

...Labor's candidates highlighted

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31,250 doors, and sent over 300,000 pieces of mail, according to a tally distributed by SEIU on election night.

Early union endorsements also helped legitimize candidates — like Kroger, who was relatively unknown.

And union political action committees (PACs) wrote some big checks, especially in the race for attorney general. Union committees contributed close to \$380,000 to Kroger's campaign, over half of the total Kroger raised. Almost all of that came from SEIU (\$312,500) and the Oregon Education Association (\$50,000); The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers gave \$10,000, and five other unions gave lesser amounts.

Unions were the source of most of the \$51,000 in cash and \$65,000 in in-kind contributions Dembrow raised in House District 45.

And union-run and union-supported PACs also contributed at least \$143,000 to the Merkley campaign, according to filings with the Federal Elections Commission.

Merkley spokesperson Matt Canter said labor support was a pivotal factor in Merkley's primary win. "The men and women of the union movement did tremendous outreach," Canter said, "and talked to members about what Jeff did in the Legislature."

"It was absolutely critical that we deliver that win for him," said Orr, the Oregon AFL-CIO spokesperson. "Jeff Merkley has been the most pro-union speaker of the House in decades, and passed a sweeping slate of pro-worker legislation. The bottom line is if people are going to stand with us, we've got to stand with them."

Turnout by members of AFL-CIO unions and Working America was 62.2 percent — 5.1 percentage points higher than the general public. And in



It was all smiles for first-time candidate and union leader Michael Dembrow (right), winner of the May primary in Oregon House District 45. Above, he celebrates with Melissa Unger of Service Employees International Union.

Dembrow's district, the union turnout was 6.2 percentage points higher.

Union activists also celebrated the wins of other endorsed candidates on election night.

- State Sen. Kurt Schrader will be the Democratic nominee for Congress in Oregon's 5th District and will face Republican businessman Mike Erickson in November. Incumbent Democrat Darlene Hooley is retiring.

- Democratic congressional incumbents David Wu, Earl Blumenauer and Peter DeFazio each won their primary races by wide margins.

- Nick Kahl, who had numerous labor endorsements, including the Ore-

gon AFL-CIO, won by 300 votes in East Multnomah County's House District 49, the seat currently held by former Republican House Speaker Karen Minnis. Kahl will face Republican John Nelsen in November.

- Democratic State Sen. Kate Brown, who was supported by SEIU Locals 503 and 49, the Oregon Education Association, and the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council (in a three-way co-endorsement) in her race for secretary of state, won her party's nomination and will face Republican Rick Dancer.

Two other labor-friendly Democrats — State Senators Rick Metsger and



Political newcomer John Kroger (left) won the Democratic primary for attorney general with the help of organized labor. No candidate from another party filed to run, so Kroger will be sworn in next January. Joining Kroger at the Benson Hotel on election night is his brother, Bill.

Vickie Walker — also sought the post, all with some labor support. Metsger and Walker are both in mid-term, so they'll be back on the Senate floor when the 2009 Legislature convenes in January.

- Union Carpenter and organizer Ed Glad had strong union backing in his bid for the Republican nomination in Oregon House District 24 in Yamhill County. His campaign received endorsements and contributions from the

Carpenters, AFSCME, SEIU, the American Federation of Teachers, Oregon Nurses Association, Oregon Education Association, and United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555. Glad got 1,703 votes, 24 percent of the total, in a three way race. He outpolled former U.S. Congressman and one-time Oregon Republican Party chief Jim Bunn, but lost to software developer and restaurant owner Jim Weidner.

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