



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on November 17, 2011

## SEIU Endorses Obama's 2012 Reelection

Just weeks after the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) professed its support for Occupy Wall Street, the 2.1-million-member organization disclosed an early endorsement of President Obama's reelection. "We believe in a country that invests in good jobs here at home, where everyone pays their fair share," SEIU President Mary Kay Henry (left) averred in a conference call to reporters. "Do we want leaders who side with the needs of rich corporations and the 1 percent, where they are prospering at the expense of everyone else? Or do we want leaders who will side with the rest of us, the 99 percent?"



In early October, the organization issued a union-wide endorsement of Occupy Wall Street, and championed the movements ideology of income inequality and its political rally cry for hiking taxes on Americas wealthy. "The brave students, workers, and unemployed Americans occupying Wall Street have shaken the conscience of our nation," Ms. Henry [avowed](#) in an October 4 press release. "The crowds and demonstrations will only get larger and louder as more Americans find the courage inside themselves to stand up and demand Wall Street CEOs and millionaires pay their fair share to create good jobs now."

SEIU officials have employed measures to drive higher turnout numbers to Occupy Wall Street solidarity events throughout the United States and Canada. On October 15, SEIU members and other unions, such as the AFL-CIO, joined an OWS march in Minneapolis to demand that banks end foreclosures, and members have participated in similar OWS protests in Boston, Chicago, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and dozens of other cities across the country.

The SEIU also endorsed Obama in 2008, but with election day still 11 months away, the union is gearing up early to lobby on behalf of the Presidents second-term pursuits. "We need to have a robust discussion in every community across this country about the choices people face We intend to use every day between now and then to make those choices clear and explain whats at stake," asserted Ms. Henry. In a post on the [SEIUs blog](#), she conveyed that Obamas initiatives are yoked with OWS overall vision, and she believes Obama is the only viable candidate for achieving the movements ambitious demands:

President Obama is the only candidate for president who shares our vision of America as a land of opportunity for everyone. We need a leader willing to fight for the needs of the 99 percent, and stand with hard working families to say that the world's wealthiest corporations must pay their fair share

These bankers and CEOs have used their wealth and excessive political influence to treat our state and federal governments like their personal cash drawer - spending lavishly on elections and then pressuring legislators to give them even more instead of creating jobs. It shows in the



results.

The SEIU is cataloging an array of tactics to mobilize voters, one being a training campaign to educate both members and non-members on “who broke this economy.” The organization also plans to launch programs to attract minority groups, particularly Latino and African-American voters, as it hopes to battle new election laws, such as new voter registration and voter identification, that could deter many Democratic voters.

Ms. Henry dodged questions on how much the SEIU plans to spend on the Obama campaign, as the union shoveled out tens of millions of dollars to Obamas 2008 campaign, and is expected to be a prominent donor to Obamas 2012 reelection effort; in 2008, the unions PAC contributed \$26 million, according to Federal Election Commission filings. Obamas top twenty donors [contributed](#) \$13,382,825 in 2008, more than three times than the \$4,034,622 contributed by John McCains top twenty donors.

But considering the Presidents personal wealth and comfortable relations with Wall Street, can the SEIU support both Obama and the OWS movement? After all, the President advocated the Wall Street bailouts and reaped generous campaign donations from some of the countrys largest financial firms. Some critics may argue that the Obama administrations actions are at odds with the movements overall message, which largely involves the very crony capitalist initiatives that have seemingly enveloped the current White House.

“We believe that as Americans we face a stark choice at this moment in history: do we want leaders who side with the needs of rich corporations and the 1 percent, where they are prospering at the expense of everyone else?” Henry [asked](#) during the above-noted conference call. “Or do we want leaders who side with the rest of us, the 99 percent?”

Indeed, the SEIU is supporting Occupy Wall Street, or the self-proscribed “99 percent,” while concurrently supporting a presidential candidate who undoubtedly stands in the movements ideological crosshairs.



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