

Portland City Council aims for sick leave vote by year's end

If passed, Portland would join Seattle San Francisco in human rights advance

A campaign to require paid sick leave for all Portland workers is picking up speed as the current City Council heads into its last few months.

City Commissioner Amanda Fritz announced at an Oct. 27 mayoral candidates forum that she's working with other City Council members to pass a paid sick days ordinance by the end of the year. The candidates forum was hosted by the Latino civil rights organization Causa, which is part of Everybody Benefits — a coalition of unions and community groups that's pressing for a paid sick leave ordinance.

San Francisco, Seattle, and Connecticut have passed laws requiring employers to provide paid sick leave, and activists say San Francisco's ordinance is the model to strive for: Workers there accrue an hour of sick leave for every 30 hours of work, which they



Backed by members of his group, Francisco López of the Latino human rights group Causa tells Portland City Council Oct. 31 that 40,000 minority workers in Portland don't have a single paid sick day a year.

use when they or a family member are sick — up to five days a year at workplaces with fewer than 10 employees, and nine days a year at larger workplaces.

Exact terms of the Portland ordinance are still being worked out. Fritz

and her staff — along with staff from the offices of city commissioners Nick Fish and Dan Saltzman — met three times in early October to discuss details with a stakeholder group convened by Andrea Paluso, coordinator of the Everybody Benefits coalition. Stake-

holders included business owners as well as staff from five labor organizations: Oregon AFL-CIO, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, Service Employees Local 503, American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees, and Oregon Nurses Association. Now Fritz' office is working with the city attorney to draft an ordinance.

Paluso said the coalition is pushing for every worker to be covered regardless of the size of the employer.

"This is a labor standard," Paluso said. "Just like we don't have a different minimum wage for small employers, we shouldn't say small employers don't have to give their employees access to sick days."

"Everybody needs coverage. This is a public health issue, and an economic security issue."

On Oct. 31, Causa members visited City Hall. During the public comment session of the City Council meeting, Causa executive director Francisco

López thanked Fritz and urged members of City Council to pass an ordinance. He said Latino workers in restaurants and elsewhere disproportionately lack paid sick days. An estimated 40 percent of Portland workers — and 57 percent of Latinos — don't have paid sick days, according to research by Institute for Women's Policy Research.

"Portland has great restaurants," Lopez said. "When friends come to Portland, they always compliment the great quality of food. But there is something my friends don't know about Portland, that many waiters, waitresses, cooks, busboys ... come to work sick because they do not get paid for sick days, because they are afraid of losing their job, and because losing a day of work means they will not have enough money to pay for rent."

"I think [Amanda Fritz] is motivated to try to get this done by the end of the year," Paluso told the Labor Press. "We shouldn't make the working people of

... Landslide vote at TriMet Lift

(From Page 1)

This time, workers made it all the way to a supermajority union vote, and while they were at it, validated an experiment in unity by the Oregon AFL-CIO — experienced staff organizers from AFL-CIO-affiliated unions were paired up with paratransit drivers for a "blitz" of home visits to their coworkers. Union-busting consultants sometimes try to frighten workers about

the prospect of union people showing up on doorsteps, but that's how unions must be built — face-to-face contact — when employers monitor workers on the job and refuse to let union organizers on the property.

After the union vote, TriMet Lift workers from several locations celebrated at the Oregon AFL-CIO hall (alongside cab drivers who won the right to form a union-affiliated cab company the same day). Local 757 President Bruce Hansen

said First Transit has used the nonunion unit against the unionized units; wages for experienced drivers are more than \$2 lower at Region 3 than at the previously unionized units. Now that Region 3 is part of the union family, Hansen said, they'll be better able to raise conditions for all the units.

Once the National Labor Relations Board certifies the results, the two sides would begin bargaining for a first union contract covering



THE AYES HAVE IT: The hand of union election observer Roni White shows the tally from her fellow drivers at TriMet Lift Region 3 — 111 for the union, 31 against.



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Local Motion

October 2012

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
10/10	General Distributors (Oregon City) Teamsters Local 162 DECERT	47	4

Requesting a union election

Workplace (Location) Union	Number of workers in unit
First Transit TriMet Lift (Portland) Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757	166
RAMS Security Bonneville, Dalles, John Day dams (Portland) SPFPA DECERT	24

LEGEND

: workers will be union-represented : workers will be on their own

DECERT : A decertification election occurs when some union-represented workers declare that the union no longer has majority support. A 'yes' vote is a vote for the union.