

Open Forum

Rioting in streets won't help cause

To The Editor:

In regard to the column written by Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain in the Dec. 17 edition of the Labor Press, I would like to make a few comments:

Next year I will have been a union member for 50 years. I am retired now. I've also been a registered Democrat all my life.

I believe in unions because they help the little people, but I think Mr. Chamberlain is way off base by hinting that people here should cause the kind of trouble that those nuts over in the U.K. and Europe are causing.

Rioting in the streets does not help any cause, in my opinion.

John Schell
Bricklayers Local 1, Retired
Portland

Thank you, Clackamas County

To the Editor:

As the head of an organization which represents 15,000 construction workers in the area, I recently attended a series of three public hearings at Clackamas County for a \$5 vehicle registration fee to help pay for the replacement of the Sellwood Bridge. A now decrepit structure built in 1925, the bridge forms a critical link in the region's transportation system and serves as an economic lifeline to many businesses in North Clackamas County and is critical for the future development of the area.

Aside from the urgent need to replace the bridge for safety reasons, there is also an opportunity to spur the

county's economy — both immediately with the construction phase and into the future by providing a viable transportation path into prime undeveloped commercial and industrial property in the county.

The hearings drew a crowd typical of the times, with those against pointing out the bridge is outside Clackamas County and would add to existing auto registration fees. Those in favor of replacement were quick to show the bridge lies only a mile outside the county line, but most of the traffic on it is to or from Clackamas County and the economic benefits to the whole county far outweighed the small cost. The price

Actions of Kulongoski, Nesbitt irresponsible

To The Editor:

AFSCME's Ken Allen is absolutely right about Gov. Kulongoski's attack on public workers as he heads out the door. It is very irresponsible, and it is especially appalling that Kulongoski's sidekick in this attack is Tim Nesbitt, former president of the Oregon AFL-CIO and former officer of the Service

Employees International Union. Dues-paying public workers paid Nesbitt's salary for many years. What a shameful betrayal. I guess he misheard labor's anthem all those years and was singing "Solidarity, whatever."

Michael Funke
United Steelworkers
Bend

Top Laborers official responds to 9/11 bill

(Statement of Terry O'Sullivan, general president of the Laborers' International Union of North America, following the passage and signing of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act.)

"President Obama's signature caps off an incredible effort to make sure the men and women who helped America during some of her darkest hours, and sacrificed so much in the process, receive the respect and support they deserve.

"Over 3,000 Laborers Union members were involved in the response and clean-up at the site of the World Trade Center. Many now suffer daily and face life-threatening illnesses due to exposure to toxins at Ground Zero. Helping them get the treatment they need is the right thing to do, and we are grateful to the leaders in Congress in both parties who worked until the last minute to make sure this bill became law.

"This bill has been a priority of Laborers Union members for years. In recent weeks, they made call after call,

and sent thousands of e-mails, to members of Congress in a successful effort to overcome an indefensible obstruction campaign mounted by a handful of Senate Republicans. By keeping a spotlight on this important issue, they helped ensure success when many predicted failure.

"By helping these 9/11 heroes, we have shown that America will help those who help their country. This victory should show all of us why we must continue fighting to support those who build our country."

NLRB proposes rule to inform more workers of their rights on the job

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) voted 3-1 on Dec. 22 to propose a rule requiring businesses to post permanent workers' rights notices.

If approved, the permanent notices would inform workers of their rights to organize and bargain collectively, and to be free of illegal employer interference. The notices also would give examples of labor law-breaking that companies should avoid.

Companies with federal contracts now must post that notice with those details, the NLRB said. And the NLRB noted that employers must already post notices regarding federal wage, job safety and anti-discrimination laws.

"The intended effects of this action are to increase knowledge of the

NLRA (National Labor Relations Act) among employees, to better enable the exercise of rights under the statute, and to promote statutory compliance by employers and unions," the Board said.

"Private-sector employers, including labor organizations, whose workplaces fall under the NLRA would be required to post the employee rights notice where other workplace notices are typically posted. If an employer communicates with employees primarily by e-mail or other electronic means, the notice would be posted electronically as well," the NLRB added.

Employers who knowingly refuse to post the notices would be guilty of an unfair labor practice, but would face no

penalties.

The Board's proposal is far from the last word on the issue. The NLRB opened the rule for public comment until Feb. 22. The dissenter on the decision, former Republican Senate Labor Committee staffer Brian Hayes, said the agency "lacked the statutory authority" to even propose the notice-posting rule.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka called the proposal "a common-sense policy needed in today's workplace. Every working person deserves to know his or her rights ... It is necessary in the face of widespread misunderstanding about the law and many workers' justified fear of exercising their rights under it."

of a cup of coffee a year, as one person put it.

Torn between two responsibilities, commissioners voted 4-0 in favor and added a resolution that, among other things, caps the amount to be contributed (\$22 million), confines the purpose (Sellwood Bridge replacement only), and requires labor and materials to be as locally sourced as legally possible.

The Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council supports the decision by the commissioners to pass the vehicle registration fee and congratulates them for the attending resolution limiting the cost and intent while creating thousand of jobs.

Paul Riggs
Secretary-Treasurer
CPBCTC
Portland

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