

U.S. Rep. Schrader asks for union member support of public option

Oregon Congressman Kurt Schrader told a Labor Day audience at Oaks Park that he supports President Obama's health care reform plan, and that he and other lawmakers need labor's voice of support for a public option at town hall meetings.

"This government is here actually to help you, and it's been doing the job," Schrader said. "I love the guys, when I go to the town halls, who don't want government involved in their life. I think well, geez, I want you not to sign up for Medicare when you turn 65 please, buddy. These people have no idea, no idea what their government does for them on a daily basis."

The first-term congressman from



Oregon Congressman Kurt Schrader (right) chats with U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden at Labor Day picnic at Oaks Park. Schrader asked for labor's help at town hall meetings to promote a public option in any health care reform bill that comes out of Congress.

the 5th District said he doesn't want a small segment of the community — "the 1 percent that may be a little vo-

cal and the press seems to like these days" — to undermine the health care reform plan that Obama has put forth.

He pleaded with union members to take time from their busy schedules to attend town hall meetings "and talk about how we need a public option, how we need a well-run health care system for every American. It would really help us out."

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley told picnickers that health insurance costs are eating up any increases in workers' wages. "We're all in this together and we have the moment of opportunity — affordable, accessible health care for every single American. Let's get it done in the next two months!"

Also speaking at the picnic sponsored by the Northwest Oregon Labor Council were Secretary of State Kate Brown, Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian, Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, and Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden did a walk-through earlier in the day before leaving for Washington, D.C.

Portland Mayor Sam Adams also made a brief appearance.

Democratic gubernatorial candidate John Kitzhaber spent a good portion of the day visiting picnic sites of the various unions. He flipped hamburgers for members of UFCW Local 555, the first union to endorse his campaign.

...UFCW endorses Kitzhaber

(From Page 1)

in doing health-care reform, which is emerging as the biggest financial issue facing our members," Anderson said.

Kitzhaber, a former emergency room doctor and state legislator from Roseburg, is credited as the architect of the Oregon Health Plan, which he passed as Oregon Senate president and defended as governor. And in recent years he founded and led the Archimedes movement, a group that has proposed that Oregon could insure all residents for no more money than the government is already spending in Medicare, Medicaid and the tax sub-

sidy for employer-sponsored health care.

In his campaign announcement, Kitzhaber called "partisanship and stakeholder politics" the greatest obstacles Oregon faces. Labor may be such a stakeholder, but Allen said not he's not put off by the comment.

"There's two things I like about Kitzhaber," Allen said. "Nobody owns him, and his door is always open. He's not going to be 100 percent every time we go to him, but knowing that the business community doesn't own him, that's big."

CORRECTIONS

An article in the Sept. 4 edition of the Northwest Labor Press entitled "Shepard a candidate for open Metro board seat" incorrectly reported that representatives from the regional government Metro testified before the Oregon Legislature in opposition to a proposed minimum wage increase.

Representatives from Metro were in Salem to testify against a labor-supported prevailing wage bill, not a minimum wage increase.

In the article, "Steelworker elected to lead NW Oregon Labor Council," the Labor Press incorrectly reported that United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Anderson had been elected first vice president of the labor council. Anderson was elected second vice president.

Lynn Lehrbach of Teamsters Joint Council No. 37 serves as first vice president.

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