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MEETING NOTICES

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# LABOR PRESS

Volume 110  
Number 3  
February 6, 2009  
Portland



## Inauguration Day festivities

Retired International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48 business manager Ed Barnes and his wife, Luanne, were among many union members from Oregon and Washington to attend the Jan. 20 inauguration of President Barack Obama. "It was one of the greatest experiences of my 75 years of life," Barnes said. "We finally have an open door policy at the White House for labor." For more on organized labor's participation in the inauguration, see Page 12.

## Recession deepens *But help is on the way, say elected leaders*

By DON McINTOSH  
Associate Editor

It's getting scary out there. The recession that began officially in December 2007 worsened rapidly in November and December. Daily announcements of business closures and mass layoffs are pushing up unemployment numbers to levels not seen in decades.

As of December, unemployment was at 7.2 percent nationally, while in Oregon, the figure was 9.0 percent, the highest level since 1983. As of December, about 175,000 Oregonians were unemployed, 70,000 more than the year before.

And sectors where union workers are concentrated — like manufacturing and construction — are some of the hardest hit. John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia-Pacific Building & Construction Trades Council, said 10 to 25 percent of local construction union workers were on their unions' out-of-work lists as of mid-January, depending on the craft.

"My guess is some are going to be

out of work for quite a while," Mohlis said — because few projects are in the pipeline for the warm-weather busy season.

"The contractors have nothing to bid on," said Frank Regalado, business manager of Elevator Constructors Local 23. "I think by June we're going to have problems."

At the Daimler Trucks North America Portland truck plant (formerly Freightliner) 192 workers were laid off January 30, including members of Machinists Lodge 1005, Teamsters Local 305, Sign Painters and Paint Makers Local 1094, and Service Employees Local 49. The company had earlier planned to start week-long shutdowns once-a-month, but instead decided to lay some workers off.

For Daryl Payne, 39, the layoff means he'll go from \$860 a week to \$482 — the maximum weekly unemployment benefit. Payne, a 15-year production technician, is looking at taking two years of welding classes at Clark College in Vancouver, which he hopes will help him become a union

steamfitter like his father.

Some unions have worked out creative ways to cushion the blow of layoffs. In McMinnville, Cascade Steel Rolling Mills laid off 77 union workers in December, leaving just over 300.

When United Steel Workers Local 8378 President Joe Munger learned further layoffs might be coming, he met with company managers and they came up with a way to match production to lowered demand. Members approved a "rolling layoff" by a strong margin. The way it works, the company shuts down department-by-department for a week or two at a time. Workers get unemployment benefits for the weeks they're off. Cascade Steel guarantees everyone will work at least two weeks out of every four, and agreed to pay full health care premiums for at least the first month. The two sides will meet each month to extend the deal. It's good for the company because they'll be ready if and when demand rebounds; steel industry analysts say that could be six to nine

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## Employee Free Choice Act

# Labor wants Obama to prioritize, help promote EFCA

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The AFL-CIO wants President Barack Obama to use the bully pulpit of the presidency to campaign for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act.

By "speaking positively about unions and workers' rights to organize," by promising to "stand with and protect" workers' rights and "by criticizing employers who interfere" with unionization, Obama's administration "can set a new tone and put our nation's labor-relations system back on the right track," the national labor federation said.

Looking at history, union officials noted that as president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt told the country that if he worked in a factory, the first thing he would do is join a union. That led to significant growth in labor's ranks.

Forty years later, President Ronald Reagan sent exactly the opposite message when he fired striking air traffic controllers. "That led to employer anti-union tactics at a level not seen in decades," the AFL-CIO said.

"The Obama Administration can make a

tremendous difference by publicly sending the message that the administration believes in, and supports, workers' rights to form and join unions, and the importance of a thriving labor movement to our nation's economic health and well-being," the AFL-CIO concluded.

Last month, labor rolled out a new \$3 million advertising campaign mobilizing members of churches, consumer groups, civil rights groups, and environmental groups to push Congress to enact the Employee Free Choice Act.

Pro-EFCA advertisements are airing on national cable television networks, as well as on news talk shows, said Mary Beth Maxwell, executive director of American Rights at Work, which assembled the coalition.

Speakers at a press conference launching the campaign said giving workers organizing and bargaining power raises their standards of living, which in turn injects more money into workers' pockets.

"When the law passes and the long decline in unionization stops, workers will have increased

bargaining power, higher living standards, more health care, better pension benefits and higher wages," said Dean Baker, director of the Center for Economic Policy Research.

That same point was made by Rhode Island Price Rite grocery worker Joe Sorrentino, one of the campaigners for the United Food and Commercial Workers' organizing drive at the firm. "I don't see any big problem with giving Americans better pay and medical coverage," he said.

Price Rite is resisting the organizing drive, even though its parent grocery chain operates 95 percent union.

The Employee Free Choice Act would not only write majority sign-up into labor law — with workers rather than bosses deciding how to move forward — it would also impose heftier fines for labor law breakers, order the National Labor Relations Board to get court injunctions against flagrant violators, and mandate binding arbitration for a first contract if the workers' union and the bosses can't agree on one within 120 days.

AFL-CIO Legislative Director Bill Samuel

said the ad campaign is concentrating on 15 to 16 key states whose senators — Democratic and especially Republican — hold the key to overcoming a planned GOP filibuster against the law. A majority of senators supported EFCA last session, but it was procedurally blocked from a vote by Republicans in the minority.

Samuel said backers now count 60 votes to stop a filibuster, including Senate co-sponsor Arlen Specter, R-Pa. But they want to clear that barrier with plenty to spare and they have to do so in the face of a multi-million dollar business advertising campaign against it.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has indicated that he won't take up the Employee Free Choice Act until sometime this summer. It's an "important piece of legislation," Reid told the Las Vegas Sun newspaper. "We're going to get to that."

"It will not be an easy lift," said Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, who was at the press con-

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# U.S. union ranks grow despite tough economy

Union membership in the United States rose from 12.1 percent to 12.4 percent last year, according to an annual survey released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The number of all workers covered by collective bargaining agreements, including those who choose not to be union members, also grew in 2008, from 13.3 percent to 13.7 percent, bringing an additional 518,000 workers under union contracts in 2008.

Overall, the number of workers belonging to a union last year rose to 16.1 million. In 1983, the first year for which comparable union data are available, the union membership rate was 20.1 percent, and there were 17.7 million workers carrying union cards.

"This growth is remarkable given the overall decline in employment in 2008 (a loss of 900,000 jobs in the nonunion sector)," said Lawrence Mishel of the Economic Policy Institute. "This is also the first time in the 30 years of this data series that union density rose two years in a row."

In Oregon, union membership grew

by 32,000 — to 259,000, or 16.6 percent of the workforce. Another 13,000 workers were represented by a union.

Washington State remains ranked No. 4 in the nation in terms of union density, with the state's 578,000 members accounting for 19.8 percent of the overall workforce. Membership actually slipped by 1,000 from a year ago. However, the number of workers represented by a union increased from 616,000 to 626,000 (21.5 percent of the workforce).

The BLS survey also reported on the union advantage workers receive on payday. In 2008, full-time union workers earned a median weekly salary of \$886 while nonunion workers were paid 28 percent less per week — \$691.

Union growth was broadly shared across demographic lines and occupations. Growth was strongest in the public sector, among Hispanics, and in Western states.

The highest shares of unionization by age were among workers aged 55-64 and 45-54 (nearly 17 percent), while the lowest share (5 percent) was among workers aged 16-24.



**Iron Workers help IBEW #48 go green**

IBEW Local 48 is installing a 78 kW solar array at its union hall. The all-union project, when completed, will not only provide 40 percent of the local's electrical usage for the next 30 years, but also will be used to train members on the design and installation of solar arrays. Late last month, apprentices from Iron Workers Local 29 — including Seth Meeks (kneeling, photo above) and Brandon Lesbo — helped put up the steel structure. Installation of some 360 solar panels will be performed by Local 48 apprentices and volunteers. Electrical equipment and supervision is being provided by signatory contractor Dynalectric. The iron beams were designed by Oregon Iron Works. And Campbell Crane donated equipment and an operator to set the steel. "The solar array will be a showcase for all prospective parties interested in installing their own solar arrays," said Dave Johnston, a Local 48 business rep. "Future apprentices will be able see a large solar installation right next door." The array should be up and running by mid-April. Iron Worker apprentices getting class credit for working on the project were: Victor Labach, Brian Russo, Ron Sather, Chris Estoos, Shane Jones, Jake Crow, Kathryn Lakey, Davis Curley, Kyle Schmidt, Brandon Lesbo, Mark Fleet, Mike Billeter, Greg Fitzhugh, and Seth Meeks. Assisting the apprentices were instructor Mark Lautenschlager (project supervisor) and Iron Workers Apprenticeship Coordinator Lee Worley.



