

Labor Council issues endorsements for May 21 election

The Northwest Oregon Labor Council (NOLC) issued endorsements for several ballot measures, and in several political races for the special election May 21.

Ballots are in the mail today. They must be at a county elections office or designated dropsite by 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 21, for your vote to count. Postmarks don't count.

NOLC endorsed **Measure 26-152 — Restore Our Natural Areas** — put on the ballot by Metro to generate operating and maintenance funds for open space that it owns. The request for endorsement came from AFSCME Local 3580, which represents most employees at Metro.

If passed, homeowners in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties would pay 9.6 cents per \$1,000 of their home's assessed value. The owner of a \$200,000 house, for example, would pay an extra \$19.20 a year. The levy would raise \$10 million annually for five years.

Measure 26-152 is supported by

AFSCME 3580, IBEW 48, Oregon AFSCME Council 75, and Laborers Local 483.

NOLC also endorsed **Measure 3-423 in Oregon City**. The measure amends the City Charter to eliminate the automatic rollback of water rates to near 1994 levels.

A 1996 City Charter amendment enacted by Oregon City voters requires the City to roll back water rates to 1994 levels in 2014. The Charter also restricts water rate increases to no more than 3 percent per year without a vote of the people. The chief petitioner of the initiative was Dan Holladay. Holladay successfully led the May 2011 referendum that killed Clackamas County's \$5 annual vehicle registration fee assessment earmarked to help pay to replace the Sellwood Bridge.

The resetting of the water rates didn't occur in 1996. That's because shortly after the measure was adopted, a group of bond holders sued the City to avoid the rate setback and ensure that their bonds could be repaid. A federal

court judge ordered the City not to implement the provision until the bonds were repaid. Those bonds are scheduled to be repaid in 2014.

"If the rate setback goes into effect, it would decrease water revenue by approximately 27 percent, and those rates would not cover current operating costs and maintenance requirements, resulting in significant changes to the City's water system operations and maintenance programs," said Oregon City Commission President Kathy Roth, who made the appeal for endorsement to NOLC's Executive Board.

Roth said Oregon City has 154 miles of water pipe, with many over 40 years old and some over 100 years old. "Seventy-five miles of pipe are leaking and need replacement quickly," she said.

The request for endorsement came from AFSCME Local 350-2, which represents employees at Oregon City.

NOLC failed to garner enough support among delegates attending the March 25 night meeting to endorse **Measure 26-151**, a Portland City Council initiative to fluoridate Portland's water supply. The vote to endorse fell two votes shy of the required two-thirds majority.

The endorsement request was brought to the labor council by United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555.

Measure 26-151 has received endorsements from Local 555, the Oregon Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals Local 5017; the Oregon Nurses Association; and Service Employees International Union Local 49 and Local 503. "This is a social justice campaign that advances public health, one that will benefit our communities, particularly children without access to proper dental care," said Theodora Ko Thompson, Local 503's Civil and Human Rights Committee co-chair.

NOLC endorsed the re-election of **Vivian Scott** to the North Clackamas School Board, Position 5. She is being challenged by businessman Steven Schroedl, director of the Cascade Heights Public Charter School.

North Clackamas is Oregon's fifth-largest school district, serving 17,300 students. Scott has served on the seven-member School Board since 2005 — the last two years as chair.

A former career counselor and music teacher, Scott has worked as an education and workforce development manager, including three years at Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. She holds a masters degree in Education from Humboldt State University and has carried union cards of the Retail Clerks Union and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees in Northern California.

At its April 22 meeting, NOLC delegates endorsed three candidates for the five-member **Clackamas River Water** board of directors. **Larry Sowa, Kenneth Humberston, and Hugh Kalani** are running for full terms on the volunteer board. All three were appointed by the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners in November, following a

successful union-led recall of board member Patricia Holloway in March.

Last September, water district employees — members of AFSCME Local 350 — took a vote of "no confidence" in the board and demanded they all resign. Workers took the drastic action following years of in-fighting amongst board members that resulted in more than \$1 million spent on lawsuits and special audits. It reached a point where the board was unable to accomplish even routine business, which threatened the water district's ability to obtain liability insurance.

Two "friendly" board members — Barbara Kemper and board president Kami Kehoe — heeded the call and resigned in October. Holloway and board member Grafton Sterling refused to step down, which led to the recall. [An effort to recall Sterling at the same

time as Holloway failed due to a clerical error that disqualified the petition.]

Now, Sowa is running unopposed for Position 3, but Humberston (Position 4) and Kalani (Position 5) face opposition.

Kalani is being challenged by former Clackamas River Water board member Warren Mitchell, who was an ally of Holloway before losing his bid for re-election in 2009.

