TESTIMONY OF
THOMAS JONES
President, American Accountability Foundation

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Committee on Education and Workforce
United States House of Representatives

Hearing on
"Out of Touch: When Union Politics Leave Workers Behind"
September 15, 2026

Chairman Allen, Ranking Member DeSaulnier, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Thomas Jones. I am the founder and President of the American Accountability Foundation, a research and communications organization that investigates how institutions with power over the lives of working Americans actually use that power.

Over the past year, my organization compiled and analyzed every publicly filed LM-2 disclosure from 2017 through 2024 for seven of the nation's leading industrial unions and their affiliated locals and councils, together with the Federal Election Commission filings of their political action committees. The seven are the United Auto Workers, the United Steelworkers, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Laborers' International Union of North America, and three of the railroad brotherhoods: the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, the SMART Transportation Division, and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes. [1] While there are interesting issues with the teachers' unions, other government-employee unions, and service employees unions, industrial unions provide the most striking and important conversation for this committee. I am here to talk about the men and women who build cars, pour steel, wire buildings, lay track, and run trains, because their unions have drifted farthest from their members while attracting the least scrutiny.

The title of this hearing is exactly right. The data show two things. First, these industrial unions now function, for practical purposes, as a financial subsidiary of the Democratic Party, even as their own members have moved decisively in the other direction. Second, the same union treasuries have become a vehicle for spending on casinos, resorts, sports sponsorships, and executive salaries that does nothing to improve a single member's wages, hours, or working conditions. Both

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[1] American Accountability Foundation, MAGA Membership & Woke Leadership, Reports One through Seven (Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen; Laborers' International Union of North America; SMART–Transportation Division; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; United Steelworkers; United Auto Workers; Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division) (2026), available at https://www.wokeunionwatchdog.com/ (hereinafter cited by union name and report number). Methodology: LM-2 disbursements for each union and its affiliated locals and councils were compiled from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards, Union Reports Search (payee/payor data) for the union and its affiliated locals and councils, 2017–2024; PAC and independent-expenditure data were compiled from the Federal Election Commission.

problems have the same root: leadership that answers to itself rather than to the rank and file who pay the dues.

I. Industrial Unions Have Become a Financial Subsidiary of the Democratic Party

Union leaders will tell you their political programs are bipartisan and issue-driven. The filings and the data say otherwise. The numbers aren't even close.

Consider the hard-dollar political action committees of these seven unions, which are funded by "voluntary" member contributions and are therefore the clearest expression of what leadership chooses to do with the money members entrust to it. I put "voluntary" in quotation marks deliberately. It is voluntary in the legal sense and, in the trades and on the railroads especially, often something else in practice. PAC solicitation is run by the same officers and business agents who control referrals, assignments, and advancement, and because contributions are tracked by name, leadership knows exactly who gave and who did not. A member who declines is not fined. He is simply known. In a workplace where the local decides who gets the call, that is a distinction without much difference, and it is why participation rates in these funds should not be read as enthusiasm for how the money is spent.

The UAW's V-CAP directed $6,383,914 to Democratic party committees during the period we analyzed and $0.00 to Republican committees. Among federal candidates, it gave $5,323,500 to Democrats and $45,000 to Republicans, a split of 99.16 percent to 0.84 percent. For every dollar to a Republican federal candidate, roughly $118 went to a Democrat. Its largest recipients were House Majority PAC at $6,390,000 and Senate Majority PAC at $5,145,000, the two super PACs whose sole purpose is electing Democratic majorities in Congress.[2]

The IBEW's PAC sent $11,188,454, or 97.79 percent of its party-committee dollars, to Democratic committees, against $252,490 to Republicans. It gave $1,545,000 to the Democratic National Committee, $1,500,000 each to House Majority PAC and Senate Majority PAC, and $1,065,000 to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.[3] The United Steelworkers Political Action Fund sent $1,162,893 to Democratic party committees and, again, $0.00 to Republican committees.[4] LIUNA's PAC gave $12,739,000 to Democratic federal candidates and $410,500 to Republicans, 96.88 percent to 3.12 percent, and reported $1,755,818 in independent expenditures, every dollar of which supported a Democrat or opposed a Republican.[5]