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# Not your grandfather's workforce, but it's still his unemployment insurance system in Oregon

By JOY MARGHEIM

Let's say you often bike to work and your Oldsmobile stays in the garage half the work week. On a day when you drive, you get into an accident. Although you dutifully pay insurance every month, your claim gets denied. "Sorry," your insurer says, "you don't drive enough."

It's crazy, right? But that scenario is not too different from what many laid-off Oregon workers experience when attempting to collect unemployment insurance (UI) benefits.

Oregon's antiquated UI program often excludes part-time and temporary workers whose employers paid into the system on their behalf. Modernizing

the program so that it better serves today's workforce is more urgent today, as a severe recession leaves more Oregonians without work.

UI is good for workers, businesses and employers. The temporary wage benefits help keep the families of laid-off workers afloat. Local merchants are better off when unemployed workers continue spending on housing, groceries and other basic needs. And once business conditions improve, it helps employers call back the experienced workers they need.

To be more effective, however, the system must be updated to reflect changes in the workforce. Established in 1935, UI was designed when the labor force mostly consisted of male breadwinners who worked full time. Today's workplace looks vastly different, with more women, part-time and temporary workers.

Currently, laid-off part-time workers can collect unemployment benefits only if they are willing to accept full-time work. For many, full-time work is not an option — if they are balancing work with caretaking responsibilities, for example.

Part-time workers are a group that is too big to leave out. One in four Oregon workers labors part time, and those

workers' employers pay into the system on their behalf, just as they do for full-time workers.

UI rules also disregard up to six months of recent earnings when figuring eligibility. Therefore, Oregonians who work intermittently or have recently returned to work after a period of unemployment or caretaking duties may have difficulty qualifying.

These and other UI rules shrink the pool of workers covered. Today, only about half of unemployed Oregonians collect UI benefits.

That's bad news for the 46,700 Oregonians who have lost their job since February of 2008, when the downturn began. According to the latest data from the Oregon Employment Department, state unemployment stands at 9 percent, its highest level since April 1985.

Now is a good time for Oregon to upgrade its UI system, not only because of rising unemployment but also to take advantage of funding that may come out of Washington, D.C. Congress is considering an economic stimulus measure that would offer an incentive for states to modernize their UI programs. By modernizing, Oregon would get about \$91 million from the feds, according to the National Employment Law Project.

To qualify for the federal funding, however, Oregon would need to change its UI eligibility criteria to allow workers to count more of their recent work experience. Twenty other states and the District of the Columbia already have enacted this improvement, which helps workers who recently entered the workforce or who work intermittently to qualify for unemployment benefits. Most of those who would benefit are low-wage workers.

Oregon can improve UI further. It can eliminate barriers for part-time workers, allow workers to get their benefits immediately rather than having to wait a week for their first check, boost the benefits for workers who have children to support, and permit low-wage workers to complete a job training program while they collect unemployment benefits. Other states have taken those steps, and so should Oregon.

Just as you don't drive your grandfather's Oldsmobile, Oregonians shouldn't be stuck with their grandfathers' unemployment insurance system. The time to bring Oregon's UI system to the 21st century is now.

*(Editor's Note: Joy Margheim is a policy analyst with the Oregon Center for Public Policy. She can be reached at [jmargheim@ocpp.org](mailto:jmargheim@ocpp.org).)*

## AFSCME #2067 donates \$20,000 to help elderly, poor heat homes

SALEM — Members of AFSCME Local 2067 donated \$20,000 to four energy assistance agencies that help the elderly and other low-income residents pay their winter heating and water bills.

Donations of \$5,000 each went to Oregon HEAT, a non-profit assistance agency; Salem Electric, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action, and Salem's water and sewer department.

AFSCME Local 2067 represents over 600 members at the City of Salem.

Since Dec. 1, the local also made cash donations of \$20,000 to various branches of the Oregon Food Bank network.

"We believe it's very important for us to be good citizens and participants in our community," Local 2067 President Jack Tucker told e-lert, an online newsletter of Oregon AFSCME Council 75. "City employees are real people, too — we live in the local communities, we pay taxes and we have a vested interest in making our communities better. As a group, we're always looking for ways to give back to our community. It's a high priority for this active group of union members."

Tucker works in the City of Salem's Public Works Department.

## Witt sponsors bill allowing UI aid for part-timers

SALEM — Oregon State Rep Brad Witt is sponsoring a bill that would allow unemployment insurance benefits for part-time workers.

Witt, a union rep with United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 and a former secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO, sits on the Business and Labor Committee.


"The bill is both an economic stimulus and a safety net issue for those who often have to work two or more part-time jobs," Witt said. "This will make an important contribution towards breaking the economy's downward spiral caused in part by inadequate consumer spending. It is also a basic fairness issue: Part-time employees pay into the system just like full time employees. Unemployment insurance is well funded in Oregon so we can fund this and still maintain our reserves."



(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)  
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4275 NE Halsey St., P.O. Box 13150, Portland, Ore. 97213  
Telephone: (503) 288-3311  
Editor: Michael Gutwig  
Staff: Don McIntosh, Cheri Rice  
Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and SW Washington. Subscriptions \$13.75 per year for union members.  
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## Lots at stake for workers

# Labor has full plate before Washington Legislature

By **DON McINTOSH**  
Associate Editor

OLYMPIA — State lawmakers assembled here Jan. 12 for what will surely be a crisis session of the Washington Legislature. Washington state government's share of the global recession is a projected \$5.7 billion revenue shortfall in the next two-year budget. Unlike the federal government, states have to balance their budgets. So unless there's a full-scale federal bailout of state governments, Washington lawmakers and Gov. Christine Gregoire will be weighing spending cuts and revenue increases.

Workers have a big stake in those decisions, and representatives of the state's labor movement will lobby and testify in the weeks and months leading up to the April 26 close of the legislative session.

Grappling with the budget won't be the only topic, though. Organized labor also expects the Democratic majority to deliver on reforms — such as extending the right to unionize, setting up a fund to provide paid family leave for workers, and requiring payment of the prevailing wage on mixed public-private construction projects.

Most of labor's political efforts are coordinated through the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) — the statewide body chartered by the national AFL-CIO. In the fourth most unionized state in the nation, WSLC represents most major unions except the Washington Education Association, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters. About 500 local unions are affiliated, with a combined membership of about 400,000. And WSLC sees itself as the advocate for working people in general, not just of union members, said spokesperson David Groves.

WSLC is calling on lawmakers to put more money in the hands of unemployed workers, which could help stimulate the economy. Washington's unemployment insurance trust fund has \$4 billion in reserves, a much higher level than most states. Gov. Gregoire is proposing to tap the fund to add \$45 a week to unemployment insurance benefits. Business groups have vowed to fight the proposal.

WSLC supports it, and also wants to see a rule change so that individuals can get unemployment if they quit because they're relocating to where a spouse has found a new job.

Last fall, responding to the budget shortfall, Gov. Gregoire announced a state government hiring freeze. Since then, the budget picture has worsened to the point where state worker layoffs are on the table. But her December budget proposal to the Legislature crossed the line for several unions. The governor didn't ask lawmakers to fund the modest raises that had just been agreed to in contract bargaining with

several state worker unions. Three public employee unions filed suit for breach of contract — the Washington Federation of State Employees (an affiliate of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which represents most state employees); SEIU Local 775, which represents home health care workers; and

## Aside from the economy and the state budget, WSLC's top reform priority ... is the Worker Privacy Act.

SEIU Local 925, which represents childcare workers. The legal dispute had not been resolved as of press time.

Basically, the governor's office is arguing economic necessity, whereas the unions counter that the governor has to ask to renegotiate the raises, and can't just unilaterally dump the contract. And they say the governor's budget failed to suggest alternatives — like ending corporate tax breaks.

Washington has no personal income tax, so public services rely on the property tax, sales tax, and a business gross receipts tax; receipts from the last two have fallen significantly with the drop-off in sales and business activity. Cutting back on corporate tax breaks would be one way to increase revenue without raising taxes. A tax break for producers of bull semen has been the most singled out for ridicule, but all told there are about 600 business tax exemptions, totaling tens of billions of dollars. WSLC isn't proposing that they be eliminated wholesale, just that they be looked at to see whether they accomplish their purposes, and whether those purposes are worth the cost to the treasury at a time when public agency budgets are facing severe cuts.

Aside from the economy and the state budget, WSLC's top reform priority this year is the Worker Privacy Act. Under the bill, workers could not be disciplined for refusing to attend workplace meetings at which issues of individual conscience are to be discussed — including whether to support unionization, but also matters of religion, politics, or charitable giving.

