 - The proposed “Schedule Policy/Career” reclassification.
 - The establishment of DOGE and its access to employee personal data.
 - The administration’s “buyout offer” to certain federal employees.
 - Reorganizations/force reductions involving USAID, the Department of Education, NIOSH, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, Voice of America and probationary employees.
 - Removal of collective bargaining rights for certain federal employees.
 - Elimination of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives at federal agencies.
- **Training, mobilization and activation of union membership in astroturf and resistance activities nationwide, including organization of and participation in protest and other activities that included outright interference with law enforcement and other functions.**
 - Shuler has described “a very large toolbox” to “fight administration policies,”⁸⁷ including:
 - “Organizing at the community level, protests, rallies, actions” including “unmasking the DOGE destruction” through “our Department of People Who Work for a Living” as well as “nationwide actions” that were “doubling in size every month”.⁸⁸
 - “pension fund investments that we know can be used strategically as leverage”.⁸⁹
 - “a network of local labor bodies... that we can use to educate and train and activate”.⁹⁰
 - “an incredible toolkit... on how to respond (to an ICE visit) and to know their rights.”⁹¹
 - And the movement in fact leveraged several of these “tools” and others:
 - **Mobilization/Activation:**
 - SLATE has described unions as having “joined the resistance—they’ve marched in many communities’ “Hands Off” rallies, and they have staged many of their own protests”⁹² and “have held town hall meetings in purple districts where Republican members of Congress refused to do so because they feared the public’s wrath.”⁹³

⁸⁷ <https://fortune.com/2025/06/14/union-president-liz-shuler-afl-cio-immigration-protests/>

⁸⁸ Id.

⁸⁹ Id.

⁹⁰ Id.

⁹¹ Id.

⁹² <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2025/05/unions-donald-trump-2026-election-kilmar-abrego-garcia.html>

⁹³ Id.

- Specifically, Shuler separately told members that the movement has “tens of thousands showing up to rallies, and protests, and town halls,”⁹⁴ and Verett boasted of the “Hands Off” protests that “in major cities and small towns in every state, working people are taking action April 5 to fight back against Trump and Elon Musk’s shameless power grab....”⁹⁵
- In protesting “an array of left-wing causes” (per the NY Times), Pringle asserts: “(NEA’s) 3 million educators...are in every congressional district and community.”⁹⁶
- Numerous statements^{97 98} and articles⁹⁹ have described protests^{100 101} against actions involving federal workers^{102 103} along with outrage at May Day rallies.¹⁰⁴
- **Legislative action** including ads,¹⁰⁵ issue-oriented letters to legislators,^{106 107 108} members “flooding Congress with...letters, calls and petitions,”¹¹⁰ and direct lobbying.¹¹¹
- **Resisting immigration enforcement:** Motivated by a growing immigrant membership,^{112 113} unions are now “on the forefront of resisting the... administration's deportations.”¹¹⁴ Including:

⁹⁴ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-president-trumps-first-100-days-labor-movement-does-not-fall-line-autocrats>

⁹⁵ <https://www.seiu.org/2025/04/seiu-condemns-senate-plan-that-threatens-working-families-healthcare-to-fund-billionaire-tax-breaks>

⁹⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/12/us/protests-immigration-palestinian.html?searchResultPosition=4>

⁹⁷ <https://labortribune.com/afl-cio-secretary-treasurer-fred-redmond-talks-about-attacks-on-organized-labor-and-why-union-members-voted-for-trump/>

⁹⁸ <https://www.seiu.org/2025/02/seius-verrett-unions-will-not-allow-the-illegal-seizure-of-workers-complaints-at-the-department-of-labor>

⁹⁹ <https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/brendan-boyle-union-workers-federal-layoffs-firings-donald-trump-elon-musk-doge/4117948/>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.bgov.com/next/news/STAB16DWRGG0>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/05/us/hands-off-protests-trump-musk/index.html>

¹⁰² <https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/southern-california/politics/2025/02/25/washington-d-c--doge-musk-protests>

¹⁰³ <https://www.ilwu.org/unions-push-back-against-chaotic-first-month-of-trump-administration/>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/01/us/politics/may-day-trump-protests.html>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.aft.org/press-release/aft-launches-multistate-six-figure-ad-buy-targeting-big-ugly-bill>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.afscme.org/press/releases/2025/in-a-letter-to-the-senate-nearly-900-state-and-local-elected-leaders-oppose-extreme-cuts-to-medicare-medicare-snap-and-public-services>

