



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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CITIZEN ACTION DEFENSE FUND FILES SUIT AGAINST THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR PUBLIC RECORDS OF BILLION DOLLAR STATE EMPLOYEE NEGOTIATIONS

**Olympia, Washington State— December 15, 2022** —Today, the Citizen Action Defense Fund (CADF) announced that it filed suit against the Office of Financial Management (OFM) for failing to provide public records in connection with the Governor's negotiations with public sector employee unions earlier this year that led to biennial agreements with \$997 million in increased salary and benefits for state employees.

Earlier this year, OFM, which is part of the Governor's office, began negotiations with public sector unions on contracts for the next biennial budget cycle. The agreements, which were finalized and signed by the parties, resulted in nearly ten figure increases for public sector union membership in salary and benefits. The agreements were politically controversial as the unions were donating to the Governor and his allies in upcoming November 2022 elections during the negotiations. The Washington Federation of State Employees trumpeted the agreements as "the largest compensation package in [its] history."

On October 20, 2022, CADF learned that OFM was refusing to provide copies of the state and unions' original offers in the negotiations until after the legislature approves the budget during the upcoming 2023 session and the governor signs it into law. CADF submitted a new request pointing out that the public records act contains no such limitations on public records. OFM continued to withhold the documents. The lawsuit was filed in Thurston County Superior Court today and OFM will have 20 days to respond.

"The State's Public Records Act exists to ensure transparency in our government and make sure that the people can get information in a timely way to be able to hold its government accountable. Here, the Governor's Office of Financial Management is refusing to provide records from its negotiations for a billion dollars in tax payer money to one of his largest political donors." said Jackson Maynard, Executive Director of CADF. "The agreements are signed and the negotiations are over- so there are no exemptions that apply. Yet, OFM will continue stonewalling the record requests for several months. OFM should not be able to rewrite the law to suit the Governor's political needs."

CADF is an independent, nonprofit organization based in Washington state that supports and pursues strategic, high-impact litigation in cases to advance free markets, restrain government overreach or defend constitutional rights. The government watchdog nonprofit files lawsuits, represents affected

parties and intervenes in cases when the state enacts laws that violate the state or federal constitutions, when government officials take actions that infringe upon the First Amendment or other constitutional rights, or when agencies promulgate rules in violation of state law.

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