The railroad unions are, if anything, more lopsided. The BLET's PAC sent 98.97 percent of its party-committee dollars to Democrats, $506,581 to $5,250. In 2024, after it was obvious to

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[2] UAW V-CAP (FEC Committee C00002840), disbursement reports, https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00002840/; as compiled in AAF, United Auto Workers (Report Six), supra note 1.

[3] IBEW Political Action Committee (FEC Committee C00027342), disbursement reports; as compiled in AAF, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Report Four), supra note 1.

[4] United Steelworkers Political Action Fund (FEC Committee C00003590), disbursement reports; as compiled in AAF, United Steelworkers (Report Five), supra note 1.

[5] Laborers' International Union of North America PAC (FEC Committee C00007922), disbursement and independent-expenditure reports, 2016–2024; as compiled in AAF, Laborers' International Union of North America (Report Two), supra note 1.

everyone that rail workers were voting for President Trump, BLET made 24 separate donations to Democratic party committees totaling $53,400, and two donations to Republican committees totaling $2,000.[6] The SMART Transportation Division's IA-SMART PAC gave $2,375,500 to Democratic committees and $72,500 to Republican committees, and its single largest recipient was not a rail-safety group but EMILY's List, at $1,030,000. Every one of its $165,000 in independent expenditures supported a Democrat or opposed a Republican.[7] And the Teamsters' D.R.I.V.E. PAC, into which the Maintenance of Way employees' political fund was merged, sent $13,762,200 to Democratic party committees against $729,846 to Republicans, roughly 95 to 5.[8]

A political program that gives 97, 98, or 99 cents of every dollar to one party is not a labor program. It is a party operation on union letterhead.

The pattern extends beyond candidates and committees into the union treasuries. The UAW gave $3,824,000 in treasury funds to Democratic Party organizations between 2017 and 2024, including a single $2,000,000 check to the Democratic Governors Association in 2022, and gave nothing to any Republican counterpart.[9] The UAW has gone further still, becoming the first union to endorse Zohran Mamdani for mayor of New York and endorsing other members of the Democratic Socialists of America for Congress and the New York Assembly.[10] The Steelworkers sent between $100,000 and $120,000 every year to the Economic Policy Institute, and funded Pride at Work and the Workers Defense League, an organization co-founded by the Socialist Party's Norman Thomas.[11] SMART-TD gave $300,000 to the Blue Green Alliance, a climate-justice group, and funded Jobs With Justice and Working Partnerships USA.[12] The Maintenance of Way union gave to the Center for American Progress Action Fund and the Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare, and spent more than $100,000 at the National Democratic Club in Washington while spending, as far as the filings show, nothing at the Capitol Hill Club across town.[13] Even the BLET, the oldest union in America, sent treasury money to the Equality State Policy Center, the Wyoming

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[6] Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen PAC Fund (FEC Committee C00099234), disbursement reports; as compiled in AAF, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (Report One), supra note 1.

[7] IA-SMART Political Action League (FEC Committee C00007542), disbursement and independent-expenditure reports; as compiled in AAF, SMART–Transportation Division (Report Three), supra note 1.

[8] Teamsters D.R.I.V.E. (Democrat, Republican, Independent Voter Education) PAC, FEC disbursement and independent-expenditure reports; as compiled in AAF, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division (Report Seven), supra note 1. BMWE's political action committee merged into D.R.I.V.E. upon the union's 2004 affiliation with the Teamsters; the figures cited are for D.R.I.V.E. as a whole.

