

# ...Edwards supports union card-check

(From Page 1) making over \$200,000 a year. "That will pay for it," he said.

Edwards supports labor's top priority bill — the Employee Free Choice Act. The bill, which would allow for card-check recognition and set time-limits for bargaining a first contract, passed in the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this year, but was stalled in the Senate by a filibuster. "If you can join the Republican Party by signing your name on a card, any worker in America ought to be able to join a union by signing a card," Edwards said.

Edwards said he supports workers' right to strike. "When you are walking that picket line and I'm President of the United States, nobody, nobody will walk through that picket line and take your job away from you. Not when I'm President of the United States."

On trade, Edwards said the current policy benefits only multi-national corporations. "Our trade policy has to

be changed," he said. The first change he would make in policy would be to ask: "Is this good for working-class America?" He said any proposed trade deal he signed would have to include worker rights and environmental protections "written in the agreement."

Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain, writing on his blog, said Edwards "hit the ball out of the ballpark in his speech ... On every issue — health care, the war in Iraq, and more, he gets it. Working people are the backbone of our country, and we need to work hard to make sure that a child of a mill worker can have the opportunity to some day run for president."

Edwards went into more detail about labor issues at the Seaside convention, but workers' rights were just as much a part of his message later that night at the Oregon Business Alliance annual awards dinner in Portland.

"I believe we need to strengthen



AFL-CIO President John Sweeney (right) meets Jeff Merkley, a Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate. Sweeney thanked Merkley for challenging incumbent Republican Gordon Smith. The U.S. Senate race in Oregon is targeted a top priority race by the national labor federation.

the right of unions to organize in the workplace," Edwards told business leaders. "The entire world wants to

know whether we, as the richest nation, are going to allow millions of our own people to live in poverty."

# ...Merkley, Novick speak at convention

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Smith in next year's general election — attorney Steve Novick and Oregon Speaker of the House Jeff Merkley — spoke to delegates. Both men have close ties with unions and are considered friends of labor.

Novick is a Harvard graduate who stands 4-feet-9 inches tall and has a hook for a left hand, joked about his stature. "To beat Gordon Smith, it's going to take something a little different. Well, I'm little. And I'm different," he said.

Novick said it might be risky backing an "untraditional" candidate. "But unions are about taking risks. Every time you stand up to the boss, you're taking a risk."

Merkley, who had the unenviable task of speaking right after Democratic presidential candidate John Edwards, asked delegates to envision what could be accomplished with a Democrat-controlled Congress and a Democratic president. "We have a lot of Smith and Bush handiwork to undo," he said.

Merkley, who earned degrees in public policy at Stanford and Princeton, said Oregon deserves a U.S. senator who will fight for fair trade and fight to keep family-wage jobs in America. "We need to create wealth, not strip wealth," he said.

# Activists and unions recognized for efforts

SEASIDE — The Oregon AFL-CIO recognized several union members and union locals for their activities in organizing and politics last year.

The following awards for voter education and mobilization for Labor 2006 were included:

**Highest Number of Volunteer Hours Dedicated to the Labor 2006 Campaign (among international unions):**

*Oregon AFSCME Council 75*

**Highest Number of Volunteer Hours Dedicated to the Labor 2006 Campaign (among Local Unions) tie:**

*Sheet Metal Workers Local 16*

*Communications Workers of America Local 7901*

**Highest Number of Volunteer Hours Dedicated to the Labor 2006 Campaign (as a percentage of members)**

*Tualatin Valley Fire Fighters Local 1660*

**Pat Quigley Award for Most Volunteer Hours for an Individual:**

*Jodi Parker, Laborers Local 320*

**Highest Voter Turnout in the Labor 2006 Campaign of Any Local Union:**

*Musicians Local 99*

**Most Improved Voter Turnout:**  
*Woodworkers, IAM Local W-1*

The following awards for organizing were presented to the following unions:

**Organizing the Most New Members Among Private Sector Unions:**  
*Oregon Nurses Association*

**Organizing the Most New Members Among Public Sector Unions:**  
*Oregon AFSCME Council 75*

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Family, Mill Wrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers



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