

# ...Gordon Smith votes 'wrong' on many unionization bills

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Top Republicans voting in agreement with the AFL-CIO were Frank LoBiondo, Frank Pallone and Michael Ferguson, all of New Jersey, at 25-8, 24-9 and 23-9-1, respectively.

Democratic presidential hopeful Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio came in at 23-4, with six absences, and Republican candidates Ron Paul of Texas and Duncan Hunter of California scored 4-23-6 and 3-27-3, respectively.

(Editor's Note: Officially, Rep. Peter DeFazio has the best lifetime AFL-CIO COPE voting record in the Pacific Northwest at 94 percent (221-15). He is followed by Earl Blumenauer at 92 percent (110-10); David Wu at 90 percent (89-10); Brian Baird at 89 percent (85-11), and Darlene Hooley at 86 percent (100-16). Greg Walden leads Republicans from the Pacific Northwest at 20 percent (20-78).

## U.S. SENATE

Five Senate Democrats, including one presidential hopeful, scored 100 percent, as did one Independent lawmaker. Sixteen other Democrats missed just one vote among the 34 se-

lected by the AFL-CIO.

In the Pacific Northwest, Democrats Ron Wyden of Oregon and Patty Murray of Washington led the way at 31-2 and 32-2 — or 94 percent, respectively. Washington Democrat Maria Cantwell scored 85 percent (28-5-1), and Oregon Republican Gordon Smith tallied 51.5 percent (17-16-1). Smith is up for re-election this year.

The top two GOP senators supporting labor issues — Sens. Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine — each voted in agreement with the AFL-CIO on 22 of the 34 votes it tallied (65 percent). Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) was just behind with a 20-14 mark.

It should be noted that many of Smith's "wrong" votes dealt with collective bargaining rights for workers. The most egregious to labor was his opposition to the Employee Free Choice Act. Labor's top priority legislation, the bill would have allowed for certification of a union when a majority of workers signed cards designating the union as their bargaining representative ("card check").

The legislation passed overwhelmingly in the House, and it had enough votes to pass in the Senate, but a Re-

publican filibuster meant backers would need 60 votes to shut it down and move to a vote on the bill. Smith was among the Republicans voting against cloture. He also would have voted against the bill.

Smith also voted against labor on several amendments giving airport screeners greater collective bargaining rights and whistleblower protections. In one key vote used in the interim scorecard, Smith and his fellow Republicans — under pressure from the Bush Administration — tried to kill a 9/11 Commission recommendation that simply restored the right of airport screeners to unionize. Republicans lost on a party-line vote in the Democratically-controlled Senate.

Smith again voted opposite labor on another Republican-led filibuster, this one blocking an increase in the federal minimum wage. The so-called "clean increase" again had enough votes to pass in the Senate, but it failed to get the 60 votes needed to end the filibuster.

Wyden, Murray and Cantwell (along with 30 other Democrats) picked up "wrong" votes on a cloture vote on an immigration reform bill. The AFL-CIO opposed S. 1639 because amendments had made it "too anti-worker." A Republican-led filibuster had the final bill bottled up on the Senate floor when a motion was made to invoke cloture (limit the debate). Thirty-three Democrats, including Wyden, Murray and Cantwell, voted "yes" to end the filibuster and

vote on the final immigration reform bill. The vote failed, the filibuster continued and the bill was effectively killed for the session.

Smith, Wyden and Cantwell also voted against the AFL-CIO's position on an amendment to the immigration reform bill that eliminated a new Y-visa guest worker program. The AFL-CIO wanted the Y visa out of the bill because it opened the door for employers to import up to 400,000 temp workers annually to perform permanent jobs throughout the United States. The amendment was rejected 31-64.

Smith and Cantwell added to their "wrong" votes by voting against another amendment to the immigration bill, this one seeking a sunset of the temporary guest worker visa program after five years. That amendment was rejected 48-49.

Front-runner presidential candidates Sen. Barack Obama (D-III) and Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.), voted 23-1-10 and 27-1-6, respectively, with labor. They both missed a large number of votes because they were out campaigning. The immigration cloture vote was their only blemish with the AFL-CIO.

Republican presidential hopeful Sen. John McCain of Arizona was 3-14-17. All of McCain's "right" votes had to do with the minimum wage hike.

The lowest-scoring "Democrat" was Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut. He voted in agreement with the

federation on 25 of the 34 votes.

The lowest-scoring Republican was Sen. Judd Gregg of New Hampshire, who voted in agreement with the AFL-CIO on only three of the 34 votes. Sen. Mike Crapo of Idaho was next, with four "right" votes.

(Editor's Note: Officially, Sen. Patty Murray has the best lifetime AFL-CIO COPE voting record in the Pacific Northwest at 89 percent (132-17). Maria Cantwell is next at 88 percent (73-10), followed by Ron Wyden at 87 percent (106-16) and Gordon Smith at 20 percent (23-90). Press Associates Inc. contributed to this report.)

## Minimum Hourly Wage Rates as of Jan. 1, 2008

Oregon's minimum wage rate became \$7.95 per hour on Jan. 1, 2008. This is the fourth-highest state minimum wage rate in the nation. The national minimum wage rate rose to \$5.85 per hour on July 24, 2007 and will rise to \$6.55 per hour on July 24, 2008.

STATE	RATE
Washington	\$8.07
California	\$8.00
Massachusetts	\$8.00
Oregon	\$7.95
Vermont	\$7.68
Connecticut	\$7.65



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