

# Oregon unions sign tentative pacts for 22,000 state workers

## SEIU and AFSCME members will get modest cost-of-living raises

The State of Oregon reached agreement July 18 and 19 with its two largest union groups, signing tentative agreements that, when ratified, will cover 22,000 state workers.

The new agreements provide a 1.5 percent cost-of-living raise Dec. 1, 2013, and 2 percent Dec. 1, 2014. They also end a freeze in step pay increases, and contain no further furlough days — two concessions that workers agreed to two years ago when the state was in fiscal crisis.

State negotiators dropped proposals to make employees pay 100 percent of

health insurance premium increases over 5 percent. In the new agreements, workers would continue to pay 5 percent of health insurance premiums. And starting 2015, employees who choose the least expensive health plan available to them will see their share of the premium decrease to 3 percent.

A unit of 19,000 workers represented by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503 was the first to reach agreement — six days after Local 503 gave a 10-day strike notice. Oregon-AFSCME (American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees) concluded a deal on nearly-identical terms the following day, which will cover another 3,000 workers. One difference: In the AFSCME contract, if health insurance premiums increase less than forecasted, workers would get their cost-of-living raises early — one month early for

every 1.6 percentage points less than 5 percent.

The two-year contracts are retroactive to July 1 and run through June 30, 2015.

The big state worker agreement is sometimes called the DAS contract, because it's negotiated by the Department of Administrative Services on behalf of nearly all state agencies. Together with side agreements, the DAS contracts run up to 160 pages, and spell out pay, benefits, work rules, and disciplinary procedures.

SEIU this year made several unusual "common good" proposals, including a call for investigation into how the LIBOR bank fraud scandal may have hurt public worker pension and other state funds. But when bargaining reached formal "impasse," those proposals were declared "permissive" subjects of bargaining, meaning the state,

by law, didn't have to consider them.

Ratification votes are expected to take place in the coming weeks and conclude by mid-August. The SEIU vote will take place statewide, by mail ballot. The AFSCME ratification vote takes place agency by agency, and some agencies, like DEQ and the Department of State Lands, are still in "local table" negotiations that could go to the second week of August.

Still being negotiated are state contracts covering 3,000 workers in two AFSCME-represented units in the De-

partment of Corrections, and SEIU-represented units covering 20,000 state-paid in-home care providers and 4,000 workers in the Oregon University System (OUS). The OUS negotiations are particularly contentious this year: State negotiators are demanding concessions in cherished union contract provisions like seniority rights during layoffs, overtime pay after eight hours, and safeguards against privatization. On July 29, SEIU began circulating a member petition in support of strike authorization at OUS.

## David Cecil named chief of staff at AFT-Oregon

David Cecil has been named to the newly created position of chief of staff for the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)-Oregon.

AFT-Oregon represents roughly 12,000 Oregon workers from 20 locals in K-12, community college and higher education in faculty and classified positions; and child care workers, in both public and private sectors.

The chief of staff directs and coordinates AFT-Oregon staff, programs, and operations, and reports directly to the president of the council, David Rives.

AFT-Oregon chose this new direction with the retirement in February of Richard Schwarz, who served 24 years as AFT-Oregon executive director.

Cecil brings over 13 years as a union leader, organizer, and labor relations



specialist to the post.

He joined AFT Local 3544 in 1999 as a Graduate Teaching Fellow in the history department at the University of Oregon in Eugene. He served as an officer in the local

until 2002, when he was hired as organizer. In 2011, he began work on the successful United Academics at University of Oregon organizing campaign, helping to form AFT-Oregon's newest unit, which now represents 1,800 faculty at the UO in Eugene.

He joined AFT-Oregon staff in August 2012 as labor relations specialist. Recently, he has assisted United Academics in their efforts to achieve a first collective bargaining agreement with

the UO.

"I'm excited because there's a lot of potential in AFT-Oregon," Cecil said. "The labor movement is at a crucial point in its history. And, the way to be successful in growing the union is to have active locals with members who understand the value of their union, not just in the workplace, but in the community as well. I'm committed to helping AFT-Oregon locals and members strengthen our union, and the movement as a whole."

## Anderson appointed to high-level post at UFCW convention

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555 Secretary Treasurer Jeff Anderson has been appointed co-chair of the Rules Committee for the international union's convention Aug. 12-16 in Chicago.

The appointment was made by UFCW International President Joe Hansen.

This is the first time that a member of the Oregon local has held a high-level position at the convention, according to Anderson.

"I consider this a high honor for Local 555 and recognition of the work we are doing," Anderson said.

UFCW Local 555, the largest private-sector union in Oregon with a membership of over 19,000, will send 24 delegates to the convention, which is held every five years.



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