

# Portlander Davidson to head NLRB's Subregion 36

Linda Davidson, longtime agent in the Portland office of the National Labor Relations Board, has been promoted to head Subregion 36, which includes all of Oregon and Southwest Washington.

As officer-in-charge, Davidson, 46, oversees a staff of eight, including three attorneys, two field examiners, and three support staff.

A Portland native, Davidson took the federal civil service exam the year she graduated from Franklin High School — 1979. Before she was hired as a clerk typist at the NLRB Portland office, Davidson had never heard of the NLRB. Since then, it's the only employer she has had.

The NLRB administers and enforces the National Labor Relations Act, conducting workplace elections to determine whether private-sector employees want a union, and investigating, prosecuting and remedying unfair labor practices by employers and unions.

In the 1980s, Davidson enrolled in the agency's "upward mobility" program. The agency paid for her to take college coursework at Portland State University, Portland Community College and Mt. Hood Community College to satisfy the requirements to become a field examiner. She made the cut in 1990. As a field examiner, she visited all kinds of workplaces investigating unfair labor practices and over-

seeing union elections. Meeting people and hearing their stories, Davidson said, was what she enjoyed most.

There will be little of that in the new job, which she started Nov. 5. Instead, she'll direct the work of the other staff. Davidson replaces Cathy Callahan, who left a year ago to take a job heading the Washington State Public Employment Relations Commission.

Davidson lives with her husband in Tigard, where she is an active member of Hall Boulevard Baptist Church. They have three grown children.



LINDA DAVIDSON

## Report says more middle-class Americans are 'hanging by a thread'

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Fewer than one-in-three middle-class families in America is financially secure, and the remaining majority are either borderline or at high risk of falling out of the middle class altogether, according to a new study published by Demos and the Institute for Assets and Social Policy (IASP) at Brandeis University.

Demos is a non-partisan public policy research and advocacy organization headquartered in New York.

"By a Thread: The New Experience of America's Middle Class"

measures economic stability across the American middle class. Based on federal government data, "By a Thread" utilizes a new "Middle-Class Security Index" developed by the two organizations. This index measures the financial security of the middle class by rating household stability across five core economic factors: assets, educational achievement, housing costs, budget and health care. Based on how a family ranked in each of these factors, they were defined as financially "secure," "borderline" or "at risk."

"Much like a common cholesterol test that shows whether someone's cardiovascular health is at risk, the Middle-Class Security Index shows that financial health eludes the majority of the American middle class," said Thomas M. Shapiro, director of the IASP/ Brandeis and one of the co-authors of the report. "It also points to specific areas — like lack of assets — that inhibit financial security."

The Middle-Class Security Index shows worrying trends:

- Only 31 percent of families who would be considered middle-class by income are financially secure.
- One in four middle-class families match the profile for being at high risk.
- One in four middle-class families match the profile for being at high risk of slipping out of the middle class al-

together.

• More than half of middle-class families have no net financial assets whatsoever.

• Middle-class families have median debt of \$3,500 and at least half of them have no assets.

• Only 13 percent of middle-class families are secure in their asset levels, meaning that they have enough to cover most of their living expenses for nine months should their regular income cease; 79 percent are "at risk" in this category, meaning they could not cover the majority of their expenses for even three months. Another 9 percent are "borderline."

• Twenty-one percent of middle-class families have less than \$100 per week — (\$5,000 per year) remaining after meeting essential living expenses. These families are living from

paycheck to paycheck with very little margin of security.

Former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros at a press conference announcing the report noted that over the past century, America's strength depended on a thriving middle class. The post-World War II middle-class boom was no accident, Cisneros said, listing such crucial government programs as the G.I. Bill that opened access to higher education for veterans, home loan guarantees by the Federal Housing Administration and affordable housing for war veterans.

The "Middle Class Security Index" will be updated biennially as new national data become available.

A PDF version of "By a Thread" is available for download at [www.demos.org](http://www.demos.org) or [iasp.brandeis.edu](http://iasp.brandeis.edu).

## ...MESD hires security guards

(From Page 1)

Donald E. Long Juvenile Detention Facility in Portland.

Loving said MESD spent \$100,000 to hire a security firm to monitor picketing. "They say our members could be 'prone to violence,' to use their phrase," Loving said. "In other words, they trust our members to handle Portland's special needs students six hours a day in the classroom, but God forbid

we walk a sidewalk with a picket sign in hand."

Employees nearly struck last year after working under terms of a contract that had expired in 2005. An 11th hour mediation averted a walkout, but it left many hard feelings.

MESD is governed by an elected seven-person Board of Directors. The directors serve four-year terms and are not compensated for their services.

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