



NORTHWEST

LABOR
PRESSVolume 107
Number 20
October 20, 2006
Portland

Organized labor says Kulongoski is best bet for working people

Following a relatively quiet primary, labor unions have stepped up the pace to re-elect Ted Kulongoski as governor of Oregon.

On Oct. 14 several hundred union members gathered at Kulongoski's campaign headquarters in Northeast Portland to meet the governor and later fan out across the city to remind people to cast their ballots before 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 7. Ballots will be mailed starting Oct. 23.

"It's a question of 'which side are you on?' If it's the rich getting richer ... that's the other guy," said Bill Lucy, international secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, to a sea of green AFSCME T-shirts.

Also joining Kulongoski and Lucy at the rally were U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain, and Tina Kotek, a candidate for the Oregon House of Representatives.

"It's all about getting our people to vote," said Chamberlain. "What we do will make the difference in wins and losses. Turnout is everything."

Kulongoski has endorsements from virtually every labor organization in the state, including the Oregon AFL-CIO, the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, the Oregon Machinists Council, Oregon AFSCME Council 75, the Fire Fighters, and the Columbia River District of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, to name some.

Change to Win labor federation unions, such as United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, Teamsters Joint Council 37, Service Employees Locals 503 and 49, and the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters, also are supporting Kulongoski.

The independent Oregon State Police Officers Association and the Oregon Education Association are on board for the incumbent governor as well.



Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski (left) shakes hands with retired Machinist Max Loucks during a campaign fundraiser at the Longshore Union hall in Northwest Portland. A former union Steelworker, Iron Worker and labor attorney, Kulongoski has received endorsements from unions and councils taking positions in local politics.

Chamberlain said Republican challenger Ron Saxton is trying to buy his way to the governor's office. "He's got money from big oil and drug companies, and a good old boy half-million-dollar club," Chamberlain said. "We know who will run this state (if Saxton is elected)."

Kulongoski thanked the crowd for

turning out on a Saturday morning. "This will make the difference. It's why we will win," he said.

Now through election day, union members will be reaching out to colleagues at work and at home. The Oregon AFL-CIO has hired crews to make phone calls to union households, and Working America, a "community affili-

ate" of the AFL-CIO, which has 30,000 members in Oregon, is involved. Working America is made up primarily of middle-income workers who sympathize with labor's goals but do not belong to a union.

Many building trades union members are handbilling construction sites

(Turn to Page 11)

'Yes' on Ballot Measure 44

Oregon AFL-CIO backs just one measure

Every two years, Oregonians get to be supreme legislators for a day, voting yes or no on questions framed by others in the ballot initiative process. This year, nine initiatives got enough signatures to win a place on the ballot.

The state's unions, at least those affiliated with the Oregon AFL-CIO, have taken positions on six of the nine.

Just one, Ballot Measure 44, got the state labor federation's support. If Measure 44 passes, any Oregon resident who doesn't have insurance covering prescription drugs can enroll in the state's fledgling prescription drug bulk purchasing pool. It's a common-sense idea: Get all the buyers together to bargain a better deal on drug prices (kind of like the idea of a union, actually). But drug companies saw the proposal as a threat to their

profits, and used their powerful lobby to control the minds of enough Oregon legislators to stop the bill. A union-backed coalition did the work to get this on the ballot. Now it's up to voters.

On three measures — 39, 42 and 43 — the Oregon AFL-CIO took no position.

The rest of the measures are opposed by the AFL-CIO.

Measure 40 requires that Oregon's seven Supreme Court judges and 10 Appeals Court judges be elected by district instead of statewide, as they are now. Opponents say the measure is likely to politicize the courts. Voters rejected this before in 2002.

Measure 41 would allow an income tax deduction equal to the federal exemptions deduction to substitute for state exemp-

tion credit. Did you catch that? Should detailed tax policy be made by ballot measure, or is that the job legislators are elected and paid to do? In a nutshell, this would reduce state tax revenues by about 6 percent, or roughly \$400 million a year. That would necessitate cuts in public education, public safety and human services.

Measure 45 would bring term limits back to the Oregon Legislature: State House reps would be limited to six years, state senators would be limited to eight years, and no one could serve longer than 14 years total in the Legislature. Oregon had voter-approved term limits from 1992 to 2002, when the Oregon Supreme Court threw them out. Opponents say legislators al-

(Turn to Page 7)