

...Fired by the Fund

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have a hearing before a judge so far, but many other union supporters have been fired since the union campaign began, including the worker who first called the union, all eight of the workers who presented the original union petition to a manager, all four workers who volunteered on the union's initial bargaining team, and several who replaced them, for a total of at least 13 supporters fired — in a call center that employs about 25 workers.

In nearly every case, the union filed charges with the NLRB. But the agency has dismissed most of them. CWA has had a tough time proving that defeating the union was a motive in the firings, because the Fund fires workers at a prodigious rate for all kinds of reasons.

If that surprises you, you wouldn't be the first. Neel, 36 and a father of three, was an idealist when he began working at the Fund. He believed in his work — dialing from the Portland call

center to raise money for groups like Illinois PIRG, PennEnvironment, and the National Environmental Law Center. And he was good at his job, exceeding fundraising quotas, and rising to the Fund's top pay rate of \$14.50 an hour.

So when co-workers talked about unionizing, Neel thought that given the progressive values the Fund espouses, managers wouldn't object very much if workers voted to unionize.

"Everyone deserves a fair shot at a good job and a secure future." Or so goes the phone rap for Fair Share, one of the Fund-affiliated groups Neel raised money for.

But not workers at the Fund. Fund phone callers pay can drop several dollars an hour in a single pay period if they fall below fundraising targets. And if they fail to meet a separate benchmark two weeks in a row, they are fired, no matter how many years they've worked there.

In 18 months of negotiations over a first-ever union contract for its two dozen Portland call center employees, the Fund held fast to those policies, agreeing only to minor concessions — limiting pay cuts to \$2 an hour per pay period, and giving workers a third missed-quota week, once a year, before termination. But the Fund insisted that the call center remain an "at will" workplace. For over a year, the Fund also insisted, as is the law in "right-to-work" states, that its call center be an "open shop," in which union dues would be strictly voluntary. In June, the Fund appeared to relent, agreeing that workers who don't want to join the union would still have to pay the union's costs to represent them. But as spelled out by the Fund, the union would have to collect the fees, and workers would face no workplace consequence for failing to pay.

Call center workers voted to reject all these terms, and a new round of bargaining is scheduled to begin Aug. 28.

Oregon AFL-CIO to convene in Bend Sept. 27-29

BEND — Union leaders and activists, mark your calendars for Sept. 27-29 and the 53rd biennial Oregon AFL-CIO Convention. The convention will be held at The Riverhouse Hotel and Convention Center: 3075 N Business 97, Bend.

Registration opens Friday, Sept. 27. That evening a welcome party will be held. Convention business gets under way Saturday morning, Sept. 28.

The popular Union Label Show is scheduled Saturday evening.

For more information, call the Oregon AFL-CIO at 503-224-3169, or from Salem call 503-585-6320.

How to fire a union activist

On Oct. 12, 2011, workers at a Portland call center voted 19 to 5 to join Communications Workers of America Local 7901. Twenty-two months later, they still have no union contract, and over a dozen outspoken union supporters have been fired since the union campaign began. Their employer is the Boston-based non-profit Fund for the Public Interest, fundraising arm for the national PIRG (Public Interest Research Group) network.



Wael Elasadly
fired for missing a shift



Kris Humbird
fired for calling in sick too late



Mike Schultz
fired for failing to make quota two weeks in a row



Cortina Robinson
fired for missing quota two weeks in a row, after 9 years of calling



Ben Woodhouse
fired for saying goodbye in a disrespectful way to a member



David Neel
fired for failing to stick to a script and "triple confirm" a pledge



Alixandre Long
fired for failing to make quota two weeks in a row



John Ingram
fired for failing to make quota two weeks in a row



James Dixon
fired for failing to make quota two weeks in a row



Hilari Grace Price
fired for saying something rude after getting off the phone with an abusive member

Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Jeff Johnson, President — Lynne Dodson, Secretary Treasurer



Happy Labor Day!

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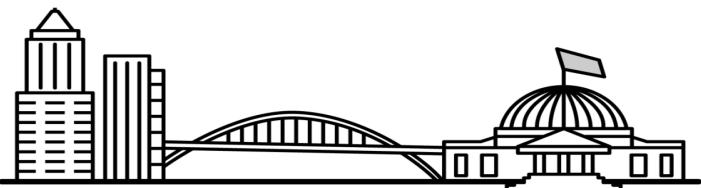
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