¹⁰⁷ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/unions-urge-senators-remove-ban-state-level-ai-accountability-laws-budget>

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.afge.org/publication/afge-urges-lawmakers-to-reject-budget-cuts-targeting-federal-workers/>

¹⁰⁹ <https://aflcio.org/about/advocacy/legislative-alerts/letter-expressing-concern-about-weakening-trade-enforcement>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.afscme.org/press/releases/2025/afscmes-saunders-a-historic-and-relentless-assault-on-working-people-and-unions-underscore-the-first-100-days-of-this-administration>

¹¹¹ <https://www.iam140.ca/?p=31905>

¹¹² <https://www.axios.com/2025/06/10/ice-los-angeles-protests-immigration>

¹¹³ <https://www.tdu.org/teamsters-fight-for-all-workers>

¹¹⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/11/business/economy/la-protests-immigrants-unions.html>

- An SEIU “Justice Journey” protesting detentions and the reconciliation.¹¹⁵
- Shuler’s claim that unions organized protests in 30 cities against Huerta’s arrest for organizing interference in ICE enforcement.¹¹⁶
- “Know your rights” training/education,¹¹⁷ rapid response¹¹⁸ and inclusion of protections for undocumented workers in collective bargaining agreements.
- Front and center in this activity, alongside the AFL-CIO, is the union favored with a speaking slot at the convention: the *Teamsters*. Ubiquitous expressions of “solidarity” with known (e.g., Kilmar Abrego Garcia)¹¹⁹ and potentially illegal workers insist “(w)e don’t know any of our coworkers’ immigration status by looking at them. But we do know they’re our Teamster brothers and sisters.”¹²⁰ In addition to providing resources on resisting ICE in the workplace,¹²¹ locals have joined in protests and strikes opposing this top Trump priority.^{122 123 124 125}
- **But perhaps most powerful, unions have unleashed hundreds of millions of dollars in political donations and in-kind contributions massively favoring the Democratic Party and candidates** – including “all in” support for the President’s 2024 opponents (Biden and Harris) and donations to politicians who have led lawfare and resistance efforts against him.
 - Some 86% of overall union contributions in the 2023-24 cycle went to Democrats.¹²⁶
 - Most prominent labor unions also put boots on the ground in favor of Democrats, and they were openly “all in” for Kamala Harris in 2024. Per media coverage and union statements:
 - The AFL-CIO, joined by AFSCME and the IAM, committed to reach a total of more than 6.5mm voters for Harris in a “massive ground game”^{127 128} alongside

¹¹⁵ <https://www.solidarityseason.org/bustour/bus-1-diary>

¹¹⁶ <https://fortune.com/2025/06/14/union-president-liz-shuler-afl-cio-immigration-protests/>

¹¹⁷ <https://labornotes.org/2025/07/fight-immigrant-workers-build-union>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.tdu.org/KNOW-YOUR-RIGHTS-ICE-IN-YOUR-WORKPLACE>

¹¹⁹ <https://www.laborontheonline.org/p/philly-teamsters-demand-immigrant>

¹²⁰ https://www.teamsters117.org/immigrant_rights

¹²¹ <https://www.tdu.org/KNOW-YOUR-RIGHTS-ICE-IN-YOUR-WORKPLACE>

¹²² <https://www.tiktok.com/@laborontheonline/video/7511824178358619422>

¹²³ <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/union-members-against-ice>

¹²⁴ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/chicago-teamsters-backed-mayor-want-ice-barred-without-warrants-strike-fight>

¹²⁵ <https://prospect.org/labor/2025-08-25-how-one-teamsters-local-is-striking-to-protect-immigrant-workers/>

¹²⁶ <https://www.opensecrets.org/political-action-committees-pacs/industry-detail/P/2024>

¹²⁷ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/union-leaders-and-workers-highlight-plans-mobilize-millions-union-voters-harris-walz>

