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## Labor will honor Oregon workers killed on the job

*“Mourn for the Dead. Fight Like Hell For The Living.”*

Mother Jones’s most famous quotation has been at the heart of each Workers Memorial Day since it was first observed in 1989. Workers Memorial Day is a day each year when America’s workers and their unions honor the thousands of men and women killed on the job and the hundreds of thousands more hurt or made ill by workplace hazards.

On this Workers Memorial Day, April 28, events and actions around the nation also will celebrate the more than a quarter of a million working men and

women alive today because of the far-reaching and successful workplace safety battles workers and their unions have won.

The national AFL-CIO estimates that more than 324,000 workers now can say their lives have been saved since the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act in 1970.

Unfortunately, on an average day in the United States, 152 people still lose their lives as a result of workplace injuries and diseases, and another 11,780 are injured, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In Oregon, the AFL-CIO will hold a

memorial rally at noon on Friday, April 27, on the steps of the State Capitol in Salem. The keynote speaker will be Gov. Ted Kulongoski. The memorial service will include a reading of the names of the 69 workers killed on the job in Oregon in 2006, as well as

the 19 Oregon soldiers killed in military service last year. (A list of those names appears on Pages 8 and 9 of this issue.)

The Oregon AFL-CIO also is asking all union members to make arrange-

ments with their employers to observe a moment of silence during their workday. Everyone is invited to the ceremony in Salem.



## Portland union members tell Congress: ‘No new NAFTAs’

By DON McINTOSH  
Associate Editor

A week after Portland-headquartered Freightliner Corporation ended local manufacture of its most famous product line, Freightliner workers gathered five floors below an Oregon U.S. senator’s federal building office to tell him how they felt about it. NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, made it easy for Freightliner to shift production, demonstrators said; trucks they made in Portland will be now made in Mexico by workers making less than one-fourth their wages.

In 1993, when NAFTA passed 234-200 in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ron Wyden was a congressman, one of the two-fifths of House Democrats to vote in favor. President George Herbert Walker Bush negotiated the treaty, but President Bill Clinton pushed it through Congress. The passage of NAFTA led many labor union members to feel the Democratic Party had turned its back on working people.

Since NAFTA, eight other “free-trade” agreements have passed Congress, including agreements with Jordan, Chile, Singapore, Australia, Morocco,

Bahrain, and Oman, plus CAFTA — an agreement with the Dominican Republic and five Central American countries. Congress also voted to remove human-rights-related restrictions on trade with China and Vietnam.

Now, NAFTA-style treaties with four other countries are up for ratification: Peru, Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. Of the four treaties up for approval, the Korean agreement is most likely to impact the U.S. economy. South Korea has almost 50 million people. Its economy is the world’s 10th largest, and one-tenth the size of the U.S. economy. The AFL-CIO says the pact would hurt workers in autos, textiles and electronics. It’s also opposed by unions in Korea. One Korean worker opposed to the treaty set himself on fire in protest.

But some trade watchers think the winds have shifted in Congress. In 1993, NAFTA had the support of 102 Democrats; CAFTA, in 2005, had just 15.

“The old Clintonite version of the Democratic position on trade is in retreat at this point,” said Larry Weiss, executive director of the Citizens Trade

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The week after their layoff, Portland Freightliner workers Sylvann Gilbertson (left), Tony Mims, and Joyce Gover demonstrate outside Oregon U.S. Senator Ron Wyden’s office April 4. Wyden supported NAFTA as a U.S. congressman in 1993, which made it easier for companies like Freightliner to move factories to Mexico.