



Workers Memorial ceremony in Salem

Members of the Oregon State Defense Force Pipe Band perform at a Workers Memorial Day ceremony April 26 at the Fallen Workers Memorial at the State Capitol Mall in Salem. More than 100 people attended the ceremony, at which the names of 42 Oregonians killed on the job or in military action in 2011 were read. A proclamation from Gov. John Kitzhaber declaring April 28 Workers Memorial Day in Oregon also was read and presented to the Oregon AFL-CIO. Workers Memorial Day is observed annually on April 28 across the country to remember workers who lost their lives as a result of preventable injuries. April 28 was the date in 1970 that Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act. It is also the day of a worldwide day of mourning for workers killed or injured on the job.

Union locals at odds in race for Portland City Council

In the race for Portland City Council, Position 1, incumbent Amanda Fritz is facing a challenge from State Rep. Mary Nolan. Both were once union-represented workers, and both have union support for their candidacies.

Fritz is endorsed by Communications Workers of America Local 7901, Oregon Nurses Association (ONA), and United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555. Nolan is endorsed by the Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council, AFSCME Local 189, Oregon AFSCME Council 75, Carpenters Locals 156 and 196, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 8, Portland Association of Teachers, Portland Fire Fighters Association, Portland Police Association, Service Employees International Union Local 49, and Teamsters Joint Council 37.

Fritz is a former psychiatric nurse who became a member of the ONA when she went to work at Oregon Health and Science University in 1986. She took part in ONA's 2001-02 strike. Though she went part-time after 1990 and eventually left OHSU, she maintains ONA membership on the professional association side.

AFSCME Local 189 — which represents City employees — backed Fritz previously, but this time is endorsing Nolan. Local 189 PAC Chair Mark Gippson says it was not an easy decision, but members fault Fritz for changes to City policy on overtime and breaks.

"The endorsement process is the only way we have of saying we approve



FRITZ



NOLAN

or disapprove," said Local 189 President Debbie Hussey.

With Nolan, they have a candidate with a strong labor record in the Legislature and top ratings from Oregon AFL-CIO. Nolan was a union member with the City of Portland Professional Employees Association (COPPEA) when she was a city planner. Later, she was a City bureau manager — director of Environmental Services. For the past 11 years (six terms) she's served as a Democrat in the Oregon House, including a stint as House Majority Leader. She had a hand in passing a \$1 billion capital construction budget, helped secure funding for the Milwaukie light rail line, and helped pass an increase in income taxes for corporations and high-income taxpayers, which voters later ratified as Measures 66/67. Her campaign centers on her ability to get results.

Though Fritz often has been in the minority on City Council votes, and was the sole vote against the Columbia River Crossing, she claims results, too: Saving tax dollars by paying off bonds sooner and by pushing for a less expensive facility to treat water for cryptosporidium.

"Amanda Fritz is a scrapper, and we

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U.S. Senate passes postal reform bill

WASHINGTON (PAI) — The U.S. Senate adopted a "flawed" postal reform bill, voting April 25 to pass S. 1789, the 21st Century Postal Service Act, by a vote of 62 to 37.

The legislation embraces a downsizing strategy and fails to fully lift the onerous burden to fund decades of future retiree health benefits decades in advance, said Fredric V. Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC).

"Although the bill is flawed, the amended version is far better than the original," said American Postal Workers Union President Cliff Guffey. "That is a result of the tremendous effort of APWU members, postal customers, and elected officials who appreciate the importance of the Postal Service to American life. Thank you for your hard work."

Before passing S.1789, senators changed some of its key provisions, moving it closer to an alternative the unions backed, offered by Sen. Bernie Sanders (Ind.-Vt).

One new section delays elimination of Saturday delivery for two years and then allows it only if other measures to make the USPS profitable fail. Other changes inserted into S.1789 included:

- Retaining overnight delivery standards for first-class mail for much of the country. USPS wanted to dump all overnight delivery standards and use that to close 252 processing centers, half of those functioning. The closures are delayed, too.

- Establishing an independent commission to suggest new business areas the USPS can enter to help it make money.

- Returning \$11 billion in pension money USPS overpaid into the Treasury in past years, and a reduction in the agency's annual pre-payment for future retirees' health care costs. A GOP-run Congress in 2006 imposed that \$5.5 billion yearly pre-payment at the behest of President George Bush. Without it, the NALC contends, the postal service would have virtually broken even, despite the recession and the inroads of the Internet.

- Banning closure of post offices in areas without significant broadband ac-

cess to the Internet or where the closure would harm small businesses or prevent seniors from getting prescription drugs.

All those measures led Sanders to eventually vote for the rewritten S.1789, as did other members of his coalition that battled for the workers' positions. Among those voting for the bill were U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley of Oregon, and Patty Murray and Marie Cantwell of Washington.

The battle now moves to the House, where the majority of Republicans oppose the bill in its current form.

No union employees? Get a tax break, says Florida Legislature

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — The Republican-controlled Florida House of Representatives in February passed a package of business tax credits and reductions under the guise that it will stimulate Florida's economy.

That's not so unusual coming from corporate Republicans. However, at the request of Republican Gov. Rick Scott, the bill included an amendment that raises the corporate income tax exemption from \$25,000 to \$50,000 only to companies that have no union employees.

HB 7087 passed 92-22. The business tax cuts and incentives are expected to cost the state \$121.1 million annually.

Associated Press reported that the House actually adopted the "no union" provision multiple times. "Almost every time a Democrat proposed an

amendment, House Majority Leader Carlos Lopez-Cantera (R-Miami), offered the anti-union provision as a substitute amendment. Once it passed, that effectively cut off debate on the Democratic amendment."

The rejected Democratic amendments included proposals that would have allowed corporations to benefit from the higher exemption only if they provided health insurance for employees' same-sex partners and coverage for contraceptives; used a federal database to determine if new hires were illegal immigrants, and proved they did not discriminate against veterans in hiring.

The Republicans did permit one Democratic amendment to pass. It bars corporations that do business with terrorist states from getting the exemption.



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