[9] AAF, United Auto Workers (Report Six), supra note 1. LM-2 disbursements to Democratic Party organizations, 2017–2024, totaled $3,824,000.00; the single largest was $2,000,000.00 to the Democratic Governors Association (2022 LM-2, File No. 511-819).

[10] United Auto Workers, "UAW Statement on New York Mayoral Primary Race," June 25, 2025, https://uaw.org/uaw-statement-on-new-york-mayoral-primary-race/; @uaw.union, Instagram (Jan. 9, 2026; Dec. 16, 2025); as cited in AAF, United Auto Workers (Report Six), supra note 1.

[11] AAF, United Steelworkers (Report Five), supra note 1. LM-2 File No. 000-094: Economic Policy Institute, $100,000.00 (2017), $100,000.00 (2018), $100,000.00 (2019), $120,000.00 (2020), $120,000.00 (2021), $120,000.00 (2022), $100,000.00 (2023), $120,000.00 (2024); Pride at Work, $5,000.00–$7,500.00 annually, 2018–2024; Workers Defense League, $5,000.00–$16,000.00 annually, 2017–2024.

[12] AAF, SMART–Transportation Division (Report Three), supra note 1. LM-2 File No. 000-073: Blue Green Alliance, $100,000.00 in each of 2017, 2018, and 2019; File No. 016-871: Working Partnerships USA, 2018–2024; File No. 035-367: Jobs With Justice, 2020–2021.

[13] AAF, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division (Report Seven), supra note 1. LM-2 File No. 000-062: Center for American Progress Action Fund, $10,000.00 (2017); Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare, $5,000.00 annually, 2017–2024; National Democratic Club, $20,000.00 (2017), $24,000.00 (2018), $24,500.00 (2019), $6,013.00 and $6,500.00 (2021), $6,500.00 (2023), $13,085.00 (2024).

organization that sued in 2025 to block that state's proof-of-citizenship voting law, forcing the Department of Justice to intervene in defense of the statute.[14]

None of this has anything to do with a locomotive engineer's hours of service or an electrician's pension. It is ideological spending, and it runs in one direction only.

Now contrast that with the members. In 2024, one large union did what every union should do before it endorses: it asked its members. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 1.3 million strong and the parent organization of two of the rail unions I have described, ran an electronic poll of its membership from July through September and commissioned an independent survey from Lake Research Partners. The member poll came back 59.6 percent for President Trump and 34 percent for Vice President Harris. The independent poll came back 58 to 31.[15] Confronted with its own members' views, the Teamsters declined to endorse anyone, with General President Sean O'Brien stating that "our members are the union, and their voices and opinions must be at the forefront of everything the Teamsters do."[16] Two days later, the Teamsters Rail Conference, of which the BLET is a part, endorsed Harris-Walz anyway.[17]

The broader survey data point the same way. Three weeks before the election, the left-leaning Pew Research Center found union voters favoring Harris by only 50 percent to 43 percent, and found that 39 percent of union voters identify with or lean toward the Republican Party.[18] The national exit poll put union households at 53 to 45 for Harris, and the AP VoteCast survey put union members at 57 to 41.[19] Every one of those figures covers all union members, and so every one of them is pulled toward the Democrats by the teachers' unions and the government-employee unions, whose members are far more liberal than the men and women in the building trades and on the railroads. Strip those out and the industrial numbers are almost certainly higher; the Teamsters' own poll, the only large industrial-union survey made public, is the best evidence of how much higher. But take even the number most favorable to union leadership, and four in ten of their members voted for President Trump. Yet these unions directed 97, 98, and 99 percent of their

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14 AAF, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (Report One), supra note 1. LM-2 File No. 054-671: Equality State Policy Center, $4,600.00 (2018), $4,500.00 (2020), $2,000.00 (2021), $2,000.00 (2022). See also U.S. Department of Justice, Statement of Interest, Equality State Policy Center v. Chuck Gray (D. Wyo.), July 1, 2025.

