



# "OPT OUT TODAY:" A FAILED MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR POLITICAL OPERATION RUN BY THE DARK-MONEY "FREEDOM" FOUNDATION

## WHAT IS THE "FREEDOM" FOUNDATION?

- A 501(c)3 organization, acting as a political operation, based in Olympia, WA that tries to attack labor unions in an attempt to elect far-right candidates and turn "blue" states "red." In 2015, they stated their goal was to [bankrupt and defeat](#) labor unions, who they see as major funders of progressive candidates and causes. After investing seven years and more than \$35 million, their anti-union campaign has become an embarrassing failure.

## WHAT DO THEY DO?

- Using the name "Opt Out Today," the "Freedom" Foundation sends unwanted, deceptive emails to union members at work and mailers to their home, pushing them to drop union membership, which they hope will hurt the union's bottom line. *See examples of their postcards on page 2.* [Learn more here.](#)
- To build their target list, they attempted to abuse public records laws and voter databases, stockpiling tens of thousands of government employees' personal information like full name, email, dates of birth, and home address. They have reportedly shown up unannounced at worksites and even the homes of public employees. [Learn more here.](#)

## WHO FUNDS THEM?

- The group is primarily funded by far-right billionaires and millionaires, either directly or using "[dark money](#)" [donor advised funds](#), including:
  - The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation - Milwaukee, WI
  - The Charles Koch Foundation - Arlington, VA
  - DonorsTrust and Donors Capital Fund - Alexandria, VA
  - The Sarah Scaife Foundation - Pittsburgh, PA
  - The State Policy Network - Arlington, VA
  - Thomas A. Roe Foundation - Greenville, SC
  - Searle Freedom Trust - Madison, WI
- IRS 990 forms have revealed several of the "Freedom" Foundation's benefactors, such as the Bradley Foundation, the Sarah Scaife Foundations, and the Robert P. Rotella Foundation, have also bankrolled white supremacists and the white nationalist movement. [Learn more here.](#)

## WHO LEADS THE ORGANIZATION?

- The organization has a disturbing track record of hiring extremists, such as President Tom McCabe, a long-time far-right operative who formerly led the Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW). He was eventually pushed out for wasting millions of dollars on failed conservative candidates and causes. Under his direction, that organization moved to the extreme right and was charged hundreds of thousands of dollars for violating campaign finance laws. [Learn more here.](#)
- Former “Freedom” Foundation staffer and ex-State Representative Mike Nearman was expelled from the Oregon legislature for opening the door to violent militants at the Oregon Capitol in 2020. National Outreach Director Matt Hayward has been arrested for assault and joked about bringing a gun to the homes of union members. Canvasser Jac Cates’s social media accounts were filled with racist, xenophobic and anti-LGBTQ slurs. [Learn more here.](#)

## HOW ELSE ARE THEY ATTACKING WORKERS?

- They have called for cutting state employee pensions, raising their retirement age, raising health insurance costs and delaying raises. They have repeatedly opposed increases in the minimum wage and even authored a report opposing paid sick leave for all workers. [Learn more here.](#)

## WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF THEIR CAMPAIGN?

- The “Freedom” Foundation’s expensive campaign to turn California, Washington, and Oregon politically “red” has clearly failed. All three states have pro-worker Democrats in the governor’s mansion and increased majorities in the state legislature, including supermajorities in the legislatures in Oregon and California. Meanwhile, total union membership has actually surged in Washington and Oregon, where the “Freedom” Foundation has focused its efforts longest. [Learn more here.](#)

