

# SEIU Local 503 adds 7,700 new home care members

In ballots counted June 2, a unit of 7,751 state-paid personal service providers voted to unionize with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503. The vote brings Local 503's total membership up to 54,000, surpassing Oregon Education Association and making it the state's largest union.

The new unit consists of people paid by the Oregon Department of Human Services to care for adults with developmental disabilities or mental illnesses. Program funding comes from Medicaid.

Some of the caregivers are hired through local "brokerages," but about three-fifths are parents or relatives of the person being cared for, like Lana

Nelson of Sutherlin, Oregon. The program pays Nelson \$9.23 an hour, up to 114 hours a month, to help her live-in daughter Nicole, who has Down's Syndrome. The work can include bathing, dressing, grooming, moving, feeding, administering medicine, diaper changes, and serving as a companion, as well as shopping, housework, and preparing meals. Work like that can be very isolating, Nelson said. Nelson told the Labor Press she voted for the union in part as a way to build community. "It's so that we all have a voice."

The group was able to unionize thanks to legislation introduced in 2009 by State Rep. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland). House Bill 3618 added this unit to the existing group of caregivers who have the Oregon Homecare Commission as their employer of record for the purpose of collective bargaining. Dembrow is a former president of Portland Community College Faculty Federation Local 2277, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers.

Of 7,751 ballots mailed out, 2,655 were returned and counted, for a turnout of about 35 percent. The result was 71 percent in favor of unionizing (1,873 to 772).

There was no organized opposition. Local 503 organizers called and visited workers, and the campaign set up a web site, [www.dignityoregon.org](http://www.dignityoregon.org).

The State of Oregon Employment Relations Board was expected to certify the unit June 14, as this issue went to press.

Local 503 spokesperson Ed Hershey said the union intends to bring the new unit into already-begun negotiations for other home care workers, and hopes to get a first contract for them this year. A statewide bargaining conference is scheduled for June 26 at Willamette University, where caregivers will determine bargaining priorities.

The unit is the largest group of workers to unionize in Oregon since 10,000 home care providers for seniors and people with physical disabilities joined Local 503 in 2001. Besides the new group, Local 503 represents 10,000 home care workers for seniors and people with physical disabilities, 4,000 employment-related day care workers, 3,500 adult foster home care providers, 19,000 state agency workers, 4,000 classified employees of the Oregon State University System, 3,000 local government workers, 2,500 nursing home workers, and 600 employees of private non-profit agencies.

## Tischer re-elected at Laborers #320

David Tischer was re-elected to a third term as business manager/secretary treasurer of Laborers Local 320 in a mail ballot election counted June 7. He defeated challenger Robert Prominski by a wide margin.



DAVID TISCHER

Dan Fehrs was re-elected president; Dave Ball was re-elected vice president; Bruce Roller was re-elected recording secretary; and Rick Ohmie was re-elected sergeant-at-arms. All ran unopposed.

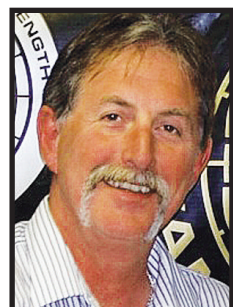
Terms of office are three years.

In balloting for three Executive Board seats, Carolyn Shaffer, Jodi Guetzloe-Parker, and Wade Webb outpolled three other candidates.

Kathleen Ball, Belus Schonek, and Jose Barron were the top three vote-getters among four candidates running for Auditor Committee.

Dave Ball, Ben Guzman, and Jodi Guetzloe-Parker were elected delegates to the Laborers District Council, and Ball, Guetzloe-Parker and Rick Ohmie were elected delegates to the international convention.

Local 320 is headquartered in Portland. The union represents workers in heavy and highway construction, at industrial plants, non-profit pre-school child care, and some public sector.



