

Columbian newspaper boycott presses forward

VANCOUVER — A month-old boycott of the Columbian newspaper called by the Southwest Washington Central Labor Council has gotten the attention of publisher Scott Campbell.

A coalition of union leaders from eight locals was asked to meet with Campbell, editor Lou Brancaccio, and editorial page editor John Laird March 23 to air their concerns.

The Southwest Washington Central Labor Council called for a boycott in February, citing the newspaper's blatant disregard for covering labor events and constantly editorializing against public employee unions and union-endorsed politicians.

"They didn't understand that. They objected to the assertion," said Shannon Walker, president of the Labor Council, in her report to delegates at the Council's monthly meeting March 24.

Since being placed on the "Do Not Patronize" list, members and allied organizations have canceled subscriptions, including Fire Fighters locals that stopped having the newspaper delivered to fire stations. The Northwest Oregon Labor Council and the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council, both of Portland, but with members who live in Washington, also passed resolution in support of the boycott.

The resolution calls for the boycott to continue through July 31, 2011. In August, the labor council will revisit the issue to determine whether or not the newspaper has expanded its coverage "to represent all of the community." If it has, the boycott will be withdrawn.

Until then, Walker is encouraging union members and allies to cancel subscriptions, with a note explaining why. She also is asking union members to write letters to the editor and publisher explaining why they are canceling.

"If you're not a subscriber, write or call them and tell them why you don't subscribe," she said.

To cancel a subscription, call 360-694-2312. Send letters to the editor to lou.brancaccio@columbian.com.



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PORTLAND, OREGON 97204

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...Indiana Dems block right-to-work bill

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with merit pay and a salary range. Public charter school employees would be stripped of all collective bargaining rights. The bill also abolishes continuing contracts for teachers, requires teachers to be paid based on "performance," and bans teachers from bargaining over class sizes. It even bars public employees from talking with elected officials about any topic that could become a subject of bargaining.

When the bill didn't have enough votes to pass a Senate committee, the Senate leadership removed from the committee a Republican who was opposed to the bill and replaced him with one who favored it. The Ohio state Senate passed it 17-16 on March 2. On the day this issue went to press, the bill was scheduled for a House hearing, where Republicans have a 59-40 majority.

If it becomes law, unions will try to overturn it via ballot referendum. To place the issue on a statewide ballot and put the law on hold, signatures must be collected from over 231,000 registered voters by July 6.

INDIANA

When the Indiana statehouse opened its 2011 session, Republican legislators aimed a loaded shotgun at organized labor. One bill would make Indiana a "right to work" state where dues would be optional in union-represented workplaces. Other bills would end the requirement to pay the prevailing wage on public construction projects; ban project labor agreements; ban automatic deduction of union dues for

teachers; expand charter schools; increase state-funded vouchers for private school tuition; and strike down local minimum wage laws. There's even a bill to ban employers from recognizing unions on the basis of "card check," which if passed would defy a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that such laws are pre-empted by federal legislation.

When it became clear the right-to-work bill would pass the Legislature, Democratic lawmakers left the state to deprive Republicans of the two-thirds quorum they need to do business. They holed up for 36 days in a hotel in Urbana, Illinois, before returning to the Capitol March 28. Republican leaders agreed to drop the right-to-work measure, but other anti-union bills remain. The legislative session is supposed to conclude at the end of April.

MICHIGAN

Republican Gov. Rick Snyder signed into law March 16 a bill to give state-appointed emergency financial managers the power to void and rewrite public employee collective bargaining agreements — in local jurisdictions facing financial stress.

Currently, four local jurisdictions have been placed under control of emergency financial managers, but dozens more could be, particularly as Snyder is proposing a \$1.73 billion business tax cut.

FLORIDA

The Florida House voted 80-39 March 16 for a bill that would put all teachers hired from here on out on year-to-year contracts, and pay them

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Richards elected to third term as head of OPEIU Local 11

Mike Richards was re-elected by acclamation to a third term as executive secretary-treasurer of Vancouver-based Office and Professional Employees Local 11.

Others elected without opposition were Matt DeVore, vice president; Barbara Melton, recording secretary; and Keith Perkins, sergeant-at-arms. Terms are for three years.



MIKE RICHARDS

Executive Board were Mike Corrigan, Utilities; Laura Gustafson, Labor Organizations; Chuck Strange, At-Large; and Diana Way, At-Large. A seat for Public Employees is vacant.

Lori Ricketts was elected to a three-year terms as a trustee.

Officers and Board members will be installed at the May 10 general membership meeting.

Elected to two-year terms on the Ex-

May 10 general membership meeting.

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