Humberston is being challenged by Sterling (yes, current board member Grafton Sterling). According to an Oregonian report, if Sterling, a former Oregon state trooper who has two years remaining on his term, wins the seat, he'll have to resign either his current seat or the new one. Either way, the board would have to appoint a replacement for a still-vacated seat.

Graduates of Labor Candidate School file for public office

For many years, unions have encouraged and supported members to run for public office. Last year, nine Oregon unions formed the Oregon Labor Candidate School. Participants undergo a six month course in the mechanics of political campaigns. Alumni

champion policies that positively impact the middle class and working Oregonians, including retirement security, living wages, a strong education system, access to quality and affordable health care, and collective bargaining rights.

The following are graduates of the Class of 2012 who have filed to run for office.

Trish Stephens of **Oregon School Employees Association** is running for **Amity School Board**, Position 1. Stephens is a special education instructional assistant in the Willamina School District. She faces one other candidate for the open board seat.

Erick Flores, a member of the **Oregon Education Association**, is running for an open seat on the **Parkrose School Board**. Flores is a teacher in the David Douglas School District. Two other candidates are seeking the Position 5 seat.

Nicole (Nikki) Milam, an office secretary with the **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers**, is running for **Medford School Board**, Position 1. The board has been divided in recent months over the performance of its superintendent. Milam is in a three-person race that includes the incumbent.

Francisco (Frank) Acosta is a member of **Portland Federation of School Professional Local 111** running unopposed for the **Multnomah Education Service District Board**, Position 3. A campus monitor at Franklin High School, Acosta also attends Corban University and is pursuing a masters degree in education.

Teachers unions endorse in several school board races

The Portland Association of Teachers has endorsed **Steve Buel, Pam Knowles, and Tom Koehler** for Portland Public Schools board. The teachers union also endorsed Nels Johnson and Francisco (Frank) Acosta Jr. for the Multnomah Education Service District board.

The Beaverton Education Association has endorsed **Tom Colett, Anne Bryan, Susan Greenberg, and LeeAnn Larson** for school board seats.

The Hillsboro Education Association has endorsed **Jaime Rodriguez, Rebecca Lantz and Janeen Sollman** for school board seats.

The Tigard-Tualatin Education Association has endorsed **Barry Albertson, David Matheson and Maureen Wolf** to school board seats.

Portland Community College Federation of Faculty and Academic Professionals Local 2277 has endorsed **Kali Thorne Ladd** for PCC director, Zone 2.

Reynolds Education Association endorsed **Diego Hernandez** for Reynolds School District Board of Directors Position 2.

Union activist takes a run at Hillsboro School Board seat

Jaime Rodriguez, a member of the Portland Community College Federation of Faculty and Academic Professionals Local 2277, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), is running for the Hillsboro School Board, Position 2.



JAIME RODRIGUEZ

Hillsboro School District serves 23,000 students at four high schools, four junior high schools, 25 elementary schools, an alternate school, and an online charter school.

Rodriguez works as an employment specialist at Portland Community College's Workforce Development Department, where he has helped hundreds of job seekers and students since 1999.

He serves as vice president of political action for Local 2277, and represents the local as a delegate to the Northwest Oregon Labor Council (NOLC), which endorsed his candidacy.

This is Rodriguez' first foray into elected office.

Rodriguez is a graduate of the first class (2012) of the Oregon Labor Candidates School. OLCS trains, prepares, and empowers rank-and-file union members representing all sectors of the economy to run for elected office. Participants learn practical skills for running for office — from fundraising, to communications, to campaign planning.

"I got a lot out of it," Rodriguez said. "I think I'm a better candidate for it."

Rodriguez, who has a bachelor's degree in public administration/political science from Fresno City College in California, is active in the

Democratic Party in Washington County.

As a founding member of the Oregon chapter of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, a constituency group of the AFL-CIO and Change to Win labor federation, Rodriguez volunteered to do outreach to the Latino community for Suzanne Bonamici in her January 2012 special election victory for Congress.

Later in 2012 he was elected a delegate from Oregon (and a labor delegate) to the National Democratic Convention in Charlotte, N.C..

"The speeches at the convention were highly motivating," he said. "I listened to President Obama and it really inspired me. I came back (to Oregon) and the opportunity to run for school board came up."

Rodriguez has lived in the Hillsboro School District for 15 years. His daughter is a junior at Century High School. He has served on the Hillsboro School District Citizen's Advisory Curriculum Committee and the Ladd Acres Elementary site council.

Rodriguez is one of three candidates seeking the open seat for Position 2. The other candidates are businessman Glenn Miller and internet consultant and charter school board president Miklosch Sander.

In addition to NOLC, Rodriguez has endorsements from Local 2477; the Hillsboro Classified Employees Association; Hillsboro Education Association; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48; and Painters and Tapers Local 10.

For more information about Rodriguez, or to donate to his campaign, go to his Facebook page at www.facebook.com/JaimeRodriguezforSchoolBoard.