¹²⁸ <https://www.goiam.org/news/600000-member-iam-union-mobilizes-for-harris-walz-and-pro-labor-candidates-in-2024-election/>

a “seven-figure (ad) buy.” AFSCME said it “engaged thousands upon thousands of union members around the country” and that the union was “all in.” ¹²⁹

- AFSCME also “pooled resources” with SEIU, NEA and AFT in a “coordinated, multi-state voter outreach initiative” ¹³⁰ behind Harris-Walz involving “thousands” ¹³¹ of volunteers, also noting that “each union has invested significantly in GOTV programs and media outreach, across TV and streaming platforms.” ¹³²
 - UNITE HERE boasted, “Over 2000 unionized hotel, food service, and gaming industry workers knocked on the doors of more than four million voters this election season.” ¹³³
 - The UAW announced its “most ambitious political program in decades for an all-out effort to elect Kamala Harris... mobilizing UAW members online, at worksites, and in the field.” ¹³⁴
 - The IUPAT, led by president Jimmy Williams, staged “a campaign bus tour through the Rust Belt to rally members and union households alike for the Harris-Walz ticket.” ¹³⁵
- Moreover, extensive political donations have gone to the President’s most determined and nefarious political opponents, illustrated again by RNC speaker Sean O’Brien’s Teamsters:
- The Teamsters union has showered Trump antagonist Gavin Newsom with \$370,450 in total contributions since 2018, including \$102,450 to his gubernatorial campaigns and \$250,000 to oppose the Governor’s recall in 2021 (the third-largest contributor).
 - Teamsters still lean heavily Democratic in funding congressional opponents to the President. In Q2 2025, their D.R.I.V.E. PAC gave \$5,000 to the NRCC, but three times that amount, \$15,000, to the DCCC in April. ¹³⁶
 - The Teamsters have also underwritten the very Democratic state attorneys general who have targeted Trump personally with illegitimate lawfare efforts and promised and pursued scorched-earth legal campaigns to thwart Administration priorities. This includes more than \$100,000 in contributions to Letitia James throughout her public career, spanning her tenure as New York City Public Advocate and continuing into her role as New York Attorney General.

¹²⁹ <https://aflcio.org/press/releases/union-leaders-and-workers-highlight-plans-mobilize-millions-union-voters-harris-walz>

¹³⁰ <https://www.afscme.org/press/releases/2024/largest-public-sector-labor-unions-unite-to-get-out-the-vote-in-battleground-states>

¹³¹ Id.

¹³² Id.

¹³³ <https://unitehere.org/press-releases/unite-here-canvassers-knocked-on-over-4-million-doors-and-had-over-500000-individual-conversations-with-voters-in-nations-largest-labor-led-independent-door-to-door-canvass/>

¹³⁴ <https://uaw.org/uaw-launches-major-digital-and-field-campaign-to-defeat-donald-trump-in-november/>

¹³⁵ <https://prospect.org/politics/2024-11-05-paint-out-the-vote/>

¹³⁶ <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/08/11/teamsters-donations-00502709>

- Letitia James, received \$31,000 from the Teamsters national DRIVE PAC in 2018, the very year she first ran for office while calling Trump an “illegitimate president” and insisted he could be “charged with obstructing justice” and “indicted for criminal offenses.” She received another \$47,500 from DRIVE in 2021 and 2022 to support her 2022 campaign, during which she actually did bring an overreaching lawsuit that resulted in a “home-cooked” \$454 million judgment against Trump that has since been overturned by an appeals court.
 - Teamsters locals contributed more than \$10,000 to James in 2023 and 2024 – ever as she was “preparing for several months ... to fight back” after a Trump win, as she declared right after the election. The same day, Rob Bonta, California AG, joined Newsom in calling for a special legislative session to fund resistance lawsuits and indicated that he had already talked to other attorneys general and drafted litigation for that purpose.
 - And in fact, James and Bonta have led and joined coalitions of other state attorneys general in suing the administration to thwart a wide range of spending cuts,^{137 138 139 140 141} block immigration enforcement,^{142 143} ¹⁴⁴ halt to transgender treatments for minors and other actions.¹⁴⁵ Co-plaintiffs have included the Democratic AGs of Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Washington and Wisconsin – all of whom have benefited from substantial Teamster contributions.
- At the local level, unions also poured contributions into the campaigns of district attorneys who have either led legal challenges against Trump administration policies or pursued criminal prosecutions of Trump himself.
- **New York City District Attorney Alvin Bragg:** Persecuted Trump on 34 felony counts for related to alleged hush-money payments during the 2016 campaign. Unions including the United Federation of Teachers, 1199 SEIU, and New York Hotel Trades Council, among others contributed \$240,457¹⁴⁶ to Bragg.

