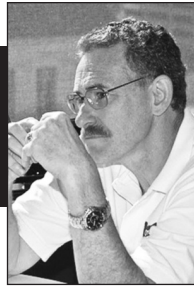


# Who's On Our Side?

By Tom Chamberlain



Grover Norquist set the tone for the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) with the battle cry "[unions] are not dead yet — but they're in decline." Good ol' boy Grover then laid out a plan to destroy unions once and for all: Gain control of governors' mansions and state legislatures and pass right-to-work laws.

Getting right-to-work on the Oregon ballot was part of their plan for 2014, but thanks to Gov. John Kitzhaber, leaders in the business community, and strong, committed union leaders who put the good of the Oregon labor movement ahead of their individual agendas, we are not dead yet.

Understand, I believe that we could have defeated this Groverian agenda that was designed to silence the voice of working Oregonians. But workers and their allies would have spent over \$10 million and thousands of hours knocking on doors and phone calling.

The Koch brothers would have invested millions to destroy the Oregon workers' movement because they know that if they had passed these anti-worker initiatives in Oregon, they could pass them anywhere.

We have too many other battles

to pick a \$10 million fight where we're sure to be outspent, even when we know we can win.

Unions have been under intensifying attack for the last four decades — since Ronald Regan broke the Air Traffic Controllers Union. These attacks do not target just unions. They target any organization that builds people power.

The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) was a community-based organization that worked in local neighborhoods throughout the United States advocating for low- to moderate-income families, increasing voter registration, fighting for affordable housing and supporting other social issues. At its peak, ACORN had a membership of over 500,000 people in 1,200 neighborhoods. Their 2008 voter registration program registered 1.3 million voters. ACORN's internal audits revealed that approximately 400,000 were duplicates. Most states require voter registration programs to turn in all completed registration forms — including duplicates — to protect voters' information. ACORN helped get millions of Americans into the voting booth, building power for working families. They

were so successful that they became a target for the Grover Norquists of the world.

In 2009, two conservative activists released a selectively edited video that falsely suggested that ACORN staff members were a part of illegal activities. While ACORN was later cleared of any wrongdoing, funding by then had already dried up. That funding was used to register low-income Americans to vote. It was used to help communities advocate for their futures. It was a threat to Norquist's agenda.

We could have won right-to-work in Oregon. This time, our local union and business leaders found a common interest — finding a better path forward for The Beaver State.

But as Gov. Kitzhaber leads us down that path, we must make sure that the outcome really is a good deal for working people. And we must be ready for Norquist's next attack on working people. We don't plan on dying off, but we know the Grover Norquists of the world will keep trying.

*Tom Chamberlain is president of the Oregon AFL-CIO.*

## Blues Festival April 5 to benefit Health Care for All

For the third year, Health Care for All-Oregon is throwing a party that will benefit its work to get simple, fair, affordable, high quality health care for all Oregonians.

The Inner City Blues Festival — "Healing the Healthcare Blues," will be held Saturday, April 5, at the Melody Ballroom, 615 SE Alder, Portland. Doors open at 6 p.m.

The Inner City Blues Festival stars

Norman Sylvester and a host of Northwest musicians. Masters of Ceremonies are Paul Knauls, a NE Portland businessman and former owner of legendary blues/jazz clubs Geneva's and the Cotton Club, and Renee Mitchell, former columnist for the Oregonian and renowned poet and author.

The evening will include Community Village information tables, a raffle prize drawing and silent auction.

Tickets are \$15 in advance at [www.tickettomato.com](http://www.tickettomato.com) or at Music Millennium, Geneva's Shear Perfection, Musicians Union Local 99, or \$20 at the door.

## Free tax preparation available

Labor's Community Service Agency is spreading the word that low- to moderate-income Oregonians can have their income tax returns prepared free by trained volunteers statewide. CASH (Creating Assets, Savings and Hope) Oregon, a non-profit group in partnership with AARP Tax-Aide, supports free tax preparation in 32 counties in Oregon at more than 140 tax sites.

Many people who earn very little may be eligible for a refund. Tax credits that many could qualify for are the Federal and Oregon Earned Income Tax Credit, the Federal Child Tax Credit, and the Oregon Working Family Child Care Credit. Trained volunteers will help taxpayers sort through their ques-

tions and provide assistance.

For more information or to find a location nearest you, call 2-1-1, or visit [www.cashoregon.org](http://www.cashoregon.org).

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1938 FORD PICKUP parts, 2 fenders, 2 grills, 3 side panels, 1 tailgate, 1 dash panel. 503-887-3388

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100 ACRES, trees, wildlife, will carry contract, Spray Oregon, \$750 per acre OBO. 541-468-2961

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COLLECTOR, cash paid, old fishing tackle, wood plugs, reels, creels, salmon fishing photos, etc. 503-775-4166

COLLECTOR PAYS cash for older toys, oil paintings, American art pottery, and costume jewelry. 503 703-5952

1947 FRANKLIN High School yearbook. 503-522-6542

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BRIGGS & STRATTON motors, vert shaft, elec start, single cyl, 16HP & 18HP twin, \$150 ea. 503-780-0374 (Colton)

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E-Z-HOE cultivator, serial HC522126, \$100. 503-775-7457

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