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## Results from May 15

# Labor chalks up some election victories

Not many Oregonians seemed to notice the May 15 special election, and voter turnout was low in most places. However, politically-active unions were paying attention to the ballot.

Labor prevailed on two out of the four Portland City Charter changes that were on the ballot.

For Portland City and Metropolitan Employees Local 189, an affiliate of the American Federation of State, County

and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the priority was defeating the "strong mayor" charter measure (Measure 26-91), which would have centralized authority over all city bureaus under the mayor and an appointed executive. Voters rejected that measure by a more than three-to-one margin.

The one Portland charter measure that got union support passed 53 to 47 percent. That was Measure 26-92, which gives Portland City Council the authority to approve the budget of the Portland Development Commission. Up to now the PDC has had autonomy in how to spend tax revenue on development projects.

On two other measures, union opposition failed to sway voters. Opposing Measure 26-89, which requires a citizen charter review commission every 10 years, wasn't a high priority for unions, and it passed 3-to-1.

But Measure 26-90, a set of changes to civil service rules, passed 54-46 percent and could harm the interest of some workers. Among other things, the charter measure may open the door to greatly increased use of temps by the City. Under the previous charter, the

City was restricted to using temp workers no more than 860 hours a year. Measure 26-90 removes that requirement. Laborers Municipal Employees Local 483, which opposed Measure 26-90, says there is no telling how many more temps the city might now try to hire.

Several union members were elected to local posts.

Mike Towner, a member of Fire Fighters Local 1660, and Brian Wolfe, a member of Fire Fighters Local 1159, were elected to the Molalla Rural Fire District board of directors. And Local 1660 shop steward Aaron Baker won election as a director of the Woodburn Fire District.

In Pendleton, two union members defeated incumbents on the board of Blue Mountain Community College. Corrections officer Bryan Branstetter, a member of AFSCME Local 3361 and treasurer of the Eastern Oregon Labor Council, won a majority in a three-person race. And elementary school teacher Tony Turner, a member of the Oregon Education Association, won nearly two-to-one.

In Tillamook County, AFSCME Local 2734 helped pass a library levy.

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