## Vancouver Laborers re-elect Ritchey

Dave Ritchey was re-elected business manager/secretary-treasurer of Vancouver-based Laborers Local 335 in an election held June 3. He defeated challenger Randy Dalton by nearly a 3-to-1 margin. Also re-elected to office was Vice President Chad Brown, who defeated challenger Tim Hogan. Both men have served in their posts since 2001. Terms of office are three years.



## Stepping it up at Multnomah County

Kathleen Millard (left) and Gloria Robayo Trujillo, members of American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 88, wave to morning commuter traffic in front of the Multnomah Building in inner-Southeast Portland. Nearly 100 Multnomah County employees rallied before work June 8 — and before a scheduled bargaining session — calling for a fair contract. Talks began March 2 for 2,800 union workers at the county. The current four-year pact expires June 30. Thus far, the county has proposed more takeaways than ever before. "We're surprised by it," said Local 88 President Michael Hanna. "Because of the poor economy, we didn't expect to gain much economically, but they're using the bad economy as an excuse to try to erode worker rights now and into the future." Hanna said the union will continue holding rallies and workplace actions until a decent contract is achieved.

# Local Motion

### May 2011

A list of Oregon and Southwest Washington workplaces deciding whether to be union-represented — as reported by the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

### Voting in union elections

Date	Workplace (Location) Union	Yes	No	
5/12	Hilton Vancouver (Vancouver) UNITE HERE Local 9 <b>DECERT</b>	77	33	👍
5/12	Sunrise Dental (Vancouver) UFCW Local 555 <b>DECERT</b>	0	13	👎
5/19	Providence St. Vincent (Portland) Oregon Nurses Association	1	2	👎
5/23	Legacy Emanuel interpreters (Portland) SEIU Local 49	2	1	👍
5/23	Legacy Emanuel patient access reps (Portland) SEIU Local 49	30	7	👍
5/23	Legacy Health telecom operators (Portland) SEIU Local 49	6	2	👍

### Requesting a union election

Workplace (Location) Union	Number of workers in unit
Legacy Health telecom operators (Portland) SEIU Local 49	10
Children's Farm Home (Corvallis) SEIU Local 503	157
Children's Farm Home RNs and LPNs (Corvallis) SEIU Local 503	15
Rogue Comm. College truck driving instructors (White City) Teamsters Local 964 <b>DECERT</b>	2

#### LEGEND

👍 : workers will be union-represented    👎 : workers will be on their own  
**DECERT** unionized workers vote whether to go non-union

# Wu drafts bill to streamline access to TAA

Oregon Congressman David Wu will introduce a bill this month to improve transparency and streamline access to Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) benefits for workers displaced by outsourcing to other countries as a result of unfair free trade deals.

The TAA program offers job training and placement support, income assistance, and relocation benefits to eligible workers who demonstrate that their layoff was related to international trade. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and funds are disbursed by states. However, as applications for TAA certification increase, the wait time for a final determination from DOL has grown to nearly a year for some workers.

"Receiving a layoff notice is one of the most stressful things a worker may ever experience," Wu said. "It's not acceptable that the newly unemployed are then subjected to a months-long wait to even learn whether they qualify for benefits to find a new job. The Trade Adjustment Assistance Accountability Act will ensure that displaced workers get answers quickly so they can move on with their lives."

Under the proposed bill, workers would have the right to ask for written status updates from the DOL, allowing them to pinpoint the cause of delayed determinations. The bill also creates nationwide consistency for TAA determinations in the same sector, which will mean that a steelworker in Oregon receives the same treatment and benefits as steelworkers elsewhere. Finally, the bill also makes it easier for workers to respond to information that may negatively affect their claim for benefits.

Wu said more than 10,000 Oregon workers were deemed eligible for TAA benefits last year, with some having to wait more than 10 months before knowing whether they were eligible for benefits.

"Our long-term economic health relies on workers' ability to find new jobs after a layoff," Wu said. "This bill will help displaced workers remain competitive in our high-tech economy."

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