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# NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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## ELECTION DAY 2012

# Labor wins in Oregon, Washington, and coast to coast

The power of the people outmuscled the almighty dollar on Election Day in Oregon — and elsewhere across the nation.

Union leaders were elated by the election results showing labor-backed **President Barack Obama's** defeat of Republican nominee Mitt Romney, and other wins ranging from keeping the U.S. Senate in Democratic hands, down to ballot measure victories in California, Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota and Illinois. (See Page 4 for a nationwide ballot measure roundup.)

"Despite the tidal wave of corporate cash, this election proved there is no match for the strength of grassroots people power," said national AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. And this year, labor was able to reach beyond union members" to other workers, Trumka said.

An AFL-CIO poll of 812 union members and 827 Working America members showed two-thirds voted for Obama. Pollster Guy Molyneux said 21 percent of all voters were union members. In the key swing state of Ohio, whose electoral votes clinched Obama's victory, unionists made up 30 percent of all voters.

Workers in general — both union



**John Mohlis, executive secretary of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council (center), celebrated Tuesday night with retired Iron Worker Jeff Carlson as television networks project the re-election of President Barack Obama. Clapping in the background is Jeff Anderson, secretary-treasurer of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555. To the left is Carlson's wife, Mary.**

and nonunion — backed Obama over Romney by a 2-to-1 ratio, the poll said.

Obama captured 50.5 percent of the popular vote and 332 electoral votes



**Jim Gourley (right) of United Steelworkers Local 1189, congratulates Brad Avakian after he was declared the winner in his re-election for labor commissioner. Avakian trounced Republican challenger Bruce Starr, 52.5 to 46.87 percent. Starr had advocated for a "right to work" law and for lowering state prevailing wages.**

(well above the required 270 to win). Romney collected 48 percent of the popular vote and 206 electoral votes. Obama is the first Democrat since

Franklin D. Roosevelt to be elected twice with over 50 percent of the vote.

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## Landslide vote for union at TriMet Lift

**Workers at contractor First Transit vote 111-31 in favor of joining ATU Local 757**

A group of 160 drivers and dispatchers at TriMet Lift voted to unionize in ballots cast Nov. 7. The tally was 111 to 31 in favor of joining Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, which represents transit workers around Oregon.

TriMet Lift is a federally funded paratransit service in which senior and disabled passengers who have difficulty riding regular mass transit can call and schedule rides. But TriMet Lift workers aren't TriMet employees; they work for UK-based multinational First Transit. First Transit has contracts with TriMet to provide service from three locations within TriMet's service area. Workers in Regions 1 and 2 have long been members of Local 757, but until now, Region 3, which operates out of a TriMet yard at SE 92nd and Powell, has been nonunion despite numerous attempts by workers to unionize.

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## Union Cab: Dream comes true

**Residents and visitors to Portland can soon take union-member-driven taxis**

By DON McINTOSH  
Associate Editor

Following a dramatic two-hour hearing Nov. 7, Portland City Council voted to issue 50 taxi permits to Union Cab — a newly-formed driver-owned co-op that is affiliated with Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 7901.

It took drivers three years to get there. After bringing the gavel down on the 4-0 vote, Mayor Sam Adams temporarily waived the rule against applause during council proceedings. Cab drivers and their families wearing orange Union Cab T-shirts — most of them African immigrants — had packed nearly every available seat in the two-story

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**Ethiopian immigrant Kedir Wako tells Portland City Council about the conditions that led him and fellow cab drivers to try to escape their status as independent contractors of several Portland cab companies.**