

Union groups to host Labor Summit in Portland April 16 to explore job outlook

A "Workforce Development Labor Summit" for the Portland-Vancouver region will be held Monday, April 16, from 9 a.m. to noon at the NECA-IBEW Training Center, 16021 NE Airport Way, Portland.

The event, co-sponsored by the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, Labor's Community Service Agency and regional Workforce Development Boards, is geared toward union leaders, apprenticeship coordinators, regional workforce board members, policymakers and employers to gain an understanding of strategies being designed as they relate to publicly-funded workforce and economic development.

The keynote speaker will be Allen Alley, deputy chief of staff to Gov. Ted Kulongoski. Panels comprised of key players in the manufacturing sector will talk about labor markets and economic outlooks.

The summit is free of charge. To register, call 503-231-4962.

California Nurses Association to affiliate with national AFL-CIO

OAKLAND, Calif. (PAI) — The Oakland-based California Nurses Association (CNA) and its affiliated National Nurses Organizing Committee, a 75,000-member union concentrated in California, Maine and Chicago, will receive a charter to join the AFL-CIO, the federation's Executive Council decided on March 8.

The charter will take effect May 1 after several details have been worked out, notably agreement by CNA to obey the federation constitution and

agree to "no-raiding" conditions that were set to satisfy the federation's current registered nurses affiliate, the United American Nurses.

The delay will also give United American Nurses time to enact "internal actions" it says it may need to protect itself. The union objected to granting an immediate charter for the California group.

CNA will join other AFL-CIO unions representing nurses around the country, including the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Communications Workers of America, the Steelworkers, and the American Federation of Teachers, who told the AFL-CIO panel considering the application that they did not object to bring the union on board.

But the United American Nurses initially did object after the California group raided its unit at Chicago's Stroger (Cook County General) Hospital several years ago. Thus the conditions were set.

CNA Executive Director Rose Ann DeMoro welcomed the federation's decision, just two days after the AFL-CIO, in a major policy break, decided to campaign for "Medicare for all," expanding Medicare to cover the entire

country. That would replace the current insurer-dominated, expensive company-based private health care system. DeMoro praised the Medicare-for-all policy as a way "to end the national health care nightmare."

Indeed, the federation's health care campaigns were one reason the CNA sought to join the AFL-CIO.

Ironically, the California group is campaigning for even more dramatic change: Government-run single-payer health care.

The union backs House Resolution 676, the national single-payer bill sponsored by Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.). More than 240 labor organizations, including four international unions, back Conyers' bill.

DeMoro said her union would add to the 325,000 registered nurses whom AFL-CIO unions represent as "a prominent voice in that effort" to reform health care.

"RNs, who are at the heart of our health care system, have an especially unique role to play ... to transform our current dysfunctional system to achieve guaranteed, universal health-care for all, based on an improved and expanded Medicare" system, she said.

Circuit City axes 3,400 top-paid hourly workers

Circuit City Stores Inc., the second-largest U.S. electronics retailer after Best Buy Co., fired 3,400 of its highest-paid hourly workers and will hire replacements willing to work for less, reported Bloomberg.com.

The company said it's eliminating jobs that paid "well above" market rates. Those who were fired can apply for their jobs at the lower pay, company spokesman Bill Cimino told Bloomberg.com.

Circuit City, based in Richmond, Virginia, pays about \$10 to \$11 an hour, on average, said Rick Weinhart, an analyst with BMO Capital Markets Corp. in New York. Entry level pay probably is close to \$8 for inexperienced workers, he said.

Meanwhile, Circuit City CEO Philip Schoonover was paid \$8.52 million in fiscal 2006, including a salary of \$975,000. Best Buy CEO Brad Anderson received \$3.85 million, including a \$1.17 million salary.

Bill seeks to overturn NLRB's 'workers are supervisors' ploy

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In a move to protect workers from being arbitrarily deprived of their right to join a union, three lawmakers introduced a bill March 23 to overturn last year's National Labor Relations Board's "workers are supervisors" ruling.

The bill by House Employer-Employee Relations Subcommittee Chairman Robert Andrews (D-N.J.), Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska) and Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.), states simply that a worker cannot be a supervisor unless "for a majority of the working time" he or she is "acting in the interest of the employer" in hiring, firing, disciplining or otherwise managing workers. It also says a worker

cannot be named a supervisor just for "assigning" other people to tasks on occasion.

The legislation is designed to nullify last year's NLRB ruling in what were known as the Kentucky River cases. The Board ruled that workers can be deemed supervisors if they spend a portion of their time — as little as 10 percent — in such "supervisory" duties as telling orderlies to change bedpans.

U.S. labor law does not allow supervisors to belong to a union.

Estimates of the number of workers impacted by the NLRB's Oakwood ruling range from 8 million by the Economic Policy Institute to 34 million by the NLRB's two dissenting members.



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