15 International Brotherhood of Teamsters, "Teamsters Release Presidential Endorsement Polling Data," Sept. 18, 2024, https://teamster.org/2024/09/teamsters-release-presidential-endorsement-polling-data/ (electronic member poll, July 24–Sept. 15, 2024: Trump 59.6%, Harris 34%; Lake Research Partners poll ending Sept. 15, 2024: Trump 58%, Harris 31%).

16 International Brotherhood of Teamsters, "Teamsters: No Endorsement for U.S. President," Sept. 18, 2024, https://teamster.org/2024/09/teamsters-no-endorsement-for-u-s-president/.

17 Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, "Teamsters Rail Conference Endorses Harris-Walz," Sept. 20, 2024, https://ble-t.org; as cited in AAF, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (Report One), supra note 1.

18 Andy Cerda, "Key facts about union members and the 2024 election," Pew Research Center (Oct. 17, 2024), https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/10/17/key-facts-about-union-members-and-the-2024-election/ (October 2024 survey of union voters: Harris 50%, Trump 43%, third-party 6%; 2023 survey: 59% identify with or lean Democratic, 39% Republican). Pew's "union voters" category covers all union members, including public-sector and education unions.

19 Karlyn Bowman, "The Exit Polls: From A to Z," American Enterprise Institute (Nov. 12, 2024), https://www.aei.org/op-eds/the-exit-polls-from-a-to-z/ (National Election Pool exit poll: union households, Harris 53%–Trump 45%; AP VoteCast: union members, Harris 57%). See also Center for American Progress Action Fund, "While Other Voters Moved Away From the Democrats, Union Members Shifted Toward Harris in 2024" (AP/Fox News VoteCast: union members, Harris 57%–Trump 41%).

political dollars against those members' chosen candidate. There is no reading of the data under which the political spending of these unions reflects the political views of the people who fund it.

Union leadership knows this. In the run-up to the 2016 election, SMART-TD's own national legislative director wrote to members: "I know the hardcore Trump supporters in our ranks have by and large ignored these failings, but I cannot . . . quite simply put, Donald Trump is unqualified to serve as President of the United States."[20] That is a union officer, paid out of the union treasury, telling rail workers that their political judgment is a failing to be corrected. Six of the seven unions in our study endorsed the Harris-Walz ticket in 2024; the seventh, the Maintenance of Way union, is a division of the Teamsters, whose members had just told their leadership not to. None of the six published a poll of its own members before doing so.

II. Union Treasuries Have Become a Vehicle for Waste and Self-Enrichment

The second problem is what happens to the treasury money that does not go to politics. Between 2017 and 2024, the seven unions and their affiliates spent, by our count, $427.7 million (LIUNA), $315.7 million (IBEW), $306.4 million (UAW), $184.8 million (USW), $136.6 million (SMART-TD), $41.5 million (BLET), and $18.1 million (BMWE) across seven categories: political spending, legal fees, hotels and conferences, travel, promotional items, food and beverage, and entertainment.[21] The LM-2 buries these under headings like "general overhead." The payee lines tell a different story.

Start with Las Vegas. The SMART Transportation Division, whose members are conductors and trainmen earning a median wage of about $75,680, spent $9.87 million on casinos and resorts over eight years, including a single payment of $3,938,650 to Caesars Entertainment in 2024, more than $1.3 million at the Diplomat Beach Resort in Florida in 2018, $81,730 at the Westin Maui, and $44,614 at the Four Seasons in Jackson Hole.[22] The BLET spent $2.08 million on casinos and resorts, led by payments to Caesars Entertainment of $759,350 in 2018 and $736,328 in 2022, and its filings include a jewelry purchase of more than $10,000. It is hard to imagine how working conditions on the railroad are improved by a ten-thousand-dollar jewelry purchase.[23] The Maintenance of Way union, whose members fix the track, spent $2.33 million on casinos and resorts, including $522,281 to Caesars in 2023, $363,112 to Bally's in 2019, and more than

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[20] SMART Transportation Division, "Why Trump Is Bad for Unions," https://smart-union.org/tag/why-trump-is-bad-for-unions/ (statement of SMART-TD National Legislative Director); as cited in AAF, SMART–Transportation Division (Report Three), supra note 1.

