

Labor liaison Smith Warner headed to state Legislature

Barbara Smith Warner, labor liaison to U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), has been appointed the new Democratic state representative for Oregon House District 45.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners on Dec. 19 chose Smith Warner, 46, to replace Michael Dembrow. In November, those same county commissioners appointed Dembrow to the state Senate to fill the unexpired term of Jackie Dingfelder in District 23. Dingfelder resigned mid-term to join the staff of Portland Mayor Charlie Hales.

Dembrow is a longtime union activist and former president of the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, Portland Community College Faculty Federation Local 2277. He was first elected to the House in 2008.



BARBARA SMITH WARNER

Smith Warner was well known in labor circles prior to joining Sen. Wyden's staff in March 2009. She worked for the national AFL-CIO as a state legislative issues coordinator and as a campaign director against several anti-union ballot measures sponsored by Bill Sizemore. From 1993 to 1996 she was the Western Regional field

coordinator for the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Smith Warner was campaign director for former labor commissioner Dan Gardner, a member of IBEW Local 48. She also has worked as campaign director for Forward Oregon and Future PAC, and on the re-election campaigns of Wyden, Gov. Ted Kulongoski, and U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer.

Commissioners chose Smith Warner unanimously to represent District 45, which includes parts of Northeast Portland, the city of Maywood Park, and the Parkrose area. She was one of three nominees submitted by the Democratic Party of Oregon. The other contenders were Thomas Sincic and James Woods.

Smith Warner stressed to commissioners her commitment to education and health care reform, as well as her many community connections ranging from her two children's school (Beverly Cleary) and the Rose City Park Neighborhood Association to the Children's Book Bank and St. Andrew's food pantry.

Smith Warner told the Labor Press she will work to expand the idea of "wraparound care" in Gov. John Kitzhaber's health care transformation to other areas such as housing, job training (including union apprenticeships) and mental health.

Smith Warner will resign from her job as Wyden's labor liaison. Her last day is Jan. 5. She will be sworn in as a state representative on Jan. 15.



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Machinists to vote on second Boeing offer

Members of Machinists District 751 in Puget Sound and District W24 in Portland employed at Boeing Co. have been ordered by their international union to vote on a second contract proposal the company made Dec. 12.

Boeing has threatened to move production of the new 777X to another state if workers don't agree to the deal.

The vote was scheduled for Jan. 3, just a day after Boeing's assembly workers returned from their annual two-week holiday break (and after this issue of the Labor Press went to press).

Machinists District 751 is "emphatically recommending that members reject the offer," as it is largely unchanged from one that members turned down by a 2-to-1 margin on Nov. 13.

Boeing is demanding an eight-year contract with drastic concessions in retirement and health care benefits, and

wage increases of only 1 percent every other year, in return for what District 751 says are vague promises of making Washington the home for the new 777X jet.

"The only guarantees this contract makes are that future Machinists won't have a defined benefit pension, current Machinists will pay more for health care, and everyone will have sharp limits on their future earnings," said District 751 President Tom Wroblewski.

Boeing sweetened its cash offer, adding a \$5,000 lump sum bonus in January 2020 to a \$10,000 ratification bonus that was offered in the first proposal. The company also withdrew its earlier demand to slow the wage progression for new hires. The offer reverts to the status quo, which is that new hires can reach the top of the pay scale in six years (and not 16 years as previously proposed).

Machinists are currently working under a contract that doesn't expire until September 2016. That agreement has been in place since 2008.

In a letter to all Boeing Machinists, International President Tom Buffenbarger said Jan. 3 will be the "final vote" on a contract. He said the union "must take the threat seriously" that Boeing will leave Washington (if the contract is rejected). He wrote that given the fact several states have tendered serious offers and incentive packages to the company, "the timeline for the Puget Sound area is expiring."

Prior to the union vote on Nov. 13, the Washington Legislature in a special session granted Boeing a \$8.7 billion tax incentive package through 2024. It is the largest state tax subsidy for a private corporation in U.S. history.

Part of SeaTac's \$15 minimum wage measure struck

SEATAC, Wash. — In a Dec. 27 ruling, a judge struck down SeaTac's voter-passed \$15-an-hour minimum wage for airport workers, but upheld it for hotel and transportation workers outside the airport.

King County Superior Court Judge Andrea Darvas ruled that under state law, the Port of Seattle has exclusive jurisdiction over SeaTac Airport. Thus, the airport is not subject to ordinances passed by the City of SeaTac, the 27,000-resident municipality that encompasses the airport. Voters in SeaTac had passed in November — by 77 votes — the highest-in-the-nation minimum wage by ballot initiative. The initiative also gave hospitality and transportation workers other rights,

including paid sick days and the right for employees of contractors to keep their jobs when the contract changes hands.

The Yes for SeaTac campaign — the coalition of unions, community groups, and churches that crafted the initiative — said it would file an expedited appeal to the Washington Supreme Court. For now, about 1,600 hotel and parking lot workers who work within the City of SeaTac get raises to \$15 an hour, but an estimated 4,700 baggage handlers, car rental workers, and others who work in the airport itself will have to wait for the results of a legal appeal.

This wasn't Darvas' first time ruling on the SeaTac ballot measure. Last summer, she agreed with an attempt by

Alaska Airlines to keep the measure off the ballot, but that decision was overruled by the Washington Court of Appeals.

This time, Darvas rejected most of the grab bag of arguments made by the initiative's opponents — that it violates the rule that initiatives must encompass only one subject, that it violates the U.S. Constitution's commerce clause by mistreating out-of-state employers, that it violates state law by letting unaffected parties sue employers, or that it is preempted by the National Labor Relations Act. But Darvas agreed with the jurisdictional argument: The City of SeaTac may not regulate the airport, because only the Port of Seattle may do that.



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