

...Election results have Oregon labor thinking big in '07

(From Page 2)

backing.

• **Raise the corporate minimum**

tax. Two-thirds of corporations doing business in Oregon pay just \$10 a year in income tax because they are able to

show no profit on the books. Kulongoski proposes to increase that minimum to a sliding scale of \$250 to sev-

eral thousand, depending on the size of the company.

• **End the corporate kicker.** Oregon has a unique law whereby if income tax revenue exceeds what the state economist predicts, the difference is refunded to taxpayers, including many out-of-state corporations. Kulongoski is proposing to keep the corporate income tax "kicker" and use it to create a rainy day fund for when revenues are lower than predicted.

• **Raise the cigarette tax.** Kulongoski proposes to raise the cigarette tax to the level paid in neighboring Washington, dedicating the proceeds to fund health care for Oregon children.

• **Roll back wasteful tax loopholes.** SEIU wants lawmakers to re-examine tax breaks passed by past legislatures. If the breaks didn't accomplish the purposes their backers claimed, like creating new jobs, then the breaks would be eliminated, returning millions of dollars to public coffers.

• **Offer amnesty to corporate tax cheats, and increase penalties on those who don't come forward.** For companies that have used off-shore tax havens and other legally murky loopholes, SEIU wants Oregon to offer them a chance to come clean and pay up, or else face stiffer penalties if found in violation of the law.

FIXING HEALTH CARE

• **Tighten the screws on insurers.** A labor-backed proposal would make health insurers justify premium increases before a public commission.

• **Bulk up bulk buying.** Kulongoski is proposing to open the state's prescription drug purchasing pool to small businesses.

• **Rein in hospital overbuilding.** To avoid costly and duplicative overbuilding, labor wants to see a strengthened requirement that hospitals demonstrate

a community need before building new facilities.

• **Shine a light on hospital pricing.** Unions will be looking to support some method for patients to compare prices and outcomes between hospitals.

OTHER IDEAS

• **Roll back privatization.** Are Oregon taxpayers getting ripped off by local versions of Halliburton? SEIU wants the Joint Ways and Means Committee to scrutinize contracts to make sure the work couldn't be done cheaper and better in-house.

• **Open up the political system to third parties.** To eliminate the "spoiler" dilemma, the union-backed Working Families Party of Oregon will be pushing for a "fusion" bill, which would allow third parties to use their ballot line to endorse major party candidates.

• **OLCC bill.** United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 will lobby for an Oregon Liquor Control Commission bill that would decriminalize the unintentional sale of alcohol to minors by grocery clerks.

• **Expand the scope of public employee union contracts.** To do something about the problem of mandatory overtime, SEIU wants to add safety and staffing levels to the list of "mandatory subjects of bargaining."

• **Prohibit transit workers from striking.** Amalgamated Transit Union will be pushing to get transit workers added to the list of public workers prohibited from striking. At first glance, that seems odd: Why would a union seek to give up the right to strike? The answer: For public workers who can't strike, the law requires binding arbitration to settle contract disagreements between labor and management. In theory, arbitrators impose the most reasonable of the two positions.

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