[21] Category totals, 2017–2024, from the LM-2 compilations in the AAF reports cited in note 1: LIUNA, $427,697,713; IBEW, $315,710,043; UAW, $306,439,991; USW, $184,791,907; SMART-TD, $136,608,670; BLET, $41,523,210; BMWE, $18,087,372. Categories: political spending, legal, hotel and conference, travel, swag/promotional items, food and beverage, and entertainment.

[22] AAF, SMART–Transportation Division (Report Three), supra note 1. Casino and resort disbursements, 2017–2024, total $9,865,304.00, including Caesars Entertainment Business Services, $3,938,650.00 (2024 LM-2, File No. 000-073); The Diplomat Beach Resort, $816,699.00 and $325,000.00, and The Diplomat Hotel LLC, $221,372.00 (all 2018); Westin Maui Resort & Spa, $81,730.00 (2018); Four Seasons Jackson Hole, $44,614.00 (2023).

[23] AAF, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (Report One), supra note 1. Casino and resort disbursements, 2017–2024, total $2,083,478.00, including Caesars Entertainment, $759,350.00 (2018) and $736,328.00 (2022) (File No. 000-101); swag/promotional total $1,765,797, including a jewelry purchase of $10,955.00 (2021, File No. 511-549).

$200,000 in a single year to Disney Destinations.[24] The UAW's president, who wears an "eat the rich" T-shirt, took his board to the Sheraton Puerto Rico, the island's largest casino, for a "weeklong meeting" that cost members $94,349, and UAW entities spent nearly $2 million on amusement parks.[25] If these unions really need to convene for conferences, they'd be better representing their membership, both financially and in spirit, by holding their conferences in towns like Gary, Indiana, somewhere both affordable and in the communities industrial union members live in.

Then there are the sports partnerships. SMART-TD spent $4.76 million on sports, including nearly $1 million to the Kansas City Royals over eight years, $191,081 in 2024 alone, and more than $100,000 to the Washington Commanders over two seasons.[26] LIUNA spent $10.1 million on auto racing, sponsoring a NASCAR team through an entity called LT Racing to the tune of $3,000,000 in 2024 alone, and paying $211,110 to the Las Vegas Motor Speedway.[27] The IBEW spent $1.56 million on golf courses and golf products.[28] The Steelworkers spent $2.24 million on entertainment, including $432,035 at Knott's Berry Farm in 2022 and annual payments to the Pittsburgh Steelers.[29]

And the unions spent staggering sums on what can only be called swag: $65 million by LIUNA, $39 million by the IBEW, $25.7 million by the Steelworkers, $24.9 million by the UAW, and $17.9 million by SMART-TD on watches, jewelry, T-shirts, gifts, and printing.[30]

Some of this is a local's picnic or a retiree Christmas party, and no one begrudges a member a hot dog and a ballgame. But a $3.9 million check to Caesars and a $3 million check to a race team are not picnics. They are choices made by leadership about money members were required to hand over as a condition of employment, and the members were not asked.

The clearest measure of whose interests are served is compensation. LIUNA's General President, Brent Booker, was paid $672,502 in 2024, and its Secretary-Treasurer, Michael Sabitoni, $646,256. Thirty-seven percent of LIUNA's headquarters staff earned more than $200,000, and

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[24] AAF, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division (Report Seven), supra note 1. Casino and resort disbursements, 2017–2024, total $2,334,502.00, including Caesars Entertainment, $522,281.00 (2023) and Bally's Hotel, $363,112.00 (2019) (File No. 000-062); Disney Destinations, $205,475.00 (2019, File No. 543-614).

