

...Kitzhaber's Grand Bargain

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cent of that \$500 million tax cut will go to the top 1 percent of taxpayers, who would get an average tax cut of \$6,011 a year.

It's a strange kind of bargain that takes away \$2,370 a year in benefits from retired public employees and gives away \$6,011 a year in tax cuts to people making over \$330,000 a year.

As lawmakers prepared to pass the legislation, labor organizations came out in opposition. Elana Guiney of the Oregon AFL-CIO, Mary Botkin of American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AF-SCME), and Rob Sisk of Service Employees International Union Local 503 testified against the PERS cuts. In a letter to legislators, Oregon Education Association (OEA) said the PERS

changes "don't meet any standards of fairness."

The Oregon State Fire Fighters Council was the only labor group to support the PERS COLA cut. Legislative Director Bob Livingston said supporting the PERS cuts was a difficult decision, but it frees up revenue to provide public services, and puts further changes to PERS "off the table" for the first time in decades. Some Republicans had pressed for much deeper changes to PERS, but Kitzhaber vowed "that's it" once this one passed.

Kitzhaber's package deal included two other bills: One removes future legislators from PERS and cuts PERS benefits for felons; the other bars cities and counties from regulating Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).

The PERS cut passed 22-7 in the

Oregon Senate and 31-24 in the House, and the tax bill passed 36-19 in the House and 18-10 in the Senate. [See "How they voted" at right]

As the tax measure came up for consideration in the House, Clackamas County Democrat Brent Barton delivered a floor speech about the "so-called grand bargain," calling the revenue bill "a major cash giveaway" to thousands of well-off taxpayers.

"What is the message this Legislature is sending when we cut taxes on thousands of lawyers, doctors, lobbyists, accountants on the same day that we are reducing benefits to retirees?" Barton asked. "There is nothing grand about it. It is certainly not a bargain."

It's also not clear the bill cutting PERS will stand up in court. In 2005, the Oregon Supreme Court struck down an attempt by the Legislature to eliminate PERS cost-of-living increases, in a case known as Strunk vs. PERB. Public employee unions united in the PERS Coalition (a group which includes the Fire Fighters) had already filed a legal challenge to legislation passed earlier this year to cap the PERS COLA at 1.5 percent. PERS Coalition attorney Greg Hartman said the new legislation will be added to that court challenge, which goes directly to the Oregon Supreme Court. It could take 18 to 24 months before the court reaches a decision, however.

"You can talk about adding classroom teachers and adding back days," OEA president Hanna Vaandering told the Labor Press, "but when you're doing it at the expense of the working class and in a way that could very well be overturned by the Oregon Supreme Court ... it doesn't make sense."

"It's incredibly disappointing that so many people felt this had to be done, because it didn't, and there were other solutions," said Guiney, legislative director of the Oregon AFL-CIO.



How they voted

SB 861 reduced the PERS COLA. **HB 3601** enacted the tax changes. In the tally, SB 861 is first, and HB 3601 is second. Republicans are in italics.

✓ means they voted for the bill
X means they voted against it
? means they didn't cast a vote.

OREGON SENATE

Herman Baertschiger ✓X
Alan Bates ✓X
Lee Beyer X✓
Brian Boquist ✓✓
Ginny Burdick ✓✓
Betsy Close XX
Peter Courtney ✓✓
Richard Devlin ✓✓
Jackie Dingfelder XX
Chris Edwards ✓✓
Ted Ferrioli ✓✓
Larry George ✓✓
Fred Girod ✓✓
Bill Hansell ✓✓
Mark Hass ✓✓
Betsy Johnson ✓✓
Tim Knopp XX
Jeff Kruse XX
Laurie Monnes Anderson ✓✓
Rod Monroe ✓✓
Alan Olsen ✓X
Floyd Prozanski ??
Arnie Roblan ✓✓
Diane Rosenbaum XX
Chip Shields X?
Bruce Starr ✓✓
Elizabeth Steiner Hayward ✓✓
Chuck Thomsen ✓X
Doug Whitsett ✓X
Jackie Winters ✓✓

OREGON HOUSE

Jules Bailey XX
Jeff Barker X✓
Phil Barnhart X✓
Brent Barton XX
Cliff Bentz ✓X
Vicki Berger XX
Deborah Boone ✓✓
Peter Buckley ✓✓
Kevin Cameron ??
Brian Clem ??
Jason Conger ✓X
John Davis ✓✓
Michael Dembrow ✓✓
Margaret Doherty X✓
Sal Esquivel ✓✓
Shemia Fagan XX
Lew Frederick XX
Tim Freeman XX
Joe Gallegos X✓
Chris Garrett ✓✓
Sara Gelser X✓
Vic Gilliam ✓✓
David Gomborg X✓
Chris Gorsek XX
Mitch Greenlick X✓
Bruce Hanna XX
Chris Harker ✓✓
Wally Hicks ✓X
Paul Holvey ??
Val Hoyle ✓✓
John Huffman ✓✓

Bob Jenson XX
Mark Johnson ✓✓
Bill Kennemer ✓X
Alissa Keny-Guyer ✓✓
Betty Komp ✓✓
Tina Kotek ✓✓
Wayne Krieger XX
John Lively ✓✓
Chris Matthews X✓
Caddy McKeown ✓✓
Mike McLane ✓✓
Nancy Nathanson X✓
Andy Olson ✓X
Julie Parrish ✓✓
Tobias Read ✓✓
Jeff Reardon ✓✓
Dennis Richardson ✓X
Greg Smith X✓
Sherrie Sprenger ✓X
Kim Thatcher ??
Jim Thompson X✓
Carolyn Tomei ✓✓
Ben Unger ??
Jessica Vega Pederson X✓
Jim Weidner ✓✓
Gene Whisnant XX
Gail Whitsett ✓X
Jennifer Williamson X✓
Brad Witt ✓✓



Mark Butler, Grant Lappi, Mike Van Atta, and Andrew Beyer were winners of a charity golf tournament sponsored by Art Cortez Construction and Carpenters Local 146. The tournament raised \$1,500 for the Pregnancy Alternatives Center in Lebanon, and also recognized general contractor Lease Crutcher Lewis for its commitment to use minority-owned subcontractors, of which Art Cortez Construction is one.

Carpenters #146 partners with contractor in charity golf tourney

LEBANON, Ore. — The Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters Local 146 partnered with Art Cortez Construction and several suppliers in a charity golf tournament benefiting the Pregnancy Alternatives Center in Lebanon, Oregon.

Twenty-eight linksters participated in the Sept. 18 tournament at Mallard Creek Golf Course in Lebanon. Together they raised \$1,500 for the pregnancy center.

At the tournament, Art Cortez Construction and the union also recognized general contractor Lease Crutcher Lewis for its responsible contracting practices, its commitment in utilizing minority contractors, and for all the charity work it performs.

Art Cortez Construction is a small minority-owned drywall company headquartered in Portland. The com-

pany worked as a subcontractor for Lease Crutcher Lewis at the recently completed Harrison Street Apartments student housing project in Corvallis.

Art Cortez Construction will work with Lease Crutcher Lewis on two more projects over the coming months, including the Oregon Zoo.

Local 146 member Mike Van Atta, who is operations manager for Art Cortez Construction, said Lease Crutcher Lewis has a commitment to teamwork "that surpasses what is common in our industry."

VanAtta said the general contractor uses minority contractors on both public works projects and private projects, where there are no diversity requirements.

"We wanted to show our gratitude and shine a light on what they are doing," VanAtta said.

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