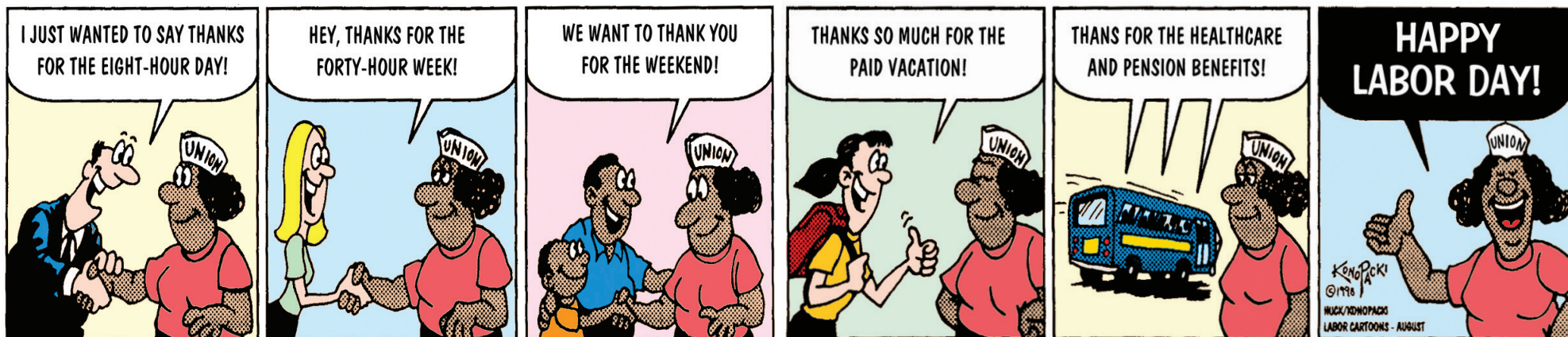




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## For working people, cost of 9/11 attacks is incalculable

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This coming Sept. 11 will mark the 10-year anniversary of the worst act of terrorism ever to take place on U.S. soil.

On Sept. 11, 2001, 19 attackers used martial arts, box cutters, and pilot training to hijack four passenger jets. They piloted two into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, and one into the Pentagon. The fourth crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after pas-

sengers learned what was happening and fought back.

The day proved to be pivotal in many ways for working people and union members: It ushered in an economic recession, justified a decade of war, and contributed to a wage rollback in the airline industry from which workers have yet to recover.

The first victims of the attacks were passengers and flight crews, workers at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and fire fighters, police, and para-

medics who were on the scene when the towers collapsed: 2,977 in all. The 19 hijackers also died in the attacks.

The attacks precipitated a swift economic contraction. Sales of flags and patriotic decals soared, but in the immediate aftermath, Americans were in no mood for shopping or entertainment.

The travel and hospitality sectors took an especially hard short-term hit. All flights were grounded for several days, and anxiety about further attacks

kept people from flying.

Among the first to lose their jobs were the 1,000 security guards, cleaners, janitors, tour guides, window washers and day porters employed at the World Trade Center — members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

Pilots, flight attendants, ground crews, and ticket agents were next: Over 100,000 were laid off over the next month.

Facing devastation in the airline in-

dustry, Congress acted swiftly — to protect the airlines, not the workers. Sept. 21 — 10 days after the attacks, Congress passed a bailout bill providing \$5 billion in grants and up to \$10 billion in loan guarantees to the airlines. An equivalent bill — to provide extra jobless benefits, subsidies for health insurance purchases, and retraining aid for the airline workers — died Oct. 11 with a Republican filibuster in the Senate.

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Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian (center) and State Rep. Brad Witt (seated), Democratic candidates for Oregon's 1st Congressional District, share a laugh during a candidates forum Aug. 25 at the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council convention. Standing to the right is OSBCTC President John Endicott and behind Witt is OSBCTC Executive Secretary John Mohlis. The building trades council took no action in the primary, which will be held Nov. 8. The victor will challenge the winner of the Republican primary in a special election to succeed David Wu, who resigned mid-term.

## Congressional candidates pitch the building trades

GLENEDEN BEACH — Construction unions celebrated the 50th convention of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council Aug. 24-26 at Salishan Spa and Golf Resort on the Oregon coast.

A highlight of the conference was a forum for candidates running in a special Democratic primary election Nov. 8 in Oregon's 1st Congressional District. The victor will challenge the winner of the Republican primary in an election to succeed David Wu, who resigned mid-term.

Three Democrats were invited to speak — State Rep. Brad Witt of Clatskanie, Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian, and State Sen. Suzanne Bonamici of Beaverton. Bonamici canceled at the last minute citing a scheduling conflict.

Both Avakian and Witt came court- ing an endorsement from the building trades council. With roughly 52,000 union members in the 1st District, labor

can determine the winner if they show up to the polls. But after listening to both candidates make presentations and field questions, the council didn't endorse either one. In an executive session at the end of the convention, a motion to endorse Witt failed to gather a two-thirds majority vote, resulting in a no action.

In their presentations to the 50 registered delegates and 38 guests, both Witt and Avakian vowed to be labor's advocate in Congress. Both said job creation would be their top priority, in particular, securing funds to improve the nation's infrastructure — including construction of the Columbia River Crossing replacement bridge on Interstate 5.

In response to a question asking for three things they have done to help the building trades, Witt noted his co-sponsorship of House Bill 2700, a linear projects bill that was the council's top priority in the last Legislature, his support of Bradwood Landing's liquefied

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