WSLC also wants to extend state-administered collective bargaining rights to community college faculty (possibly the last major group of public workers without that right) and to performing artists at small symphonies and opera companies not covered by the National Labor Relations Act.

And WSLC, which is a member of the Healthy Washington Coalition, wants to see more progress toward making sure all Washingtonians have

health insurance. That means no cuts to the state's program of health insurance for children from low-income families. And it means a decision on how to move forward on a program of comprehensive health care reform.

Under Senate Bill 6333, passed last year, a citizen task force hired a consultant to account for five major proposals to overhaul health care; that gives lawmakers a menu of options to choose from.

"We think health care reform is part of economic recovery," Groves said. "To take the burden off business and working families ... frees up money to create jobs and spend money in other areas that help the economy."

The labor council also wants lawmakers to stop stalling and make a decision on how to fund a paid family leave benefit they approved in 2007. The program would replace up to \$250 a week of lost wages for workers who take family leave after the birth or adoption of a child. The benefit would apply only at workplaces with 50 or more employees, the same workers who now have a federal guarantee of unpaid family leave. The problem with unpaid family leave is that workers can't afford to use it. So the modest benefit would make a difference. Except Olympia never decided how to fund it: Would it come from a 2 cents per hour payroll tax on workers, or a penny each from workers and employers, or even from unemployment insurance fund? Whichever, it's time to get it off the ground, WSLC will argue.

Meanwhile, the Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council (WSBCTC), which pools the political agendas of the state's building trades unions, will focus on proposals to expand apprenticeship opportunities; bring unemployment insurance

rules into compliance with federal standards; and give the state better tools to make employers comply with workers' compensation coverage requirements.

Thanks to previous rounds of legislation, most public works projects in Washington require at least some work be done by apprentices — opening up chances for new workers to gain skills. State-certified apprentice numbers have doubled since 1999, and now stand at close to 16,000. This year, WSBCTC hopes to extend the apprentice utilization requirement to construction projects on higher ed campuses.

"It's a policy statement," said WSBCTC Executive Secretary David Johnson. "If you're going to bid on public work, you need to make some commitment to training the future workforce."

WSBCTC also will push a bill targeting "bid shopping," in which general contractors, after getting a contract, play subcontractors against each other to see which will do the work most cheaply. The bill would require contractors to name their subcontractors when they get a contract.

And WSBCTC will bring back a bill to expand the requirement that workers employed on public construction projects be paid the prevailing wage. One idea would be to require private sector projects to pay prevailing wage if they're given public money in the form of tax incentives or lower-than-market-value public land. Another would have the state begin to collect data on wages paid to out-of-state workers making pre-fabricated parts used in public construction, such as pre-cast concrete forms.

For information and regular updates, union members can visit the Washington State Labor Council Web page at [www.wslc.org](http://www.wslc.org).

Members who want to get involved in WSLC's legislative efforts should plan to attend a half-day legislative conference Thursday, Feb. 26 at the Olympia Red Lion Inn.

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## Friend of labor tapped for NLRB chair

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Wilma Liebman has been designated by President Barack Obama to chair the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

As an NLRB member over the past eight years, Liebman has challenged the Bush Administration on workers' rights.

"The Board's Republican majority made it harder to form unions through

majority sign-up, limited the ability of illegally fired workers to recover back pay, and allowed employers to discriminate against union supporters in the hiring process," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

Liebman was first appointed to the NLRB by President Bill Clinton in 1997. Her current term expires in 2011.

Before joining the NLRB, Liebman served from 1994 to 1997 at the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, first as special assistant to the director and then as deputy director. She began her legal career as an NLRB staff attorney in 1974, then served on the legal staff of two unions: the Bricklayers and the Teamsters.

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The filing deadline for  
Board Positions 1 and 4 is March 19, 2009*

## Congress passes Lilly Ledbetter 'fair pay' bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — By a 61-36 vote, the U.S. Senate on Jan. 22 passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Bill.

The legislation overturns a 2007 Supreme Court ruling that said workers who are discriminated against in pay could sue only within the first 180 days of being hired. In practical terms, advocates said, that barred all pay discrimination cases, since workers often do not discover the discrimination until long afterwards.

In the case of Lilly Ledbetter, the gray-haired grandmother from Gadsden, Ala., did not discover her paychecks as a supervisor in the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. plant had been shorted until near the end of her 19-year career. She sued and won \$3.5 million in back pay and damages.

Appeals lowered the damage payout, but the high court — on a 5-4 vote — threw out the case entirely.

The five justices, all men appointed by Republican presidents, including two named by George W. Bush, said anti-discrimination law allows suits only within 180 days of being hired, or 300 days in some cases. Any time after that, and workers can't file a lawsuit.

Ironically, Ledbetter told Press Associates Inc. during a congressional hearing that rank-and-file female workers at the plant suffer little or no pay discrimination because they are covered by a Steel Workers Union contract. As a supervisor, she was not.

"The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act is a modest and targeted response to a harm-

ful and unjust ruling that made it just about impossible for victims of pay discrimination to seek justice in the courts, no matter how severe the discrimination they face," said Debra Ness, president of the National Partnership for Women and Families, one of the lead organizations that lobby for fair pay and female workers' rights.

All 36 Senate votes against the bill came from male Republicans. The GOP also provided the entire opposition in the House, which passed the bill soon after the Democratic-run 111th Congress opened.

Senate Democrats of both sexes voted unanimously for the bill. They were joined by the four female Senate Republicans and Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania.

President Barack Obama has signed the legislation into law.

## Officers elected at labor council in Vancouver

VANCOUVER — Mike Carnahan of Electrical Workers Local 48 was re-elected secretary-treasurer of Clark, Skamania, West Klickitat Counties Central Labor Council in an election held Jan. 22.

Shannon Walker of Office and Professional Employees Local 277 was tapped president; Judy Kuschel of AFSCME Local 313 was elected vice president; and Rick Thompson of Machinists Lodge 63 was re-elected sergeant-at-arms.

Walker succeeds Cager Clabaugh of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 4. He did not seek re-election.

Elected to the Executive Board were Lucy Carrier of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, Roy Jennings of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, Roben White of Painters Local 10, and Scott Orrell of ILWU Local 4. Mark Rauchenstein of International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers Local 17 was re-elected a trustee.

## Marion, Polk, Yamhill CLC elects Munger president

SALEM — Joe Munger of Steelworkers Local 8378 has been elected president of the Marion, Polk, Yamhill Counties Central Labor Council. He succeeds Dave Tischer of the Laborers Local 320, who did not seek re-election.

Richard Swyers of AFSCME Local 2067 was re-elected secretary-treasurer and Rosalie Pedroza of Service Employees Local 503 was re-elected vice president.

Terms of office are three years.



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# Official Notices

## BAKERY, CONFECTIONERY, TOBACCO WORKERS AND GRAIN MILLERS 114

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, followed by a 10:30 a.m. General Board meeting, at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 204, Portland.

## BOILERMAKERS 500

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 14, at 2515 NE Columbia Blvd., Portland.

## BRICKLAYERS AND ALLIED CRAFTWORKERS 1

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

## CARPENTERS 1715

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17, preceded by a 5 p.m. Executive Board meeting at 612 E. McLoughlin, Vancouver, Wash.

## CEMENT MASONS 555

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

## CLARK, SKAMANIA & W. KLICKITAT COUNTIES LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, preceded by an Executive Board meeting, at the ILWU Local 4 Hall, 1205 Ingalls St., Vancouver, Wash.

## COLUMBIA-PACIFIC BUILDING TRADES

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Tuesdays, Feb. 10 and Feb. 17, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

## ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, in the Executive Boardroom. Sound and Communication Unit meets 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, in the Meeting Hall. Residential Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, in the Dispatch Lobby. Vancouver Meeting, 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, at Round Table Pizza, 5016 NE Thurston, Vancouver. Wasco Unit meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, at Pioneer Center, Bingen Meeting Rm., 971 NE Washington St, White Salmon, WA. Coast Unit meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, at Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria. Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 18 and March 4, in the Executive Boardroom. Electrical Women of Local 48 meets 5:30 p.m. Fri-

day, Feb. 20, at 5th Quadrant, 3901b N. Williams, Portland.

Marine Unit meets 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, in the Meeting Hall. Bylaws Committee meets 5:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 16, in the Executive Boardroom.

General Membership Meeting, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, in the Meeting Hall. Show-up early for sandwiches. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Meetings are at 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland, unless otherwise noted.

DEATH ASSESSMENTS: The following death assessment has been declared for Feb. and is payable at 50 cents: No. 2197, Floyd Stuck.

## ELECTRICAL WORKERS 280

Bend Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at the IBEW/UA Training Center, 2161 SW First St., Redmond.

