

# AFL-CIO engaged in Washington's 'Top-2' primary

OLYMPIA — Ballots are due to be mailed out Aug. 1 to most Washington voters and are due back Aug. 19.

Washingtonians made their picks for president already, in a special February caucus and primary, and backed the eventual winners — Barack Obama and John McCain. Now voters will narrow the field in state and local races.

It's the first try-out of the state's new "Top 2" primary, in which the top two vote-getters advance to the November general election, regardless of which party they belong to. Top 2 passed via ballot measure in 2004, but was delayed by a court challenge that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Top Two primary may shift politics the most in areas like Seattle or Eastern Washington that are strongly dominated by one political party. In the past, candidates who won the primary in such areas expected to coast to victory in the general election. Now voters in some cases may decide in November between two candidates of the same party.

Organized labor's highest priority race won't be decided in the primary, because the rematch between Republican Dino Rossi and Democratic incumbent Christine Gregoire will almost certainly go to November. Four years ago, Gregoire won the governor's race only on the second recount, and by a small margin — 133 votes. A Chelan County judge rejected a legal challenge by Rossi to the results. Rossi, a commercial real estate broker and two-term former state senator, has been campaigning ever since.

Rossi has been portraying himself as a moderate, said David Groves, spokesperson for the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), AFL-CIO. But his record in the state senate wasn't moderate when it came to workplace issues, Groves said. Rossi's votes earned him a 6 percent rating from the WSLC, putting him in the company of the most hardline anti-union Republicans from Eastern Washington. For example, he voted in 2003 to cut unemployment benefits up to \$200 a week. Unemployed construction workers were hit especially hard.

Labor is pushing for a high turnout for Gregoire in the primary.

"The better she looks as an incumbent in the primary, the better it'll be going into final vote in November," said Mike Carnahan, secretary-treasurer of the Clark, Skamania, West Klickitat Counties Central Labor Council.

After conducting interviews, reviewing candidate questionnaires and considering candidate records, the state labor council announced endorsements in May. Candidates have to have two-thirds support of affiliates to get the WSLC endorsement. Through "solidarity charter" arrangements, WSLC includes several locals of unions of the Change to Win labor fed-

## CONGRESS

*U.S. Congress, Dist. 3* - Brian Baird

## STATEWIDE

*Governor* - Chris Gregoire  
*Lieutenant Governor* - Brad Owen  
*Attorney General* - John Ladenburg  
*Secretary of State* - Sam Reed  
*State Treasurer* - Jim McIntire  
*Auditor* - Brian Sonntag  
*Insurance Commissioner* - Mike Kreidler  
*Public Lands Commissioner* - Peter Goldmark  
*Supreme Court Position 3* - Mary Fairhurst  
*Supreme Court Position 4* - Charles Johnson  
*Supreme Court Position 7* - Debra Stephens  
*State Court of Appeals 3* - Kevin M. Korsmo

## LEGISLATIVE

*17th Legislative District:*  
*House Seat 1* - Tim Probst  
*House Seat 2* - Deb Wallace  
*Senate* - Don Benton  
*18th Legislative District:*  
*House Seat 1* - VaNessa Duplessie  
*House Seat 2* - Jonathan Fant  
*Senate* - Jon Haugen

eration.

WSLC is non-partisan, and in its political work stays focused on eco-

nomics and workplace rights. Democrats tend to have the best records on those issues, but WSLC backs Republicans as well, including, in this primary, incumbent Secretary of State Sam Reed and 17th district State Sen. Don Benton. Benton had a 40 percent rating in 2007, but voted in accord with the WSLC on some key legislation expanding the right of public employees to unionize.

In the tinted box to the left are candidates endorsed by WSLC for statewide races and for local legislative and congressional races in Southwest Washington. Washington has 49 state legislative districts, each of which has two representatives and one senator.

The Top 2 method applies only to elections for partisan offices; non-partisan offices like judgeships and city offices are unaffected. Candidates for each partisan office state a preference for a political party, but that preference does not imply that the party approves of or associates with that candidate. Voters do not have to declare a party affiliation or select one party's ballot to vote in the primary.

A similar proposal will go before Oregon voters as a ballot measure this November.

The deadline for registering online or by mail is past, but new voters can register in person through Aug. 4. In all but King and Pierce counties, the election will be conducted entirely by mail. Ballots will be mailed to voters

Aug. 1 and must be postmarked or deposited at a designated location before 8 p.m. Aug. 19. [This is different from Oregon's vote-by-mail system, in which postmarks don't count.]

WSLC is looking for volunteers to take part in "Labor Neighbor" walks, in which union members call or visit other union households to educate them about election issues important

to working families. The next Labor Neighbor solidarity walk in Southwest Washington will be Sunday, Aug. 3 from 1 to 5 p.m.; volunteers will meet at the Vancouver Fire Fighters Hall, 2807 Fruit Valley Road. To sign up or get more information, call Lori Province of the WSLC at 206-351-2956 or visit the federation Web site at [wslc.org](http://wslc.org).

## A HARD RAIN FELL: Struggles for civil rights in the 1960s and their meaning today

A forum on Friday, August 8, at 7:00 pm  
 6401 SE Foster Rd, Portland, Oregon  
 (SEIU Hall)

Sponsored by SEIU Local 503  
 Civil & Human Rights Committee

### Panel Speakers:

Union activist Ann Montague on Bayard Rustin  
 & Gay Liberation

Union organizer Bob Novick on the legacy of the 1960s

Civil rights leader Jarvis Tyner on  
 connecting the 1960s to now

Info: Contact Bob Rossi, 503 581-1505 X 141

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