



Painters' Kirkpatrick retires

John Kirkpatrick (seated) of Painters District Council 5 gets the treatment at a retirement party on his behalf. Kirkpatrick retired Oct. 1 after 18 years with the council, where he worked as an organizer, apprenticeship coordinator and business rep. Kirkpatrick, 55, is active in safety and health issues and will continue to serve as a labor representative on Oregon's Management-Labor Advisory Committee for Workers' Compensation. He also will continue as chair of the Safe Employment Education and Training Advisory Committee of OR-OSHA and on the Workers Memorial Scholarship Program. Kirkpatrick has received numerous awards from the state for his work on safety and training. He has written and received more than \$350,000 in grants from OR-OSHA, NIOSH and the Environmental Protection Agency that have allowed him to design training curriculum for painting health and safety awareness, respiratory protection, lead abatement, drywall finisher ergonomics and more. In addition to all the job-safety work, Kirkpatrick helped found the Organizers Roundtable of the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council and he represents labor in discussions with the City of Portland on a day labor center.

CLARIFICATION

Oregon AFL-CIO Resolution No. 6 "Illegal Employers" was amended in the Law and Legislation Committee to read: "The Oregon AFL-CIO is on record for increased penalties, including incarceration, for illegal employers and to strictly enforce safety and health, wage and hour, and collective bargaining laws regarding employers who hire and exploit workers without legal status."

The NW Labor Press did not report the amended language in its convention report Oct. 19. The Labor Press regrets the oversight.

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Washington AFL-CIO urges 'No' vote on I-960; 'Yes' on Ref. 67, EHJR 4204

SEATTLE — Washington voters have five ballot measures to vote on in this year's off-year election, and the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, is weighing in on three of them.

The state labor federation is recommending union members vote "No" on Initiative 960, and "Yes" on Referendum 67 and Engrossed House Joint Resolution 4204.

Initiative Measure 960 was placed on the ballot by conservative activist Tim Eyman. It would require voter approval for any kind of tax increase, legislative approval for any government agency fee increase, and advisory votes on taxes enacted without voter approval.

"This measure would allow a small minority of legislators to block everything," said Washington State Labor Council Political Director Diane McDaniel. And, McDaniel said, there would be no pro- or con- statements in the Voters' Pamphlet, only a 13-word description of each item. "We believe that's why we have a Legislature and a governor," McDaniel said, — "to make well-informed decisions for the good of the state, not send everything out to voters to decide."

Referendum 67 would penalize insurance companies if they deny or delay reasonable claims — it allows wronged individuals to sue and get triple damages, plus attorney fees, if they can prove their case. The law doesn't apply to health insurers.

Currently, there is no penalty in

Washington when insurers delay or deny valid claims, and McDaniel says insurance companies are abusing that impunity.

"We're saying 'You pay your premiums on time, you expect them to pay legitimate claims on time,'" McDaniel said.

The Legislature passed this bill as a law, but then insurance companies paid signature gatherers to refer it to voters; now they're spending \$8 million to persuade voters to reject the law, arguing that it's mainly about enriching trial lawyers and that it will lead to increased insurance premiums.

Engrossed House Joint Resolution 4204, the "simple majority" amendment, would let voters approve school district property tax levies by simple majority vote. Currently, because of an earlier ballot measure, there is a 60 percent "supermajority" requirement that is based on voter turnout in previous elections. McDaniel said too many local levies fail with 59 percent of the voters in support.

"It's unfair to expect schools to pass with 59 percent, while stadium, parks, jails levies can be approved with 50 percent plus one vote," McDaniel said.

For WSLC to take a position on a ballot measure requires **two-thirds vote of the Executive Board**. In the case of these three measures, there was complete unity by organized labor.

WSLC didn't take a position on two other measures — one that would restrict prison labor, and one that would

create a state rainy-day fund.

About one-fifth of the Washington electorate — 400,000 Washington voters — are members of union households, and McDaniel said the WSLC is working hard to reach them with mail, phone calls and workplace fliers.

In local races, the Clark, Skamania and West Klickitat Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, also issued voter recommendations. The labor council is calling on union members to vote for Larry Smith and Dan Tonkovich for Vancouver City Council; Al Swindell for Woodland City Council; Jim Irish for La Center mayor; and Arch Miller for Port of Vancouver commissioner.

Washington is moving to a county-by-county vote-by-mail system. Ballots were mailed out to Southwest Washington voters in mid-October and must be postmarked by Tuesday, Nov. 6 in order to be counted. [That's different from Oregon, where mail ballots must arrive by Election Day.]



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