Joint Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, at 33309 Hwy 99E, Tangent.

Executive Board meets 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, at 32969 Hwy. 99E, Tangent, OR.

## ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at Courtyard Marriott, 435 NE Wasco St., Portland. **NOTE LOCATION CHANGE.**

## EXTERIOR & INTERIOR SPECIALISTS 2154

Members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 1125 SE Madison, Suite 207, Portland.

## FIRE FIGHTERS 1660

Members meet 8 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at 4411 SW Sunset Dr., Lake Oswego.

## GLASS WORKERS 740

Eugene area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 9, at Best Western Grand Manor Inn, 971 Kruse Way, Springfield.

Salem area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at Candalaria Terrace, Suite 204, 2659 Commercial St. SE.

## INSULATORS 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11. Members meet 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 13. Meetings are at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

## LABOR ROUNDTABLE OF SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

Delegates meet 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 13, at Hometown Buffet, 7809-B Vancouver Plaza Dr., Vancouver, Wash.

## LABORERS 320

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at Joe Edgar

Hall, Teamsters' Complex, 1850 NE 162nd Ave., Portland.

## LABORERS 483 MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

Members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th Ave., Portland.

## LANE COUNTY LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 1116 South A St., Springfield.

## LANE, COOS, CURRY & DOUGLAS BUILDING TRADES

Delegates meet at noon Wednesday, Feb. 25, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Pkwy., Springfield.

## LINOLEUM LAYERS 1236

**PLEASE NOTE:** The following meeting is "Special Call" to vote to give the negotiating committee strike sanction. Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

## MARION-POLK-YAMHILL LABOR COUNCIL

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, followed by a 7 p.m. general meeting at 2110 State St., Salem.

## METAL TRADES COUNCIL

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 12. Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24. Meetings are at the IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

## MID-COLUMBIA LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

## MILLWRIGHTS & MACHINERY ERECTORS 711

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 28, preceded by a 9 a.m. Executive Committee meeting, at the Carpenters Hall, 2205 N. Lombard St., Portland.

## NORTHWEST OREGON LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

## PILE DRIVERS, DIVERS & SHIPWRIGHTS 2416

Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 27, preceded by a

6 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 2205 N. Lombard, #10, Portland.

## PORTLAND CITY & METROPOLITAN EMPLOYEES 189

Executive Board meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10. General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24.

Meetings are at 6025 E. Burnside St., Portland.

## ROOFERS & WATERPROOFERS 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12. Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, March 5. Meetings are at 5032 SE 26th Ave, Portland (503 232-4807)

## SALEM BCTC

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 5, at the IBEW 280 Training Center, 33309 Hwy 99E, Tangent.

## SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

Portland members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

Medford area members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, at Wild River Pizza, 2684 N. Pacific Hwy., Medford.

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at the Local 16 Hall, 4748 Franklin Blvd., Eugene.

Coos Bay area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, at Abby's Pizza, 997 First St., Coos Bay.

Portland area VOC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

## SIGN PAINTERS & PAINT MAKERS 1094

Members meet 3:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 16, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

## SOUTHERN OREGON CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

## UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 20, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Astoria area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, at the Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane, Astoria.

Bend area members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at the Local 290 Training Center, 2161 SW First, Redmond.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 3, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 517 Railroad St., Brookings.

Coos Bay area members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb.

24, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Eugene area members meet 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 4816 S. 6th St., Klamath Falls.

Medford area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, at 950 Industrial Circle, White City.

Roseburg area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, at the Roseburg Labor Temple, 742 SE Roberts, Roseburg.

Salem area members meet 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, at 1810 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, at the Eureka Training Center, 832 E St., Eureka, Calif.

## USW 1097

Members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 18, preceded by a 3 p.m. Executive Board meeting, in the union office building, 91237 Old Mill Town Rd., Westport.

## Mardi Gras gala to raise funds for Share program

VANCOUVER — Several labor unions are helping Share, a non-profit organization that provides shelter, food and emergency services for people in Southwest Washington, through sponsorships at its fundraising events.

The first event of the year is a Mardi Gras Gala, Saturday, Feb. 21, from 5 to 11 p.m. at the Vancouver Hilton Hotel. The gala includes wine and hors d'oeuvres, a New Orleans-style dinner, casino-style gambling and silent and live auctions.

Tickets are \$75.

For information on sponsoring a Share event or to buy a ticket, call Doug Smith at 360-750-4436, extension 303.

## Annual 'Faith-Labor Breakfast' Feb. 24 at Portland church

The annual "Faith-Labor Breakfast" will be held from 7:15 to 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at Immaculate Heart Parish, 2926 N. Williams Ave., Portland. Cost for breakfast is \$7.

The event is sponsored by Portland Jobs with Justice, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and the Northwest Oregon Labor Council.

Clergy, lay leaders and union members are invited to attend

For more information, or to register, call Jobs with Justice at 503-236- 5573.



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## Retiree Meeting Notices

### ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 12 at the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd Ave., Portland. All retirees are welcome to attend.

### CARPENTERS

Retired Carpenters meet for lunch 11 a.m. Monday, Feb. 9, at Hometown Buffet, 10542A SE Washington St., Portland.

### ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retirees, wives and friends will meet 11 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, at Russellville Park Plaza, 20 NE 103rd Ave., Portland. For reservations and

more information please contact Glenn Hodgkinson at 503 656-0028.

### ELECTRICAL WORKERS 280

Retirees meet between 11:45 a.m. and noon Monday, Feb. 9, at Hometown Buffet on Lancaster in Salem, which is next to Michael's Craft Store. If you have any questions, please give Don Ball a call at 541-327-3388.

### GLASS WORKERS 740

Retirees meet 11 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, at Izzy's Pizza & Buffet, 1307 NE 102nd Ave. (and Halsey), Portland.

### MILLWRIGHTS 711

Retirees meet noon Wednesday, Feb. 18, at Hometown Buffet, 10542A SE Washington St., Portland.

### NORTHWEST OREGON LABOR RETIREES COUNCIL

Business meeting from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday, Feb. 9, at 1125 SE Madison, Suite 100G, Portland.

### OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17 at the AFSCME office, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 503 -239-9858.

### SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, at Izzy's (Eastport Plaza), 3846 SE 82nd, Portland.

### UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Portland.

## IN MEMORIAM

**SHELLEY HEROCHIK**, a labor educator and communicator, died Jan. 14 at age 58 of complications from diabetes. In the Portland labor community, she's best known for her work locally with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

Born Shelley Glotzer, she grew up in Linden, New Jersey and married John Herochik in 1976. She earned a bachelor's degree from Douglass College and a doctorate in education from Rutgers University in 1982, where she taught labor history. She next went to work as an educator for New Jersey Local 65 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and later for New York Local 122.

She helped register union workers to vote and get out the vote for New York mayor David Dinkins in 1989. In 1991, her husband got a job as Portland Rose Garden Arena production manager, and the two moved to the Portland area.

She worked for two years for Southwest Washington Congresswoman Jolene Unsoeld. After Unsoeld lost reelection in 1994, Herochik was hired as SEIU western region representative.

She also worked on SEIU's national health care reform campaign and helped organize a Portland rally attended by First Lady Hillary Clinton.

In 1997, she was hired by then SEIU Local 49 secretary-treasurer Rick Henson as field director. She served as strike spokesperson during a 33-day walkout by 2,000 support workers at Kaiser Permanente. Henson lost his election in 2000, and Herochik went to work as a reporter at the Portland Business Journal. She also wrote for BUILDERnews magazine.

To be nearer to families, she and her husband moved to Chesapeake, Virginia, in 2005. She took a part-time job teaching writing, philosophy and business, and advising students at the Chesapeake campus of Cambridge College, a Massachusetts based school for working adults.

Herochik is remembered by Portland unionists as a big-hearted fighter for justice with a fierce commitment to unions and working people.

After a memorial service in Chesapeake, Herochik was interred in New Jersey.

## Labor Law Conference slated Feb. 27 in Portland

The 13th annual Oregon Labor Law Conference will be held Friday, Feb. 27, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the IBEW Local 48 union hall, 15937 NE Airport Way.

The event is sponsored by Local 48, the Oregon AFL-CIO, the Oregon State and Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Councils, and the Northwest Oregon Labor Council.

Presenters will include Richard Ahearn, regional director of the National Labor Relations Board; manage-

ment attorney Rick Liebman of the firm Barran Liebman; and Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian.

The conference organizer is Norm Malbin, in-house attorney for Local 48. The purpose of the conference is to provide information that will help union activists do their job better and help them avoid legal liability.

For more information, call Kristi Straight at 503-889-3660 or Malbin at 503-889-3669.

