

Make Wall Street fix our pensions

To The Editor:

I received a letter from my trust office about how I am going to be facing a reduction of pension benefits. I belong to a union that has Taft-Hartley laws that apply to it. My union has always followed these laws, as well as the burdensome laws that former President Bush applied to the union that make them account for every penny they spend.

I have wondered why it is that Wall Street can follow Arthur Anderson accounting rules, but my union has a complete and different set of rules and laws it must follow.

There is no doubt in my mind that

had Wall Street had the same laws applied to it as did my union, they wouldn't be where they are today.

When you look at all the laws that apply to my union's pension plan and the way that my union followed all those laws, it will become clear that the reason my pension plan lost its value is not the union's fault — it is Wall Street's fault.

I think the bail-out money Wall Street received should be used to fix all the damage to the pension and 401(k) plans that Wall Street caused. The bail-out money was not meant to be a billion dollar vacation and bonus fund for those that mismanaged our pension plans.

The money was meant as a way to fix the things that Wall Street broke.

When a person drives down the road and hits a car, and it is their fault, they are required by law to fix it. The same logic should apply to Wall Street. If Wall Street breaks a pension plan, it should be required to fix it. They shouldn't be allowed to take our tax dollars and go on a vacation or give themselves bonuses that are far above the wages of middle-class America.

I think Wall Street should be held to the same standard that the rest of us are held to, and that means they should fix the things they break.

When my union meets with contrac-

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tors at the bargaining table, it should be concerned with bargaining about things that apply to a living wage and benefits — not about how they are going to repair the damage that Wall Street has caused to our pension plan.

In the interest of fairness and the true American way, I want Wall Street to fix the damage they have caused. I know they can because they have the bailout money to do it with.

**Jeff Lyles
Plumber and Fitters 290
Tualatin**

...Oregon Legislature

(From Page 8)

fits. Also, the bill would let contracts go to "responsible" bidders who met quality standards, instead of always taking the low bidder even when that bidder has a record of failed commitments and broken rules. Keep tabs on the campaign at oregongovernmentaccountability.com.

REPRESENTING THEIR MEMBERS

Unions are also pushing legislation of particular interest to their own membership.

The **Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council (OS-BCTC)** is pushing HB 2429, which would require companies taking advantage of Enterprise Zone property tax abatements to pay construction workers the state's prevailing wage on projects over \$5 million. Too often, says OS-BCTC Executive Secretary Bob Shiprack, these tax-subsidized projects are built by workers earning substandard wages and no benefits. OSBCTC is also backing HB 2120, a bill to raise \$1 billion per biennium to modernize Oregon's transportation system through a 2-cent increase in the gas tax and an increase in registration and title fees and revenue bonds. Supporters estimate projects funded by this bill would create and maintain 6,700 jobs a year for five years.

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 is supporting a bill to make the unintentional sale of alcohol to a minor a civil infraction punishable by a fine and mandatory training, instead of the current set-up in which it is a serious crime. The union says employers use the law as an excuse to terminate members on a first offense.

In synch with "Buy American" provisions of the recently-passed federal stimulus package, the **United Steelworkers** is pushing a "Buy Oregon" proposal. When out-of-state companies bid on Oregon state government contracts, SB 872 would add 5 percent to their bids, making in-state companies a little more competitive.

AFT Healthcare Northwest, joined by **Service Employees International Union Local 49**, is backing SB 564, which would mandate a minimum registered nurse-to-patient ratio in acute care hospitals and require hospitals to make their staffing levels public.

The **International Association of Fire Fighters** is near to winning passage of HB 2420, which would recognize as an occupational disease any of 12 cancers that it's been shown their work contributes to.

The Legislature has set deadlines for bills to proceed. Bills (except those related to revenue and budget) have to be approved by at least one House or Senate committee by April 17, and have to be passed by either the House or Senate by April 28. To become law, a bill must pass both chambers and be signed by the governor.

Expert craftsmen needed to help repair kids club

To The Editor:

Roger Bullock's idea to assist ill children at the Doernbecher Children's Hospital is commendable.

Unlike Doernbecher Children's Hospital with a fundraiser on its payroll, the Children's Club does not.

A stellar non-profit child care program, the Children's Club will celebrate its 40th anniversary this summer. It is

located in four daylight basement classrooms in the Sunnyside United Methodist Church Community Annex, 3520 SE Yamhill, Portland.

Since your NW Labor Press article seeking volunteer tradesmen and women to assist with the Oregon state license renewal punch list of projects (July 6, 2007), volunteers painted classrooms, replaced broken windows, re-

placed missing 9-inch tiles, and purchased 81 cartons of Armstrong 12-inch tiles (now stored on site).

However, the church elders will not consider our starting an asbestos tile abatement project until enough cash is in their building maintenance account. We have an open-ended contract pending our success at raising \$10,000.

The Children's Club has raised

\$2,000 toward the \$10,000 needed to abate the old tiles so that we can construct a prep-kitchen. Because of the asbestos, this is a project that community volunteers cannot do.

Is there a contractor out there who might be willing to take this abatement project on at a reduced cost?

Believe me, there are no capital improvement grants available to church-owned buildings. Yet, the old building has served our children well for 40 years.

The low-to-moderate income families that the Children's Club serves could use a hand-up. The young children of hotel maids, breakfast cooks, dishwashers, gasoline attendants, caretakers for the elderly — minimum wage earners — rate the very best environment to learn in.

For additional information contact the Children's Club Executive Director Joay Miles at 503 233-2246.


**Mary Ann Schwab
PFTCE 111 (Retired)
Children's Club Board Member
Portland**



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