

# Sample Responses to COPE Questions

**When responding to difficult questions always respond with a short explanation and then go back to the core message points.**

**Then ask again.**

**Question: No.**

*Response:*

We don't really know why they are saying no and we should wait for them to tell us before we walk away all dejected. Once they give a reason maybe there is something we can work with. Don't waste your time with someone who is adamant or hates the union. Move on to more fertile ground. On the average we have found that you have to ask four people to get one yes. So don't take the "No's" personally, just think of them as moving you that much closer to your next yes. This really is a numbers game and the big secret is that you just have to ask enough people.

**Question: Why can't you just use my dues money? What do you do with all that money you get from me? Where are our dues going?**

*Response:*

Your dues go to support contract negotiations and representation.

The law places restrictions on the use of dues money for all the political work needed to protect state workers and their families. We are asking you for an additional \$5 a month for political action so that we can make our voices heard and win in November.

**Question: I already pay \$2 a month into LPAC (money used for state political issues by negative dues deduction). Why should I give to COPE?**

*Response:*

It's great that you already give. This year we're in the fight of our lives against Meg Whitman, a billionaire who is trying to buy the governor's seat to attack state workers, and so we're asking for everyone currently giving to increase their contribution. We're asking for COPE because the law places limitations on what LPAC money can be used for in politics. COPE money can be used for anything.

**Question: I don't think the union should be working on politics; the Union should stick to working on contracts and representation.**

*Response:*

Government decisions affect our ability to organize and negotiate contracts all the time. Government decisions also affect our ability to negotiate for

quality health care and for pensions. For example...

When everybody gives a little, and we put it together with other peoples contributions, then the union is strong enough to be a voice for working people on government decisions that affect our pensions, our health care, our right to organize and bargain for better wages, job security and working conditions.

**Question: I'm a Republican and the union is always giving money to Democrats. I don't want my money to be spent on people I don't support.**

*Response:*

The Union supports issues and politicians who vote to support our issues, not political parties. The Union's job is to look at how our representatives are doing on issues that matter to working people. For example, the Union looks at where they stand on minimum wage, training opportunities, pensions for public employees, and quality health care before insurance company profits, only then are decisions made, with member input, about which politicians to support.

Can you support the efforts to build power for working people by contributing \$5 a month?

**Question: How come the only time I see you folks is when you want to talk to me about money?**

*Response:*

I know that it must feel that way sometimes. With a limited union staff that covers thousands of state worksites, we are very busy and don't always have enough time for doing what we'd really like to be doing - talking to all of you. I have had a chance to talk with many of your co-workers and I know that we all want a lot of the same things: we want to be able to support ourselves and our families, we want to be appreciated, and we want opportunities to get ahead. You know that the governor doesn't have any loyalty or appreciation for state workers; we can only get what we need if we work together. This fund is to help us all put a few dollars together, so that together we can be strong and make a difference on the issues that are important to all of us - issues like stopping the furloughs, minimum wage, pensions we can count on, job security and respect.

**Question: I've been furloughed for over a year and a half now. I can't afford to donate!**

*Response:*

I know the furloughs have been tough, believe me. I talk to members all the time who are losing their houses and cars, and really struggling to take care of their families. But I would suggest to you that you can't afford *not* to give. COPE is a way for us to get the power that we need to tell him to *back off*. Cutting state workers and gutting our pensions is something none of us can afford. Can I get you to sign up right now? Here's a pen.