





# Local Motion

November 2008

Union certifications and decertifications in Oregon and Southwest Washington, as reported by the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board

## Recognition elections

Name of employer Date	Name of union	Location	Results:		
			Union Yes	Union No	
Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School 10/29	AFT-Oregon	Portland	13	8	
Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company 11/17	Teamsters Local 670	The Dalles	3	12	
ABC Car Rental Services 11/21	Teamsters Local 206	Eugene	9	20	
Safeway (DECERTIFICATION) 11/21	Teamsters Local 962	Klamath Falls	14	57	

## Requests for recognition election

Name of employer Name of union	Location Number of employees
Basin Transit Service (DECERTIFICATION) Service Employees International Union Local 503	Klamath Falls 25
CoHo Distributing, dba Columbia Dist. (Mt. Hood Bev.) Teamsters Local 162	Portland 100
Rural/Metro Corp. (Fire Dept.) mechanics & trainers Teamsters Local 962	Grants Pass 3
First Student Teamsters Local 206	Junction City 26
Paragon Systems Assn. of Security Professionals vs. SPFPA Local 50	Portland 100
White Bird Dance Int'l Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 28	Portland 10
Prestige Care Incorporated Service Employees International Union Local 503	Portland 49



To all our friends,  
Happy New Year!

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## President-elect Obama will instill pro-worker spirit at Dept. of Labor

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — Democratic President-elect Barack Obama strongly supports changing the Labor Department to make it pro-worker and make it more activist in enforcement, a top member of Obama's agency transition team says.

"I'm 1000 percent confident in the interest, the will and the capacity of the incoming Administration to implement the changes he (Obama) outlined in the campaign," said Thomas Perez, Maryland's secretary of labor, licensing and regulation.

Added another Obama adviser, workers' rights attorney Jill Ruckelshaus, change at DOL "is a top priority" for the incoming president, "in my opinion."

Ruckelshaus, Perez and Gov. Jon Corzine (D-N.J.) all spoke at a Dec. 8 symposium called by the Center for American Progress. The think tank held the session to discuss and release its comprehensive report on pro-worker moves Obama could implement at the agency without waiting for legislation.

Those moves would increase enforcement, notably in Labor's Wage and Hour Division, against companies that break overtime pay laws and misclassify workers as "independent contractors" to avoid paying Social Security, Medicare and workers' comp.

Other moves they recommended involved better collection of data on wage and hour and job safety and health violations, and using that evidence to target patterns of law-breaking, both by individual companies and industries. That would be followed by pro-active enforcement, multiple fines, and wider-ranging investigations of targeted firms, both to catch scofflaws and to deter other potential

corporate lawbreakers.

All of those moves can be done by redirecting resources and emphasis within DOL, and without waiting for either a new law — such as the Employee Free Choice Act — to empower workers or for new Obama executive orders, the panelists said.

Obama has yet to name a Labor Secretary, or deputies for key posts there. Names floated for the top job include former House Minority Whip David Bonior (D-Mich.), now chair of American Rights at Work; Mary Beth Maxwell, the pro-worker organization's executive director; former House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-N.Y.) and Gov. Jennifer Granholm (D-Mich.).

Whoever is labor secretary should be a key part of Obama's economic team, panelists at the center said. But that appears unlikely, as the economic team has been named. It includes several members of the more pro-business wing of the Democratic Party, a wing headed by former Clinton Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin.

Regardless of who gets named to the top job, Corzine and the panelists said a top priority of the Obama Administration should be to "change the culture" in DOL away from its anti-worker, pro-business bias under President Bush and Labor Secretary Elaine Chao. Chao is the only original Bush Cabinet member to serve all eight years.

The panelists and their report "took a broad view of enforcement across DOL," as panelists David Madland and Karla Walter put it. That means not just increased enforcement, but also increased coordination in enforcement, because often violators

break a whole host of labor laws, in wages, hours, health and safety and other areas.

And while the Bush DOL has concentrated on individual violations, an Obama DOL should administer the law in those cases, too, but also use them as signals pointing to more widespread abuses in industries or firms, the panelists said.

DOL is also handicapped by the fact that the number of personnel in key areas, notably the Wage and Hour Division, has crashed. Panelist Kim Bobo, of Chicago-based Interfaith Worker Justice, reiterated her point that the division has half as many inspectors as it had when it was founded in 1941.

To augment its enforcement powers, the panel said DOL should reach out to other organizations — unions, non-profit groups such as Interfaith Worker Justice, state enforcement agencies, and community groups — to become constant "eyes and ears" against violators. Those organizations are also more familiar with local working conditions, have people available, and are more credible with workers, they said.

Corzine and Perez said several states have stepped into enforcement voids left by Bush's DOL. And the governor said the feds could adopt some of their innovations, too. For example, he cited the "independent contractors" issue, a particular problem in construction and trucking. To halt such practices New Jersey passed a law tightening and unifying the definition of "independent contractor." It also now has the power to put "stop work" orders on construction projects where contractors harm workers by misclassifying them.