[25] "Margaritas and Mistreated Temps," LaborPains.org (Apr. 2, 2024), https://laborpains.org/2024/04/02/margaritas-and-mistreated-temps/; as cited in AAF, United Auto Workers (Report Six), supra note 1. Theme-park disbursements by UAW entities, 2017–2024, total $1,977,415.00.

[26] AAF, SMART–Transportation Division (Report Three), supra note 1. Sports-related disbursements, 2017–2024, total $4,759,153.00, including Kansas City Royals (File No. 012-414), $111,100.00 (2017), $120,900.00 (2018), $124,110.00 (2019), $123,000.00 (2020), $24,090.00 (2021), $140,000.00 (2022), $144,200.00 (2023), $191,081.00 (2024), totaling $978,481.00; Washington Commanders, $50,602.00 (2023) and $51,752.00 (2024) (File No. 515-603).

[27] AAF, Laborers' International Union of North America (Report Two), supra note 1. Auto-racing disbursements total $10,107,430.00, including LT Racing, $3,000,000.00 (2024), $2,040,000.00 (2023), $1,660,000.00 (2022), $1,315,000.00 (2021), $900,000.00 (2020) (File No. 544-430); Las Vegas Motor Speedway, $211,110.00 (2023, File No. 001-013).

[28] AAF, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Report Four), supra note 1. Golf course and golf product disbursements, 2017–2024, total $1,555,955.00.

[29] AAF, United Steelworkers (Report Five), supra note 1. Entertainment disbursements total $2,240,403, including Knott's Berry Farm, $432,035.00 (2022), $312,878.00 (2019), $165,950.00 (2018) (File No. 067-051); Pittsburgh Steelers, $16,276.00 to $23,476.00 annually, 2017–2024 (File No. 000-094).

[30] Swag/promotional-item category totals, 2017–2024: LIUNA, $65,080,196; IBEW, $39,116,002; USW, $25,697,625; UAW, $24,869,709; SMART-TD, $17,923,997. Source: AAF reports cited in note 1.

62 percent earned more than $100,000, in a union whose members earn roughly $50,000.[31] IBEW International President Kenneth Cooper was paid $462,434 and Secretary-Treasurer Paul Noble $407,389; 78 percent of IBEW headquarters staff earned six figures and 30 percent earned more than $200,000, against an average IBEW electrician's wage of $83,736.[32] SMART's General President, Michael Coleman, earned $421,201, more than five times the median railroad worker, and the union's social media specialist earned $230,434.[33] The BLET's National President earned $308,519, and 13 of the 62 named officers and employees at its headquarters earned more than $200,000, financed by members paying up to $159 a month in dues.[34] At the Maintenance of Way union, 65 percent of headquarters employees earned six figures while the union's own compensation summary put member wages at $61,692.[35] And at the UAW, 56 percent of headquarters employees earned six figures; the highest-paid person on the 2024 filing was not President Fain at $229,514 but an executive administrative assistant at $272,139, while autoworkers average about $55,000.[36]

These are not the salaries of a movement. They are the salaries of a professional class that has learned to live very comfortably on a percentage of other people's paychecks, and that has every incentive to keep the political operation running, because the political operation is what keeps the professional class relevant in Washington.

III. A Different Approach: Work With the Members, Not the Bosses

I will close not with a list of legislative asks but with an observation about strategy, because conservatives have been getting this wrong.

It starts with the simple proposition: <u>Stop working with people who oppose you.</u>

On June 9 of this year, the Faster Labor Contracts Act passed the House 230 to 193, brought to the floor by a discharge petition and carried by 20 Republican votes. It forces employers to the table within 10 days of a union's request and, after 90 days of talks and 30 days of mediation, lets a three-member arbitration panel impose a binding two-year contract that neither the workers nor the employer ever voted on. Teamsters President Sean O'Brien called it "one of the most

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[31] AAF, Laborers' International Union of North America (Report Two), supra note 1. 2024 LM-2 officer and employee compensation: Brent Booker, General President, $672,502.00; Michael Sabitoni, General Secretary-Treasurer, $646,256.00. Member salary figure (approximately $50,000) is drawn from Glassdoor as cited in the report and should be treated as an estimate.

