



PROPAGANDA WATCH

Sunlight Policy Center of New Jersey



SUNLIGHT
POLICY CENTER
— OF NEW JERSEY —

The Sunlight Policy Center is a 501(c)(3) organization that claims to be a non-partisan research center focused on “advocating for policy solutions that put New Jersey back on the path to future prosperity.” Since 2019, they have published a series of “policy papers” and blog posts attacking NJEA, denigrating our elected leadership and spreading poorly sourced, misleading and false disinformation about our finances and organizing practices. They consistently make false claims regarding the levels of compensation of NJEA staff. SPCNJ has also spread disinformation about COVID-19 safety in public schools and dangerous rhetoric aimed at worsening New Jersey’s teacher shortage. They routinely advocate against union membership and have made repeated attempts to convince members to leave the union.

Who is Sunlight Policy Center of New Jersey

SPCNJ was founded by Mike Lilley, a millionaire from Rumson, NJ who previously worked as the Executive Director of Better Education for Kids NJ, also known as B4K, a New Jersey based education reform organization backed by hedge fund billionaires advocating for private school vouchers. Prior to this work, Lilley was an “Adjunct Scholar” for the American Enterprise Institute, a right-wing think tank funded by the Koch Brothers, advocating for reducing consumer protections, denying climate change, and eliminating social safety nets. SPCNJ’s Board of Trustees include hedge fund millionaires and education reform advocates.

Why are they talking about NJEA’s membership dues?

Sunlight Policy Center is a political advocacy organization with an anti-union agenda. Their billionaire backers would love nothing more than to reduce the ranks of union membership in New Jersey, because we are the only thing standing between them and their efforts to privatize public education. SPCNJ has allied themselves with the greater disinformation movement in New Jersey, providing them with talking points and materials to attack educators, spread hateful rhetoric, and undermine our public schools.

NJEA members recognize that their union membership is more than a simple purchase of services. Collectively, NJEA members stand together to advocate for our profession and to keep New Jersey’s public schools the best in the nation, and the leaders and staff of NJEA are proud to stand by their side.

What should I do?

Take a closer look. Organizations that seek to undermine union membership usually have financial motives, and SPCNJ is no exception.

If you receive emails from SPCNJ at your school district email address, contact your district IT department and request that they block emails from this sender domain as anti-union propaganda.

Report suspicious activity related to your membership using the Center for Honesty reporting tool at www.centerforhonesty.org. Educate yourself and your colleagues. And remember, your freedom to stand up for yourself and public education is on the line.