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Mahlon Mitchell (far left in uniform), president of the Wisconsin Firefighters Association, leads 2,500 people (below) on a march through downtown Portland April 16, part of the Portland Rising rally for jobs.

2,500 rally in Portland for jobs and the middle class

Tired of being blamed for the economic crisis, a crowd of 2,500 union members, faith groups, and community allies gathered at Pioneer Courthouse Square April 16 before parading through the streets of downtown Portland with a call for fairness, more jobs, and saving social safety net programs.

"Now this is what democracy looks like," said featured speaker Mahlon Mitchell, president of the Wisconsin Professional Firefighters Association.

Since his election in January as the first black president of the Firefighters Association in Wisconsin, Mitchell, 33, has been on the front lines fighting the Republican-controlled Wisconsin Legislature's attacks on public employee collective bargaining rights.

At least a dozen other state legislatures led by Republican governors have followed suit — all under the guise of saving taxpayer money.

"This isn't about money," Mitchell said. "This is about an attack on the middle class, and this is about an attack on workers' rights. We cannot just sit idly by and let that happen."

Rally supporters believe a massive

public works program could be funded and social safety net programs bolstered if only Congress would require major corporations and the very rich to pay their fair share of taxes. Currently the financial industry and large corporations are not paying their fair share. For

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Participants dressed like U.S. Supreme Court justices to protest pro-corporate judicial decisions.

Koch brothers have presence in Oregon

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

At a Georgia-Pacific paper mill in Wauna, Oregon, and three company warehouses in Portland, 900 members of United Steelworkers (USW) and Inland Boatmen's Union (IBU) are poised to go on strike.

On the surface, the disputes are about health care and pension issues. But the disagreements may also be stemming from ideas from higher up than Georgia-Pacific's own management. GP was bought in 2005 by Koch Industries, the privately-held conglomerate owned by billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch (pronounced "coke"). Charles Koch lays out his business theories in "The Science of Success: How Market-Based Management Built the World's Largest Private Company." Local union leaders say the book has become the bible for GP managers.

The two brothers espouse a hard-line anti-government, anti-regulation philosophy, and over the years have supported those ideas with over \$100 million in

donations to conservative think tanks, Tea Party groups, and Republican candidates. They've also broken new ground in proselytizing employees, sending packets last year to all local Georgia-Pacific workers urging them to vote for Republican candidates like Dino Rossi and Jaime Herrera Beutler in Southwest Washington and Chris Dudley in Oregon. Sixteen of the 19 Washington candidates Koch Industries endorsed were Republicans; the other three were members of the conservative Democratic "road kill caucus."

USW representative Gaylan Prescott said in his nearly 30 years in the labor movement he's never seen that level of direct political involvement by an employer.

"They're just right in your face telling you who to vote for, telling you if these people don't get elected, it's going to have negative effects on their business and consequently your job."

USW represents 790 workers at the

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Bob Tiernan will oversee bargaining at Dosha Salon

Newly unionized Dosha Salon and Spa has hired former Oregon Republican Party chair Bob Tiernan to handle upcoming contract bargaining with its own workers.

The full-service salon appears to have gotten off to a poor start as a union employer. Just weeks after workers voted to join Communications Workers of America Local 7901, the union filed a charge with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) accusing Dosha of several labor law violations.

Tiernan, a former state rep from Lake Oswego, chaired the Oregon Republican Party for two years ending January 2011, but is best known as sponsor of Oregon's mandatory minimum sentencing law and 1994 Ballot Measure 8, which made public workers deduct 6 percent of their salary for pensions until it was struck down by the Oregon Supreme Court.

Tiernan has also been a labor relations consultant. He represented Pay-

less in the 1990s. As chief operating officer at the Grocery Outlet discount chain, he negotiated industry-standard contracts with United Food and Commercial Workers at three unionized stores. Last year, he ran a campaign to dump the union at a Berkeley Bowl supermarket in Berkeley, California; management lawbreaking there was so egregious that the NLRB brokered a re-run of the election, and in March, workers voted to go nonunion.

At Dosha, which employs 155 workers, workers voted March 30 to unionize. Since then, the company has broken federal law, according to charges filed April 21 by the union. In addition to unilaterally changing how vacations are scheduled without bargaining over it, management has disregarded the workers' choice to unionize by directly meeting with workers on the company's own terms to discuss

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