¹³⁷ <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-sues-trump-administration-illegally-shutting-down>

¹³⁸ <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/2025/attorney-general-james-sues-trump-administration-protect-scientific-research-and>

¹³⁹ <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/2025/attorney-general-james-sues-trump-administration-gutting-critical-social>

¹⁴⁰ <https://agstudies.org/mediacenter/new-york-ag-letitia-james-attorney-general-james-sues-trump-administration-to-protect-libraries-and-museums/>

¹⁴¹ https://www.wisdoj.gov/PressReleases/4.25.25_Title_VI_Lawsuit.pdf

¹⁴² <https://www.cnn.com/2025/08/10/us/california-newsom-trump-national-guard>

¹⁴³ <https://www.wisdoj.gov/PressReleases/8-18-2025-VOCA-Multistate-Complaint-Filed.pdf>

¹⁴⁴ <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/25-cv-00345%20-%20State%20of%20New%20York%20et%20al.%20v.%20Department%20of%20Justice%20et%20al.%20-%20Complaint.pdf>

¹⁴⁵ <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-files-lawsuit-against-trump-administration's-unlawful>

¹⁴⁶ <https://publicreporting.elections.ny.gov/>

- **Philadelphia Attorney General Larry Krasner:** Denounced Trump’s plan to deploy the National Guard to U.S. cities, calling it a “military invasion” and hosting town halls to organize resistance. Unions including the Laborers Union Philadelphia, Plumbers/Pipefitters Local 690, and Teamsters Union, and others contributed \$84,200¹⁴⁷ to Krasner across two election cycles.
- **Boston District Attorney Kevin Hayden:** Publicly clashed with Trump-era immigration enforcement, criticizing ICE for detaining a defendant mid-trial and considering charges against an ICE agent. Hayden Received contributions from the Teamsters DRIVE PAC, Ironworkers Local 7, and others totaling \$4,600¹⁴⁸.
- **Atlanta District Attorney Fani T. Willis:** Brought a sweeping RICO case against Trump and 18 allies for allegedly conspiring to overturn Georgia’s 2020 election results. The Southeastern Carpenters Regional Council contributed \$1,500¹⁴⁹ to Willis.
- **San Francisco Attorney General Brooke Jenkins:** Unions such as San Francisco Labor Council, Laborers Union, and Teamsters Local PACs contributed \$23,411.99¹⁵⁰ to Brooke Jenkins.

Conclusion

Union bosses have abandoned their mission to represent workers and instead operate as partisan operatives for the far left. Their hostility toward President Trump’s pro-worker agenda is not just ideological; it’s strategic, coordinated, and well-funded.

Key Takeaways:

- **Union leadership from all parts of the union movement is “irreconcilably hostile to Republicans,”** as Vice President J.D. Vance warned, and the evidence proves him right.
- **Union dues, collected from the ranks of union members, are weaponized to oppose the president’s policies,** fund lawsuits, protests, and political campaigns that ultimately undermine their own interests.
- **Union bosses have underwritten the careers of those leading lawfare against President Trump, such as New York Attorney General Letitia James,** illustrating the deep investment unions have in opposing the administration.
- **Union leaders are increasingly out of step with their members,** who want lower energy costs, secure borders, and a government that works for them—not against them.
- **The disconnect is undeniable and growing.**

President Trump’s outreach to working Americans is resonating. It’s time to expose union leadership’s betrayal and stand with the workers who deserve better. Our upcoming white paper will shed light on this hypocrisy and rally support for a labor movement that prioritizes workers over politics.

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.opensecrets.org/campaign-expenditures/vendor?cycle=2020&vendor=Lawrence+Krasner+for+District+Attorney>

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.ocpf.us/filers?q=17971>

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.transparencyusa.org/ga/candidate/fani-willis/contributions>

¹⁵⁰ <https://sfethics.org/disclosures/campaign-finance-disclosure/campaign-finance-disclosure-data>