

Single-payer health care rally draws crowd

SALEM — Advocates for single-payer health care in Oregon made their voices heard in Salem Feb. 4 — the opening day of the 77th legislative session. Among the nearly 1,000 people gathered at the noontime rally on the front steps of the State Capitol was State Rep. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland). A member of the American Federation of Teachers, Dembrow is co-chief sponsor of the Health Care for All Oregon Act. The draft legislation currently has 19 co-sponsors, including rookie state Rep. Jennifer Williamson (D-Portland), who is co-chief sponsor.

Portland Sen. Chip Shields is co-chief sponsor on the Senate side.

A second bill in draft form carried by Dembrow would authorize a formal study of the health care financing system. “Every Oregonian has a fundamental right to health care. The Affordable Care Act and public exchanges are not the answer,” Dembrow said.

Williamson told rallygoers that each

year 540 Oregonians die from treatable diseases because they could not access affordable health care. In addition, 34,000 Oregonians and 12,000 families were forced into personal bankruptcies last year, caused by a medical crisis. “And most had insurance when their medical condition began. That is outrageous,” she said.

Dembrow said that due to language in the federal Affordable Care Act, a single-payer system cannot be established before 2017. He vowed to spend the next three years building a movement to support a “health care for all” system in Oregon.

“It won’t be solved by lawmakers or by the governor,” Dembrow said. “It’s going to be solved by a million people in the state of Oregon demanding change, organizing for change, and voting for change.”

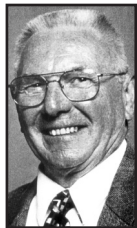
Dembrow said his goal is to have a ballot measure ready for the 2016 election.



State Rep. Michael Dembrow addresses a crowd of nearly 1,000 people gathered at the State Capitol Feb. 4 for a rally for a single-payer health care system in Oregon. Ten buses delivered people from as far away as La Grande and Bandon, Ashland and Prineville for the noon rally organized by Health Care for All Oregon.

IN MEMORIAM

TOMMY ‘TEAMSTER’ MALLOY, a retired business agent and lobbyist for Teamsters Joint Council No. 37, died Jan. 27 of age-related causes at his home in Southwest Portland. He was 88.



THOMAS JAMES MALLOY was born into a Teamsters family in Milwaukie, Oregon, on July 24, 1924. His father, grandfather, and five uncles were all members of the Teamsters. Malloy, himself, was a 54-year member, joining Teamsters Local 206 after taking a job as a warehouseman after graduating from high school.

He enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1942 and served in World War II. After leaving the military in 1946, Malloy was hired as an organizer for Teamsters Cannery Local 681. He worked as a “salt” at Libby’s cannery in Portland, signing up new union members. He was fired from Libby’s when the employer found out what he was doing.

Malloy was hired by the union as a business representative and was working for Local 681 when Dave Beck, director of the Western Conference of Teamsters, assigned him to the Puget Sound area as an organizer.

Beck sent Malloy back to Portland in 1949 to take over Teamsters Automotive Local 255, which had been placed in trusteeship. He left Local 255 in 1960 to take the reins of Teamsters and Chauffeurs Local 281. A short time later he was appointed secretary-treasurer of the Chauffeurs Division of the

Western Conference of Teamsters.

Malloy was elected as a trustee on the Executive Board of Joint Council No. 37 in 1980. He left that post three years later to accept an appointment as a Joint Council representative assigned to serve the union as its political coordinator and legislative lobbyist. When he retired from the dual post in 1987, Malloy ranked as the longest-serving Teamster representative in the Western Conference, with 41 years.

After his “retirement,” Council 37 asked him to continue as its political and legislative representative on a contract basis, which he did until 2005.

Malloy’s civic endeavors included serving as a trustee of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), and on the board of the Housing Authority of Portland. The latter came via appointments by Mayors Terry Schrunk and Neil Goldschmidt.

On Feb. 1, 2013, Teamsters Joint Council No. 37 announced that it was adding Malloy’s name to the Teamsters Clyde C. Crosby/Joseph M. Edgar Memorial Scholarship Fund. The program offers scholarships to children of active, retired, disabled, or deceased members of a local union affiliated with the Joint Council.

Malloy is survived by his wife of 52 years, Eleanor “Frankie”; daughters Shelli Niyama and Tricia Anderson; son Steven; five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by son Michael “Mickey.”

Services were arranged by Riverview Abbey, a Teamster-represented funeral home located in Southwest Portland.

Austerity plans and ‘Bowles-Simpson’ are bad policies for the economy and workers

By **JACKIE TORTORA**

Working families aren’t fooled. There’s nothing “fair and balanced” about the Bowles-Simpson budget plan that would ultimately increase unemployment, cut Social Security benefits, tax workers’ health benefits, and scapegoat federal employees while giving more tax breaks for sending jobs overseas and lowering tax rates for Wall Street and the wealthiest 2 percent.

On Feb. 7, U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.) introduced an amendment that would direct President Obama to follow the budget recommendations of

OSU research assistants to vote on unionization

CORVALLIS, Ore. (PAI) — The Oregon Employee Relations Board (ERB) ruled on Jan. 4 that 680 research assistants (RAs) at Oregon State University in Corvallis can belong to a union. The board said RAs, like their fellow teaching assistants, are public employees and have the right to organize and bargain collectively.

The RAs petitioned the board last June for recognition with the Coalition of Graduate Employees Local 6069, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)-Oregon. Local 6069 already represents some 900 teaching assistants at the university.

OSU objected, arguing that the RAs were not employees.

ERB will mail ballots Feb. 21. The ballot will have two options: “Local 6069” or “No representation.” Ballots must be received (not postmarked) by March 7.

Ersine Bowles and Alan Simpson, known as the Bowles-Simpson plan.

Last year, 350 economists wrote a letter explaining that austerity measures, like the Bowles-Simpson plan, are the exact opposite actions needed to take in order to get people back to work. Not to mention that all these austerity plans being floated target Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid beneficiaries for benefit cuts while hypocritically showering the wealthy and corporations with more tax breaks they don’t need.

Republicans in Congress are threatening to shut down the government in March so they can get their way and

enact the same economic agenda voters overwhelmingly rejected in the last election. The Republican ransom demands are the same as always: cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid benefits; tax cuts for the wealthy and Wall Street; and budget austerity for the rest of Americans, which is already causing the economy to sputter.

The AFL-CIO is asking union members to call their lawmakers in Congress at 888-659-9401 and urge them to reject austerity plans like Schrader’s amendment.

(Editor’s Note: Jackie Tortora writes for the AFL-CIO NOW blog.)

Labor, women’s groups celebrate 20th anniversary of Family Medical Leave Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — Unionists and women’s leaders celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) in early February. FMLA gives workers in firms with at least 50 employees six weeks of unpaid leave yearly to care for ill family members, newborns or themselves with the guarantee they can return to their old jobs.

President Bill Clinton signed the Act on Feb. 5, 1993.

The Labor Department marked the milestone by issuing a final rule that extends the same job protections to families of military service members and to airline personnel and flight crews.

The Association of Flight Attendants, an affiliate of Communications

Workers of America, which lobbied for the change for years, cheered. “It’s an exciting day” that gives flight attendants “peace of mind,” union President Veda Shook said.

Carol Rosenblatt, director of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), said even though passage of FMLA was a landmark victory, it should be expanded to be paid leave and cover more workers, including part-time employees.

“It is time these holes be fixed,” she said.

An effort to expand the Act in the last Congress was stopped by a Republican filibuster in the Senate.

For more information about FMLA, go on line to <http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/2013rule>.