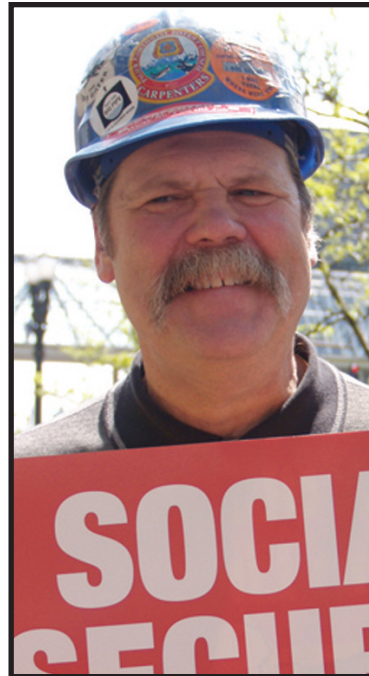
# Dennis steps down as president of Carpenters local, regional council

Bruce Dennis, a longtime local leader within the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, has resigned as president of Portland-based Local 247 and as president of the five-state Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters. Both are unpaid positions.

Until August, Dennis was also a full-time union representative at the regional council. He and three others were let go following the regional council elections, at which he won reelection as president.

Based on age and years of service, Dennis, 57, was eligible for the pension benefit offered to union staff, but not while he continued to serve as a union officer. So the decision to resign the unpaid elected offices was an economic one, he told Local 247 members in November — and arrived at after some soul-searching. Dennis has spent much of his life in the union.

A Northeast Portland native and Parkrose High grad, Dennis said he was first exposed to the Carpenters while he was a long-haired anti-war student who had enrolled in Portland State University to avoid the risk of going to Vietnam. Dennis got a work-study job in the university facilities department, and picked up skills from a former Carpenters member who encouraged him to look into the union. When Dennis graduated in 1973 with a general studies degree, he promptly joined Local 247 as an apprentice carpenter.



BRUCE DENNIS

After 15 years in the trade, Dennis ran for union office. He won election as trustee in 1988, full-time staff rep in 1990, local president in 1992, and regional council president in 1996.

Now that he's no longer in the union leadership, Dennis said he's using his free time to do things he enjoys, but hasn't had time for — fishing, working on his 1964 Corvette, helping a friend remodel. He sings in the choir at Trinity Lutheran Church. He serves on the board of the IBEW

& United Workers Federal Credit Union.

And he has more time to act on his beliefs. Among his biggest concerns are that big-dollar campaign contributions make the political system unresponsive to regular voters, and that NAFTA-style trade policies have sold out the working class. Dennis, his hardhat covered in union stickers, has been a regular presence at anti-free trade rallies. Last fall he campaigned door-to-door for Portland Commissioner Amanda Fritz and Multnomah County Commissioner Judy Shiprack. And he's active in the Oregon Working Families Party, a union-backed third party.

Carpenters are allowed to continue to work part time while collecting pension benefits, so Dennis also has returned to working at the trade, taking occasional dispatches for short-term jobs. He said he will continue to attend Local 247 meetings, and is freer to speak his mind now that he's not chairing them.

"We've got a good union," Dennis said. "It's not perfect, but it's up to us to make it better."

To fill its vacancy, Local 247 will hold nominations at its February general membership meeting, and vote on a replacement at the March meeting.

The Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters will nominate and elect a replacement at a Feb. 15 delegates meeting in Spokane.



James Coon



Raymond Thomas



Cynthia Newton



Kimberly Tucker



Chris Frost

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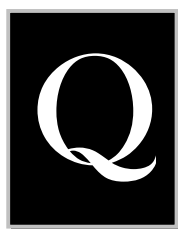
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# Myths About the Employee Free Choice Act

Despite the need for reform, critics of EFCA continue to misinform the public about the bill and hide the serious shortcomings of current labor law. In an attempt to set the record straight, following are myths and realities of the Employee Free Choice Act.

**MYTH:** EFCA will prevent the use of secret-ballot elections.

**REALITY:** EFCA does not strip workers of their right to choose a secret-ballot election to decide whether to select — or not to select — a union representative. EFCA simply gives workers the additional option of selecting a union representative by majority sign-up.

Under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), there are three ways for workers to form a union:

1) By secret-ballot: The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) will conduct a secret-ballot election to select a bargaining representative if at least 30 percent of workers have signed a petition or authorization cards in favor of a union. If a majority of workers voting select a particular union, the NLRB will certify that union as the employees' bargaining representative. EFCA does not change this process.

2) By voluntary card-check recognition: An employer can voluntarily decide to recognize a union representative if a majority of employees have signed authorization cards in favor of the union. EFCA does not change this process.

3) By NLRB-ordered recognition: As a last resort, the NLRB can order an employer who has engaged in unfair labor practices (that make a fair election unlikely) to recognize a labor union if a majority of employees have signed authorization cards in favor of the union. EFCA does not change this process.

EFCA would simply add a fourth choice for workers seeking to form a union. The legislation would require the NLRB to certify a union representative if a majority — more than half — of workers sign authorization cards in favor of the union.

The majority sign-up, or "card-check," option would streamline the union selection process for workplaces that have a majority of workers who want to join a union. This is the same majority that would be voting in a secret-ballot election. Moreover, the majority sign-up process already exists, but only if the employer chooses to recognize it. EFCA would extend the right to select a union representative via the majority-sign up process to workers themselves.

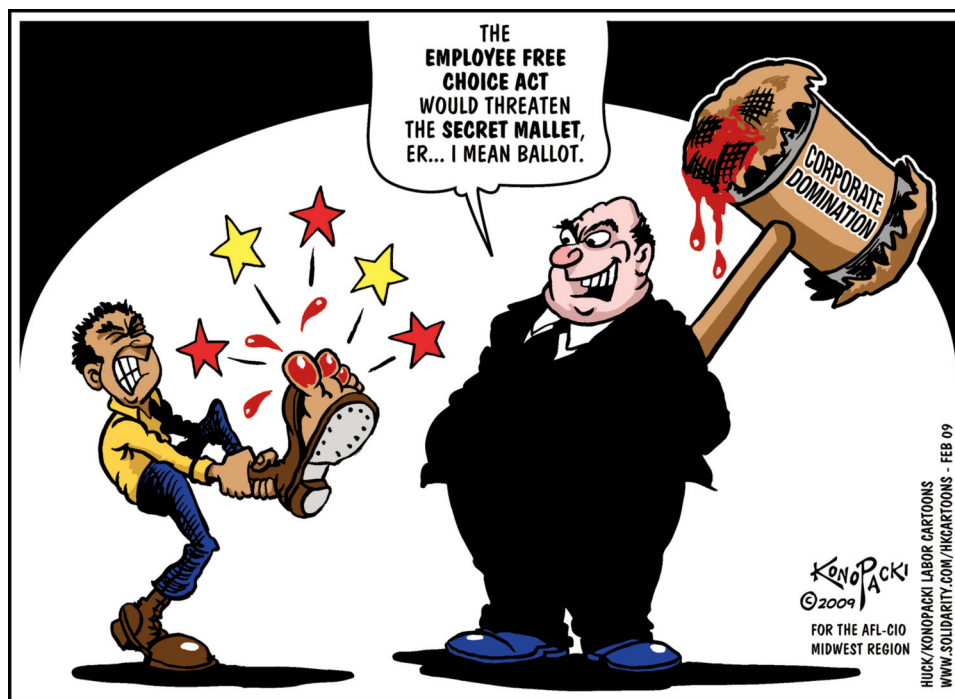
**MYTH:** Secret-ballot elections are the fairest way to select union representation.

**REALITY:** Secret-ballot elections in the union context can leave employees vulnerable to virtually unchecked employer intimidation and coercion.

Under current law, once workers have petitioned the NLRB to hold a secret-ballot election, there is no set timetable for holding that election. Employers who are determined to prevent the formation of a union often use this period to threaten, discriminate against, demote, dock the pay of, and even fire pro-union employees. Studies have shown that one-quarter of private-sector union organization drives result in employee firings, and one out of every five workers who openly advocate for a union is fired. Unfortunately, current law includes weak remedies that fail to deter employers from engaging in these practices. At best, the NLRA will order the employer to stop its wrong-doing and reinstate an improperly fired employee and force the employer to pay back-pay, that is, unless the employee has found a job in the interim.

EFCA would toughen the penalties against employers who en-

gage in these unfair labor practices. In addition to ordering an employer to stop the practices, the legislation would require employers to pay employees who are fired as a result of union organizing activity, during an organizing campaign or first contract drive, treble damages (i.e. back-pay, plus liquidated damages two times that amount). The bill would also impose civil fines of up to \$20,000 per violation against employers who willfully or repeatedly violate workers' rights in forming a union.



