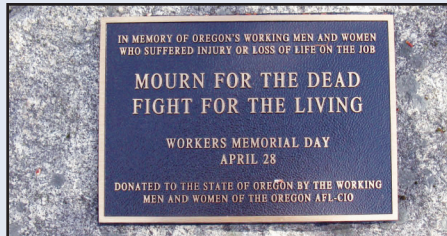




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Unions to remember fallen workers

Oregon workers who died on the job last year will be remembered at ceremonies in Portland and Salem

Forty-seven workers died on the job in Oregon in 2012. That's down from 57 a year ago, and equals the number who died in 2010, according to the most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) report.

To honor them, the Oregon AFL-CIO and Northwest Oregon Labor Council will hold memorial services the last week of April. Both services are part of the national AFL-CIO's Workers Memorial Day event, which recognizes the thousands of U.S. workers who die each year

and the more than 1 million who are injured at work. This year marks the 42nd anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the effective date of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. The Act—which guarantees every American worker a safe and healthful working environment—created OSHA.

The Oregon AFL-CIO's observance will be at noon, Monday, April 29, at the Fallen Workers Memorial outside the Labor and Industries Building, 350 Winter St. NE, on the Capitol Mall in Salem. The service will feature the reading of the names of the Oregon workers who died on the job in 2012, along with the names of Oregonians killed in military action in Afghanistan and Iraq. (A list appears on Page 8 of this issue.)

On Monday, April 22, the Northwest Oregon Labor Council will hold a memorial service at its monthly delegates meeting. The service will include a presentation of colors by the Oregon Military Funeral Honors Program. Michael Wood, administrator of the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OR-OSHA), will be the keynote speaker.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m. at the IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

According to the most recent BLS data available, 51 of the 57 workers killed in Oregon in 2011 were men; 17 (men and women) were between the ages of 55 to 64, and nine were 65 or older. Trucking/transportation and farming/fishing/forestry occupations were the deadliest, ac-

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SEQUESTER OUT!

A group of Oregonians 'sit-in' with U.S. lawmakers Bonamici and Schrader to talk about the impact of sequestration cuts on workers and middle-class families

A group of about 50 concerned citizens met with U.S. Representatives Suzanne Bonamici and Kurt Schrader at a "sequester sit-in" April 4 sponsored by the Oregon AFL-CIO, the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, Oregon Action, and Working America.

A panel of Portland-area labor and community activists illustrated how sequestration is impacting tens of thousands of middle class jobs, and vital services to children, seniors, people with mental illness, and the military.

Sequestration is the term used for the \$85 billion in automatic, across-the-board cuts to both defense spending and domestic spending that went into effect March 1. Congressional leaders and President Obama set the self-imposed deadline in an effort to pass a federal budget. Their thinking was that the sequester cuts were so severe that Republicans and Democrats would be forced to reach agreement on a budget to avoid them. But they failed to agree, and the cutting began March 1.

The AFL-CIO's Executive Council, which says sequestration will cost more than 750,000 jobs this year alone and slash funding for the very programs

people need to get back on their feet, has called on lawmakers to repeal it.

At the sequester sit-in on April 4, representatives from labor unions, Mercy Corp NW, and Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon rattled off a series of sequester impacts, ranging from job cuts for teachers and law enforcement, to longer waits for federal assistance, to fewer safety inspections of the nation's food supply, to fewer loans for small businesses.

Sequestration cuts are not limited to federal employees — who have already given back over \$100 billion through unpaid furloughs and no pay raises over the last three years, said Amanda Schroeder of American Federation of Government Employees Local 2157.

"As our families continue to earn less, our families have less to spend in their neighborhoods and cities. That's less money that we are spending at a cafe where a waitress depends on our business. It's less money we have to spend at grocery stores, movie theaters, on bus tickets and at hardware stores. Sequestration hurts all working Americans."

Meanwhile, Schroeder continued, "No tax loopholes for the wealthiest Americans have closed. This is hardly a balanced approach to the deficit reduction."

Robyn Johnson of Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon said federally funded nutrition programs were for the most part held harmless. She said 800,000 Oregonians rely on food stamps and that the Oregon Food Bank serves 200,000 people a month.

"We are most concerned about the WIC program (Department of Agriculture's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children). A 5.2 percent cut will eliminate 7,200 slots for pregnant women, infant children, and kids up to the age of five," Johnson said. "It is untenable that there is a discussion about taking a program that is serving the most needy, and the most vulnerable people in the most vulnerable time of their life."

Jeff Klatke, a member of AFSCME Council 75, said business is booming at Home Forward (formerly the Housing Authority of Portland).

The agency, which serves 15,000 low-income families, has seen demand



U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader (right) tells the audience that he is using his smartphone to take notes of their concerns about sequestration. Joining him at the AFL-CIO-sponsored "sit-in" was U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici.

for its services increase multiple times since the Great Recession hit.

Klatke said six months ago a record 21,000 applications were filed after Home Forward opened its wait list for Section 8 vouchers. That's in addition to 26,000 public housing request applications that are already on file.

"And now, after this economic downturn, which we are still not out of yet, the community gets sequestered," Klatke said.

Home Forward relies on the Department of Housing and Urban De-

velopment (HUD) for a majority of its funding, and Klatke pointed out that funding has been slowly declining for years. "We have been forced to operate with the 'do more with less' philosophy long enough that we simply can't do more and we can't survive with any fewer staff," he said.

Home Forward residents — the majority of whom are seniors and the disabled on fixed incomes — likely will see their rents raised and their utility assistance reduced.

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