

...Washington State Labor Council

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National Education Association to join state labor federations.

Labor has erupted into infighting in recent months, with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) accused of raiding other unions. Former Northern California SEIU leader Sal Roselli, founder of a new health care union, had been scheduled to speak, but withdrew after SEIU threatened to picket and disrupt the convention.

In Wenatchee, delegates passed resolutions calling for greater labor unity, and condemning SEIU President Andrew Stern and other SEIU international leaders for raiding UNITE/HERE, the restaurant and textile workers union.

Bob Baugh, executive director of the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council, and Andrea Buffa of the Apollo Alliance explained cap-and-trade proposals designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the importance of a strategy to address climate change that includes an effort to create jobs and rebuild America's manufacturing base.

Convention delegates also passed resolutions:

- Calling for the passage of the TRADE Act of 2009, which would take a different approach to future agreements than the one taken in NAFTA;
- Endorsing HR 2564, a bill in Congress which would guarantee paid vacation time for American workers;
- Supporting a new immigration



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policy for the United States based on principles worked out by former Labor Secretary Ray Marshall;

- Supporting passage of a state law to mandate the payment of prevailing wage on all public/private joint ventures and partnerships.

The complete list of resolutions passed is available at <http://www.wslc.org/2009res.htm>.

The WSLC's organizational Mother Jones Award was presented to Machinists District Lodge 751 for its solidarity during last year's 57-day strike at Boeing Co.

The Mother Jones Award for an individual was presented to Ken Brown,

business manager of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 73 in Spokane, for his work on behalf of members who lost their jobs when Columbia Lighting shuttered its facility and moved to Mexico.

And the WSLC's Rising Star Award was presented to Dusty Hoerler of United Association of Plumbers and Fitters Local 32 for his dedication and participation in last fall's Labor Neighbor political action activities.

In all, the convention brought 317 delegates and three alternates and 58 guests to the Coast Wenatchee Hotel. Highlights of the convention can be watched online at tvw.org.

AFL-CIO convention may see health care floor fight

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — With less than a month to go before September's AFL-CIO Convention in Pittsburgh, the biggest floor fight there may be over health care reform. And that floor fight, in turn, could affect the entire health care battle on Capitol Hill.

That's because while the labor federation has supported and actively campaigned for legislation based on the principles of universality, cost controls, choosing your own doctor, and a government-run alternative to insurance companies, 552 labor bodies want to go in a different direction: A government-run single-payer system.

As of Aug. 10, four days before the resolutions deadline, single-payer health care coverage advocates had sent 40 draft resolutions backing health care reform bills HR 676 and S. 703 to the AFL-CIO.

On Aug. 16, during a wide ranging speech to a convention of progressive bloggers and web journalists (Netroots Nation), AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka said, "My preference, and the feeling of many in the labor movement, is that we should have a single-payer health care system."

Trumka will be at the September convention in Pittsburgh, where he is expected to be elected president of the AFL-CIO.

If delegates are successful in winning support for single-payer legislation, that could sink Congress' and President Barack Obama's reform plans.

HR 676 would institute a single-payer health care system by expanding and improving the Medicare system to every U.S. citizen. HR 676 would cover every person for all necessary medical care including prescription drugs, hospital, surgical, outpatient services, primary and preventive care, emergency services, dental, mental health, home health, physical therapy, rehabilitation (including for substance abuse), vision care, hearing services including hearing aids, chiropractic, durable medical equipment, palliative care, and long term care.

HR 676 would end deductibles and co-payments and save hundreds of billions annually by eliminating the high overhead and profits of the private health insurance industry.

In the current Congress, HR 676 has 86 co-sponsors in addition to its sponsor, Democrat John Conyers of Michigan.

U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) has introduced a single-payer bill in the Senate.

To date, none of Oregon's congressional delegation, nor U.S. Rep. Brian Baird of Southwest Washington, have co-sponsored the bill.

President Obama on Aug. 11 told a pro-health care reform crowd in New Hampshire that single-payer would not get through Congress.

The resolutions submitted to the AFL-CIO say health care "cost and coverage are major stumbling blocks in contract negotiations, causing strikes, lock-outs, protracted deliberations and lower monetary offers by management."

The resolutions sum up by simply saying "health care is far too expensive in the U.S."

'Labor Night' at ballpark slated for Aug. 27

The Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council will sponsor "Labor Night at the Portland Beavers" Thursday, Aug. 27. Tickets are \$12. The Beavers' opponent is the Tacoma Rainiers.

The game starts at 7 p.m., and the first pitch will be thrown by Al Panek, retired president of Teamsters Joint Council No. 37 and former labor liaison to U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden.

Unions are encouraged to purchase bulk tickets before Aug 25. Discount tickets will not be available at the box office. To order, call Brian Pollard at 503-553-5441 or go to bpollard@pgepark.com.

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