**MYTH:** Secret-ballot elections are the most democratic way to choose a union.

**REALITY:** Though EFCA gives workers the choice to select a secret-ballot election or the majority sign-up process, these secret-ballot elections are nothing like our federal, state, or local candidate elections. The NLRB's election process, for example, stifles free speech and democratic debate by restricting the ability of unions and pro-union workers to communicate with employees, while allowing employers free access to workers every day.

Unlike other elections, where candidates are allowed equal access to voters during the campaign, current labor laws allow employers to bar unions from the workplace and refuse access to employee contact information until just days before the election. While strict limits apply to when and where pro-union employees can campaign to form a union, employers can require workers to attend anti-union meetings during work hours, one-on-one or in a group. Employers may also direct supervisors, who control pay and promotion, to deliver anti-union messages to workers and attach anti-union literature to paychecks. A recent survey found that employees who have gone through the NLRB election process are twice as likely to report employer coercion as those who participated in a majority sign-up process.

EFCA would give workers the option to choose a different, simpler, and fairer method of union selection — majority sign-up, which reflects a key tenet of Democracy — majority rule.

**MYTH:** Majority sign-up is untested and will increase intimidation and harassment of workers by labor unions.

**REALITY:** Majority sign-up has been well-tested for over 70 years. Further, under EFCA, worker intimidation and/or coercion by any party, including unions, will remain strictly prohibited.

Majority sign-up is nothing new. Workers have been forming unions through majority sign-up since 1935. The method for obtaining authorization cards is already established and used via the voluntary card check recognition and the secret-ballot election processes. Indeed, more workers form unions via card check than via secret-ballot elections. In 2004, approximately 375,000 work-

ers joined AFL-CIO unions through majority sign-up, while approximately 73,000 workers used the NLRB election process. (AFL-CIO, "Over 70 Years of Experience with Majority Sign-up.")

While the critics of EFCA claim that, under the legislation, unions may intimidate workers, under current law, employers, employees, and unions are barred from engaging in unfair labor practices. Improperly obtained authorization cards are already invalid and cannot be counted towards majority sign-up. Moreover, in more than 70 years, there have been very few instances of fraud or misrepresentation in obtaining card signatures. Nevertheless, to ensure the integrity of the card check process, EFCA would require that the NLRB develop guidelines for selecting a bargaining representative via majority-sign up, including model language for authorization cards and procedures to verify the validity of authorization cards.

**MYTH:** EFCA would require "public" union card signings.

**REALITY:** EFCA would preserve current confidentiality requirements, which require the NLRB to keep authorization cards and the identity of signers confidential to protect workers from employer retaliation.

**MYTH:** EFCA will "silence" employers.

**REALITY:** Nothing in EFCA alters the rights of employers to speak out against a labor union.

Under the legislation, employers would still be free to campaign against a union, as long as they do not threaten or intimidate workers. EFCA only strengthens penalties for employers who engage in unfair labor practices.

**MYTH:** EFCA's mediation/arbitration guidelines will force unwanted contracts on employers and employees.

**REALITY:** EFCA does not force unwanted first contracts on parties acting in good faith; the legislation, however, would give parties an incentive to come to the bargaining table.

Under current law governing the first contract process, there is no effective penalty for refusing to bargain with newly certified union representatives. As a result, employers may "stonewall" the first contract and effectively block the benefits of a labor union. A recent study found that 34 percent of union election certifications do not result in a contract for workers.

To get parties to the table, EFCA provides a starting schedule and a framework for negotiations. The parties have 90 days to bargain on their own and may extend negotiations for as long as they need to. If the negotiations are unsuccessful, either party can seek help from a mediator with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS), which enjoys an 86 percent success rate. If after 30 days mediation fails to result in a first contract, FMCS can refer the dispute to an arbitration panel, but the parties can still extend the period by mutual agreement or agree to return to the bargaining table. Only if the parties agree to arbitration and arbitration fails to result in a first contract will the arbitration panel impose contract terms on the issues the parties have not yet decided. Even then, the contract is only binding for two years and can be amended by written consent of the parties.

## Did You Know?

# 34%

of workers lack a collective bargaining agreement one year after voting for union representation, due to weak labor law enabling employers to avoid bargaining with employees.

# Drawn-out campaign at Oregon bakery attests to need for EFCA

As organized labor prepares to battle in the nation's capital for a long-sought labor-law reform, the story of a year-and-a-half-long union campaign at a mid-sized Lake Oswego bakery shows why reform is necessary.

The Employee Free Choice Act — the union movement's number one priority in Congress — would make it easier for workers to obtain union representation and a first contract.

In short, the law would get rid of the danger, delay and uncertainty that kill most union campaigns when an employer is determined to resist them.

Eighteen months ago, union organizer Georgene Barragan took a job at Breadsong Bakery, a specialty bakery

in Lake Oswego, to try to unionize the workers. Breadsong, a unit of a subsidiary of agribusiness giant Cargill, employs about 30 production workers at about \$11.25 an hour. Some of its bread is sold under brand-names that are otherwise baked by members of Bakery, Confectionery Tobacco Workers & Grain Millers Local 114. The union wanted to prevent members' work from slipping away to a nonunion shop — and give the non-union workers a chance to earn the significantly higher union wage and benefit package — \$19.80 an hour and fully paid family health insurance coverage.

Barragan approached co-workers one by one, and by September, a major-

ity had signed cards saying they wanted to be represented by Local 114. Under the Employee Free Choice Act, that would have been enough for them to get a union. But under current law, employers don't have to accept that method of showing majority support, and can insist on an election. That usually means up to six weeks during which managers and outside consultants mount a full-court press to talk workers out of unionizing.

That's what happened at Breadsong. The union filed for an election Nov. 7, and a date was set — Dec. 19, 2007. Union organizers will recognize what followed as a textbook case of the standard anti-union playbook — a set of

proven tactics that employers have developed over decades to defeat union campaigns.

Managers called in workers one by one and interrogated them about the union campaign. Almost daily mandatory meetings were held, at which managers showed anti-union propaganda videos and handed out fliers warning workers about the dues they'd have to pay. And 12 days before the election, they fired Barragan — the most outspoken union supporter.

The union cried foul, and filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board, asking that the election be postponed. The federal agency agreed with the union that the law had been violated, and put off the election. An NLRB agent brokered an out-of-court settlement with the company. Barragan was reinstated June 24, 2008. A few months after that, a new date for the

election was set — Oct. 10, 2008.

But in the three weeks prior to the second scheduled election, the employer offensive ramped up again, says Local 114 Secretary-Treasurer Terry Lansing. Over a period of two weeks, the company held seven mandatory meetings at which company managers, corporate lawyers and the general manager spoke against the union. The company issued an annual wage increase to workers at other nonunion locations, but told Breadsong workers they couldn't have it because of the union campaign — and that they might not get a raise for a year if they vote the union in.

Workers were told they wouldn't be able to participate in the company stock ownership plan if they unionized. They were told, falsely, that dues would start coming out of their checks as soon as the union was voted in. Company rep-

(Turn to Page 11)

## ...Rolling out new EFCA campaign

(From Page 1)

ference launching the ad campaign.

It should be easier in the House, though, where Samuel expects the legislation will pass with a larger majority than in the 110th Congress. (It passed 241-185 in the House in 2007.)

Among elected officials in Oregon and Washington, support for the Employee Free Choice Act is particularly strong. The legislation's co-sponsors include U.S. Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell of Washington, and Ron Wyden of Oregon; and U.S. Reps. David Wu, Earl Blumenauer, and Peter DeFazio of Oregon, and Brian Baird of Southwest Washington. All

are Democrats.

Newly-elected U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon campaigned in favor of EFCA, and newly-elected Congressman Kurt Schrader (D-5th Dist.) of Oregon signed onto the bill as a co-sponsor on his first day in office.

Besides the Leadership Conference, other groups in the pro-worker campaign include the National Consumers League, the NAACP, La Raza Unida, People for the American Way, the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, the National Partnership for Women and Families, Human Rights Watch, the Center for American Progress, the Americans for Democratic Action, and Interfaith Worker

Justice.

Speakers at the press conference warned the media about a misinformation campaign coming from business groups — particularly the U.S. Chamber of Commerce — about the Employee Free Choice Act. Most notably, the claim that EFCA would “destroy the secret ballot” in union recognition elections. The speakers noted unionists could still choose the election option, or majority signup (card-check). That choice would be up to the workers, not the bosses, under the bill, they said.

*A list of myths and realities about the Employee Free Choice Act is posted on the facing page.*

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# Labor says replace I-5 bridge now

Local labor officials told Portland City Council it's time to bring to a close the long and drawn out debate over replacing the Interstate 5 bridges.

