

...Sequestration impacts workers and middle-class families

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Doug Cooper, assistant director of Mercy Corp NW, said some of its capital for lending to small businesses comes from the Small Business Administration. Half of those loans are to new start-up companies, a segment that commercial banks essentially don't deal with. "As of today, any new capital for lending is on hold," he said.

Bob Marshall, an organizer for United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, summed it up best: "I turned 64 in March, and I'm tired of hearing about cuts to the working people. I just can't take it any more. Everything is cutting this and cutting that. We've been cutting for 35 to 40 years. Enough is enough. I'm tired of corporations privatizing the profits and socializing the losses."

Bonamici and Schrader sympathized with panelists and the audience.

"I don't think people expected these cuts would ever take place, but here we are," Bonamici said.

"It's a horrible comment on the United States government, particularly this Congress, that this has come to pass," Schrader added.

Bonamici said the sequestration's across-the-board cuts "do nothing about income disparity," noting that Congress should look at cutting subsidies and closing tax loopholes for oil and gas companies, big farmers, and

agriculture. She wants policies that will create jobs, not cut them. "These policies for sequestration go in the opposite direction."

"Do you know what the Republican alternatives are to the sequester?" Schrader asked. "Doubling down on the domestic cuts. To build up the defense budget."

Schrader said some members of Congress want to continue funding civilian contractors and military projects that even the top military brass want to eliminate. "They can't even give us a number (of how many contract workers are on the payroll). The DOD budget is unauditible."

The lawmakers said there is a bill in the U.S. House to repeal sequestration — but not the votes to pass it.

OSHA freezing hiring, no furloughs under sequestration

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will freeze bonuses and hiring as part of its efforts to reprogram funds under sequestration, GovExec reports.

Under that reprogramming, the Labor Department agency projects it will not need to furlough employees, according to the report.

Citing an internal agency memo, Kellie Lunney writes the Department of Labor and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved OSHA's request to reprogram funds.

Both the department and OMB instructed the agency to act as if it would operate under its reprogramming plan, which Congress holds final approval over.

OSHA will eliminate non-essential employee travel and non-mission critical contracts.

SEQUESTER: IMPACTS ON OREGON

● **Teachers and schools:** Oregon will lose approximately \$10.2 million in funding for primary and secondary education, putting around 140 teacher and aide jobs at risk. In addition, about 13,000 fewer students would be served, and approximately 40 fewer schools would receive funding.

● **Education for children with disabilities:** Oregon will lose approximately \$6.4 million in funds for about 80 teachers, aides, and staff who help children with disabilities.

● **Work-study jobs:** Around 240 fewer low income students in Oregon would receive aid to help them finance the costs of college, and around 280 fewer students will get work-study jobs that help them pay for college.

● **Head Start:** Head Start and Early Head Start services would be eliminated for approximately 600 children in Oregon, reducing access to critical early education.

● **Protections for clean air and clean water:** Oregon would lose about \$1,882,000 in environmental funding to ensure clean water and air quality, as well as prevent pollution from pesticides and hazardous waste. In addition, Oregon could lose another \$1,052,000 in grants for fish and wildlife protection.

● **Military readiness:** In Oregon, approximately 3,000 civilian Department of Defense employees would be furloughed, reducing gross pay by around \$16.5 million in total.

● **Army:** Base operation funding would be cut by about \$1.6 million in

Oregon.

● **Law Enforcement and Public Safety Funds for Crime Prevention and Prosecution:** Oregon will lose about \$155,000 in Justice Assistance Grants that support law enforcement, prosecution and courts, crime prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, and crime victim and witness initiatives.

● **Job search assistance to help those in Oregon find employment and training:** Oregon will lose about \$470,000 in funding for job search assistance, referral, and placement, meaning around 16,320 fewer people will get the help and skills they need to find employment.

● **Child care:** Up to 300 disadvantaged and vulnerable children could lose access to child care, which is also essential for working parents to hold down a job.

● **Vaccines for children:** In Oregon around 1,670 fewer children will receive vaccines for diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, whooping cough, influenza, and Hepatitis B due to reduced funding for vaccinations of about \$114,000.

● **Public health:** Oregon will lose approximately \$366,000 in funds to help upgrade its ability to respond to public health threats including infectious diseases, natural disasters, and biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological events. In addition, Oregon will lose about \$890,000 in grants to help prevent and treat substance abuse, resulting in around 3,800 fewer admissions to substance abuse programs. And

the Oregon Health Authority will lose about \$113,000, resulting in around 2,800 fewer HIV tests.

● **Stop violence against women program:** Oregon could lose up to \$81,000 in funds that provide services to victims of domestic violence, resulting in up to 300 fewer victims being served.

● **Nutrition assistance for seniors:** Oregon would lose approximately \$690,000 in funds that provide meals for seniors."

State ombudsman can assist injured workers

SALEM — The Ombudsman for Injured Workers is a state office that serves as an independent advocate for injured workers by helping them understand their rights and responsibilities, investigating complaints, and assisting to resolve complaints. The ombudsman's staff give straight answers, at no charge, about worker rights and responsibilities; time loss and medical benefits; returning to work; claim closure; and litigation and settlement processes.

If you need help regarding your workers' compensation claim, call toll-free at 800-927-1271, or 503-378-3351, or by email at oiw.questions@state.or.us. Their web site is at www.oregon.gov/DCBS/OIW.

The ombudsman is Jennifer Flood.

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