[32] AAF, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Report Four), supra note 1. 2024 LM-2: Kenneth W. Cooper, International President, $462,434.00; Paul A. Noble, International Secretary-Treasurer, $407,389.00. Average IBEW electrician earnings ($83,736) are drawn from Indeed as cited in the report.

[33] AAF, SMART–Transportation Division (Report Three), supra note 1. 2024 LM-2: Michael Coleman, General President, $421,201.00; Paul Pimentel, Social Media Specialist, $230,434.00. Railroad worker median wage ($75,680) from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Railroad Occupations.

[34] AAF, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (Report One), supra note 1. 2024 LM-2: Edward A. Hall, National President, $308,519.00; James A. Holdcraft, Vice President, $307,004.00; 13 of 62 named officers and employees exceeded $200,000. Dues figure from BLET Local 446 dues schedule.

[35] AAF, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division (Report Seven), supra note 1. 2024 LM-2: Tony D. Cardwell, President, $233,492.00; 65% of national headquarters employees exceeded $100,000. The $61,692 wage figure is drawn from a 2020 BMWED compensation summary cited in the report.

[36] AAF, United Auto Workers (Report Six), supra note 1. 2024 LM-2: Todd Brien, Executive Administrative Assistant, $272,139.00; Shawn Fain, President, $229,514.00; 56% of national headquarters employees exceeded $100,000.

consequential labor bills to come before Congress in generations." Six months earlier, the Protect America's Workforce Act passed 231 to 195, again by discharge petition and again with 20 Republicans. In May, the rail unions' long-sought Railway Safety Act was folded into the surface transportation reauthorization.[37] Each was sold as bipartisan and pro-worker. Each transferred power and money to the same leadership whose spending I have just described, leaders who are praying for a Speaker Jeffries in January.

That is the pattern I would ask this Subcommittee to break. For decades the conservative instinct has been to treat the union boss as the gatekeeper to the union member: earn the endorsement, win the members. The gate no longer works. The members have already moved. What stands between them and the party they are voting for is a professional leadership class of lobbyists and headquarters employees paid four, five, and thirteen times what its members earn, that spends the treasury in Las Vegas and the PAC at EMILY's List, and that calls their membership's political judgment a failing.

So my suggestion is a change of posture rather than a bill. Go directly to the members: policies built on the President's America First agenda that reinvigorated manufacturing are what these workers actually want, and they are the natural ground on which conservatives and rank-and-file members can meet without a union president standing in the middle. And tell the members the truth about their own unions. The men and women on the railroads and the factory floors do not know that $3.9 million of their union's treasury went to Caesars, or that their PAC's largest check went to EMILY's List, because their leadership has no interest in telling them, these benefits only go to leaders in the unions, and the LM-2 is designed so they cannot easily find out. Hearings like this one are how they find out.

Mr. Chairman, the men and women of America's industrial unions have done their part. They have shown up, done the work, paid their dues, and, in overwhelming numbers, voted for an agenda that puts American manufacturing, American energy, and American borders first. Their leadership has taken the money, spent it in Las Vegas and at the Democratic Governors Association, and told the members their political judgment is a failing to be overlooked. That is out of touch. The answer is not to keep negotiating with the union leadership and its lobbyists. It is to stand with the members. I am grateful to this Subcommittee for doing so today, and I look forward to your questions.

The American Accountability Foundation is a nonprofit research and communications organization.

[37] Tom Jones, "Republicans should stop helping Democrats empower union bosses," The Washington Times (July 27, 2026), https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2026/jul/27/republicans-stop-helping.