"We've been talking about this for a long, long time now. It's not something new," said Judy O'Connor, executive secretary-treasurer of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council. "This has been studied and studied. The longer we wait, the more expensive it gets."

Portland City Council held a public hearing on the subject Jan. 29. O'Connor was among 75 people signed up to give testimony.

"It's time to poop or get off the pot," said Lynn Lehrbach of Teamsters Joint Council 37. "We need to build a bridge that will last 100 years — and build it 12 lanes."

The Teamsters want 12 lanes, in part, to allow the center lanes to remain relatively unobstructed for movement of freight. "Moving in and out of lanes can be very dangerous," Lehrbach said. "The more lanes, the better the trucks can get through."

Labor groups are generally in agreement that the current six-lane bridges should be replaced with new bridges

that have the capacity to accept 12 lanes, with light rail and pedestrian and bike access.

City Commissioner Randy Leonard appears to be on board with that plan, but it's not clear what other city commissioners, the mayor, or Metro councilors favor. The two councils held a joint work session Jan. 26 to talk about the replacement bridge. From that meeting, it appears opposition to the 12-lane option will come from Metro councilors Carl Hostika and Robert Liberty, and new City Commissioner Amanda Fritz.

City Commissioners Nick Fish and Dan Saltzman and Mayor Sam Adams look to be undecided, as do Metro President David Bragdon and councilors Rod Park, Carlotta Collette, Kathryn Harrington and Rex Burkholder.

A 39-member Columbia River Crossing task force spent three years discussing what, if anything, should be done to the current bridges connecting Oregon and Washington. The task force favors 12-lane replacement bridges with light-rail and bike and pedestrian crossings.

Anticipated cost at this point is between \$3.1 billion to \$4.2 billion — which also includes work on six nearby interchanges.

Both the City Council and Metro will make their recommendations known by Feb. 25. The bridge, in whatever form, is not slated to break ground for at least two years.

# Obama reverses Bush executive orders, creates new Middle-Class Task Force

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Barack Obama reversed three Bush-era anti-worker executive orders and created a Cabinet-level task force to rebuild the nation's middle class. In a White House ceremony Jan. 30, attended by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and other union leaders, Obama signed three executive orders that reverse a series of orders by then-President George W. Bush, which govern the way federal contractors deal with unionized workers.

The three new executive orders:

- Require federal service contractors to offer jobs to current workers when contracts change.
- Reverse a Bush order requiring federal contractors to post notice that workers can limit financial support of unions serving as their exclusive bargaining representatives.

• Prevent federal contractors from being reimbursed for expenses meant to influence workers deciding whether to form a union and engage in collective bargaining.

"We cannot have a strong middle class without strong labor unions," Obama said before signing the orders. "We need to level the playing field for workers and the unions that represent their interests."

Obama also announced creation of the White House Task Force on Middle Class Working Families to develop and coordinate policies to rebuild the nation's middle class. Vice President Joe Biden will chair the task force. A Web site, [www.strongmiddleclass.gov](http://www.strongmiddleclass.gov), has been set up where workers can submit ideas about how the economy has affected them and ideas on changing it.

## Teamsters begin withdrawing funds from KeyBank over strike at Oak Harbor

Teamster local unions across the country have informed KeyBank of Cleveland, Ohio, that they intend to end their financial relationship with the bank. KeyBank and its parent company, KeyCorp, are the primary lender for Oak Harbor Freight, based in Auburn, Wash., where 470 Teamsters have been on strike for the past four months.

The strike involves more than 100 members of Portland-based Teamsters Local 81.

It is estimated that local Teamster unions and sister unions maintain approximately \$18 billion in assets through KeyCorp and its subsidiaries.

In a letter addressed to local unions, Teamster President Jim Hoffa asked that they contact KeyCorp immediately

and begin the process of transferring their business to a comparable service provider.

"KeyBank, which operates branches in several states, is playing a critical role in the ongoing dispute by providing funds that allow Oak Harbor Freight Lines to survive," Hoffa said.

Teamsters started bargaining for a new contract with Oak Harbor in October 2007 and so far the union negotiators have met with management over 25 times. Union members went on strike Sept. 22, 2008 to protest Oak Harbor's violations of U.S. labor laws. This is the first strike in the five decades that Teamsters have represented employees of Oak Harbor Freight.

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# ...Recession deepens: *But help is on the way*

(From Page 1)

months off. Plans for federal infrastructure investment could help.

As of press time, the U.S. House had passed and the U.S. Senate was considering a \$819 billion rescue bill — HR 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The bill increases benefits to the poor and unemployed, lowers taxes on working people, and increases spending on a wide array of infrastructure improvements in order to put people back to work and stimulate economic activity.

The bill would extend unemployment benefits by several months, increase the weekly benefit \$25 for all unemployed workers getting benefits, and for the first time, allow unemployed workers who don't have insurance to get on Medicaid — or have up 65 percent of their COBRA payments reimbursed so they can keep employer-provided insurance. It would also increase funding for food stamp benefits, student financial aid, housing assistance, and employment and training programs. It would increase the earned income tax credit, which provides checks to households too poor to owe taxes. And it would provide a "13th check" (a bonus of one-month's worth of benefits) to 7.5 million of the poorest people in America — the blind, disabled, and seniors who are entitled to Supplemental Security Income.

A tax credit for individuals would put up to \$500 a year directly onto paychecks, through reduced withholding. Workers too poor to be withholding income tax would get the money as a direct subsidy.

To increase employment, the bill appropriates money for highway construction, mass transit, to expand weatherization, to modernize the nation's electricity grid, promote energy efficiency, improve maintenance at the Forest Service and National Park Service, do environmental cleanup, do wildland fire management, renovate elementary and secondary schools, repair Veterans Administration hospitals, improve maintenance at Veterans cemeteries, and expand broadband Internet Service in rural areas.

State governments would get grants totaling almost \$40 billion to stabilize budgets rocked by the downturn.

And there are additional provisions. Employers who get funds under the act will be required to use the government's E-Verify system to make sure



**About 650 people attended a Jan. 31 "town hall" on the economic crisis organized by Portland Jobs With Justice. One message resounded — the federal response needs to be bolder, and it needs to stimulate the economy from the bottom up. Speaking above is Martin Hart-Landsberg, an economics professor at Lewis & Clark College in Portland.**

their employees are legally allowed to work in the United States.

All Oregon and Washington Democrats voted for the bill and all House Republicans voted against it.

If passed, the federal stimulus is expected to have a multitude of local trickle down effects. For example, Portland Public Schools could get \$20 million for infrastructure improvements, said spokesperson Matt Shelby. Shelby said the money would go to energy efficiency upgrades — new roofs, boilers, duct work, and windows.

The bill also expands the borrowing authority of the Bonneville Power Administration by \$3.25 billion. BPA is the federal power agency that supplies much of the electricity in Washington and Oregon. BPA spokesperson Scott Sims said that means a green light for nine projects that otherwise would not have happened, including 4,700 megawatts worth of new wind farms, several new substations along the Columbia Gorge and I-5 corridor, and

600 miles of new transmission line. Oregon's share of the projects could be the equivalent of about 1,000 construction jobs.

"Infrastructure spending is good bang for the federal buck," said Oregon Congressman Peter DeFazio in a press statement after the House vote. "It has been proven time and again as a way to create jobs and stimulate and an ailing economy."

State governments don't have the bottomless credit of the federal government, but several legislators told Oregon labor leaders Jan. 24 that wouldn't stop them from digging deep to fund infrastructure.

"We are not going to sit on our hands in this session of the Oregon Legislature and do nothing," Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney told participants at a legislative conference organized by the Oregon AFL-CIO.

As of press time, the Legislature was expecting to finalize this week a bill to authorize \$175 million in bonds to pay for transportation projects and deferred maintenance and capital construction projects at 11 state agencies, 17 community colleges, and seven universities. Gov. Ted Kulongoski pledged to sign the bill, which he said would enable projects from Portland to Pendleton to break ground by April 1.

Even local governments were getting in on recovery plans. On Jan. 13, Portland City Council unveiled a "Portland Job Creation and Business Stimulus Package" that consisted of fast-tracking, over the next 12 months, city public works and construction projects that had been slated for construction over one to three years.

"It's very encouraging that on all levels — federal, state, and city — government leaders are talking about what they can do to get infrastructure projects out the door as soon as possible," said building trades Executive Secretary-Treasurer Mohlis.

What remains to be seen is whether the economy can be rescued by public construction jobs and extra money in the hands of the poorest. The current wave of stimulus plans differs from those of the Bush years in that they emphasize infrastructure spending over tax cuts. "Infrastructure," DeFazio said, "is an investment that we can in good conscience pass on to future generations, as opposed to a tax cut that will be gone, with little to no benefit to the economy, in a matter of months."

## ...Bakery workers get third crack at joining Local #114

(From Page 9)

representatives asked workers to air grievances, and promised to do better.

One grievance about payroll handling was fixed on the spot.

At a final meeting, two days before the election, the company general manager Dave Thurston told workers that a vote for the union would be interpreted as a vote of no confidence in the well-liked local plant manager, Lou Flores. Flores' job might be on the line, in other words.

According to several witness affidavits, Flores then pleaded for his salvation in the meeting, and publicly addressed two employees he had just hired: "Both of you guys asked me for a chance ... now I'm asking you for a chance. Please, guys, vote no for the union."

"That changed the entire vote," said Lansing. "Now you're no longer voting on whether or not you want to be represented. Now you're voting on the fate of another human being."

On election day, in a majority-immigrant workplace, a known pro-union employee was called into the office and informed that his green card had expired; he was sent home until he could fix the problem.

When the vote was counted, it was 17-10 against unionization.

How does a majority on cards become a minority on ballots? Partly through legal methods, and partly through illegal methods.

Again the union filed charges, listing nine separate objections to the employer's conduct, and arguing that Cargill's violations of the law poisoned the atmosphere and made the results invalid. An agent investigated and made a determination.

Required attendance at almost-daily anti-union harangues? Legal.

But blaming the union for the company's decision not to give raises — and remedying a grievance right before the election? Those crossed the line, the NLRB found. The election was nullified, and a new one set — for Feb. 12.

Will Breadsong workers decide to join the Bakers Union? We'll find out. But one thing is certain: If EFCA had been the law of the land, this group of 30 would now be more than a year into their first union contract, earning something closer to the union standard. Under EFCA, workers would unionize as soon as a majority sign cards. Employers would be deterred from violating workers' rights by stiffer penalties. And if the two sides can't agree in four months, a neutral arbitrator can impose a fair first-time contract.

"We don't spend our members money frivolously," Lansing said. "We look at each case and ask, first of all, 'Can it go union?' and secondly, 'can the employer afford to pay a decent wage?' If we feel those things can happen, then we will do everything we can to help those workers. We feel that Cargill can afford a decent wage."

## Bailed-out bank uses taxpayer cash to fight EFCA

By **SETH MICHAELS**  
National AFL-CIO

When Congress entrusted billions of dollars to banks last fall, it wasn't with the expectation taxpayer money would be used to hustle for political campaign cash, spread disinformation and fight legislation aimed at improving the economy for everyone. Yet, that's exactly what Bank of America did last fall, coordinating CEOs and lobbyists to oppose the Employee Free Choice Act.

According to reporting by Sam Stein in The Huffington Post, within three days of receiving \$25 billion in taxpayers' money, Bank of America officials hosted an Oct. 17 conference call with key corporate leaders to strategize about the upcoming election and how to fight the Employee Free Choice Act in the next Congress.

Stein obtained audio of the call, led by mega-lobbyist Rick Berman and Bernie Marcus, founder and former CEO of Home Depot. The call, which included major finance industry figures and representatives from big corporations (including AIG, itself a recipient of \$85 billion in taxpayer-funded loans), featured apocalyptic rhetoric and demands that those on the call donate to anti-Employee Free Choice Act politicians.

The audio Stein obtained features a hysterical Marcus calling the Employee Free Choice Act "the demise of a civilization" and insisting that corporate honchos who didn't donate big sums to anti-worker incumbent senators "should be shot, should be thrown out of their [expletive] jobs."

In the audio of the call, Berman lays

out the corporate lobbyists' post-election strategy: to try and scare members of the Senate up for election in 2010, hoping to create the appearance of unpopularity and weaken senators' resolve. The disinformation campaign is already under way, with a bevy of anti-Employee Free Choice Act front groups dropping huge sums of money from undisclosed corporate donors into TV ads and lobbying.

Why are these industry leaders so scared of the Employee Free Choice Act? Because they know the same thing that the bill's proponents know: that right now, U.S. labor laws are badly tilted in favor of employers, and under the Employee Free Choice Act, workers, not companies, would have a say in forming a union and bargaining for health care, pensions, fair wages

and better working conditions.

Bank of America and its fellow corporations have been the only winners in the economy for a long time, and they'll stop at nothing to keep it that way.

The better question, of course, is why, after receiving billions from the federal government, Bank of America used its time and resources to coordinate a disinformation campaign aimed at soliciting political donations and preventing a stronger, fairer economy and the freedom to form unions and bargain. It's a sign of the hubris and lack of accountability in the corporate community that Bank of America thought they could get away with this — and it's a sign that the Employee Free Choice Act is badly needed to restore fairness to the economy.

# Union members march in Inauguration Day parade

By **JAMES PARKS**  
National AFL-CIO

WASHINGTON, D.C. — For Maria Somma, it was a dream come true. The native of Vietnam and naturalized citizen was one of the 265 union members who braved freezing temperatures to join representatives from across the country and the armed forces to participate in the official inaugural parade for President Barack Obama. The contingent of union members taking part in the parade included members from the AFL-CIO, Change to Win and the National Education Association.

With 15 union members riding a union-made float and 250 marchers alongside, the workers' contingent was one of the largest groups in the parade. This is the first time in recent memory that workers have participated in the parade.

Fred Mason, president of the Maryland State AFL-CIO, who spearheaded the drive to include the workers' contingent in the parade, said nearly 1,500 groups applied to participate in the parade and only 100 were selected.

"The fact that 265 workers will be

in the parade is a real testament to the importance of working people and their issues to the well-being of the country," Mason said.

Somma, who lives in Pittsburgh and is a member of the United Steelworkers, rode the float representing the AFL-CIO constituency group Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA). She says labor's participation shows the power of the American Dream for all people. "It's very exciting to be welcoming a person of color into the White House and to be a part of history," she said. "This is an incredible achievement for this country. For Barack Obama to come from his background and rise to the top is not the typical American story. His inauguration is part of the transition of this nation to fully embrace all its citizens."

Marching with a banner, "America's Workers: United for Change," participants also carried flags that represented the issues most important to working families: an "Economy That Works for All," "Great Public Schools," "Good Jobs Green Jobs" and "Health Care for All." The overall



A contingent of union members from the AFL-CIO, Change to Win and the National Education Association took part in the Jan. 20 inaugural parade in Washington, D.C. With 15 union members riding the union-made float and 250 marchers alongside, the workers' contingent was one of the largest groups in the parade. Photo by Patrick G. Ryan, courtesy of the National Education Association.

theme of the labor float is "Honoring America's Workers."

The float was created by union carpenters, welders, sculptors and painters. Constructed of steel, wood and foam, it was more than 17 feet high and 24 feet long. Outlines of the diverse "faces of labor" surrounded the float as a salute to the backbone of the

United States — "the hardworking men and women who make our nation strong."

Several of the marchers in the workers' contingent said the inauguration signaled a sea change in the way the White House views workers.

"The country is coming together in a way I've never seen in my life," said

Latasha Carpenter, a member of Communications Workers of America Local 2108 in Beltsville, Md. "I'm proud that we have a president who is embracing us all as union brothers and sisters. It is so important we stand united and strong to ensure health care, good jobs, and the Employee Free Choice Act."

Riding on the float and representing the Alliance for Retired Americans had a special significance for Jimmy Allen of Bowie, Md. The retired member of the Amalgamated Transit Union, who is black, says he's seen a lot in his life, but "when it comes to an African-American being president, I said I wouldn't believe it until it happened. Now I can tell my grandchild that she can grow up and be president of the United States and mean it."

Even if you couldn't be there, you can honor this historic event with a commemorative AFL-CIO Obama T-shirt. The long-sleeve, union-designed and printed shirts say "Yes We Can" with the Inauguration Day date, January 20, 2009, under an image of President Obama. The T-shirt sells with a suitable-for-framing commemorative poster for \$30 from the The Union Shop Online. Go to ([unionshop.afl-cio.org](http://unionshop.afl-cio.org)) to order.

## Oregon Tradeswomen Inc. awarded EPA grant for 'green' job training

Oregon Tradeswomen Inc. has received a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help train workers in environmental cleanup skills.

EPA's Brownfields Program awarded 13 grants of \$200,000 each to non-profit organizations, workforce investment boards, and state and local governments, geared toward cleaning up contaminated properties and turning them into productive community assets.

Using the grant funding, OTI will train 120 participants during eight six-

week sessions. Students will be recruited from low-income, minority, unemployed or underemployed female populations in the Portland area. Trainees will receive Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response certification, as well as a certification of graduation from a state approved pre-apprentice program.

Following completion of the course, at least 78 trainees will be placed in environmental jobs. OTI has developed partnerships with labor unions that operate apprenticeship programs and with potential employers.

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