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Supreme Court sides with Radical Right in Illinois home care worker case

In a 5-to-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court on June 30 ruled that home health aides working for state Medicaid clients in Illinois don't have to pay "fair share" agency fees to the state employees union that represents them, if they don't want to be union members.

The court split along ideological lines, with the five conservative justices in the majority and the four Democratic appointees in dissent.

Justice Samuel Alito's majority opinion in *Harris v Quinn* said Illinois violated the home care workers' First Amendment rights to free speech by re-

quiring them to pay "agency fees" to the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). "A state may not force every person who benefits from this group's efforts to make payments to the group," he wrote.

Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain said the decision was another in a string of recent attacks on unions. "Make no mistake — the original case was supported by groups seeking to take power away from working people," he said.

Rebecca Sandoval, president of SEIU Local 503's Homecare and Per-

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Staples boycott grows

The AFL-CIO, teachers' unions, and others support postal workers' boycott of the office supply chain after it contracts with the U.S. Postal Service to staff mini-post offices inside its stores.



PHOTOS BY BETTE LEE

Dozens of protesters carrying signs and banners marched inside a Staples store in Northeast Portland June 20, where they attempted to present a petition signed by 500 Portland residents who have pledged to boycott the office supply stores. The protesters are angry because Staples signed a no-bid, sweetheart deal with the U.S. Postal Service to staff postal counters inside its stores — at the same time the USPS is eliminating public post offices and reducing work hours.

A pilot program was launched in 82 stores last October (none in Oregon). USPS plans to expand the scheme to all of Staples' 1,500 locations nationwide starting in September. Staples employees who work full time earn about \$18,000 per year and receive minimal training on how to handle U.S. Mail, said Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, which is spearheading the 'Don't Buy Staples' campaign.

The AFL-CIO bolstered the boycott campaign with its endorsement last month. The California Federation of Teachers was the first to sign on to the campaign in April, followed by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)-Michigan and AFT-New Hampshire. On June 23, delegates to the Northwest Oregon Labor Council voted to join the boycott. The American Federation of Teachers is expected to consider a 'Don't Buy Staples' resolution at its national convention this month.

Teachers play an especially important role in the boycott,

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New dry dock could mean hundreds of jobs at Portland shipyard

By DON McINTOSH
 Associate Editor

Thirteen years after America's largest floating dry dock floated off to The Bahamas, the company that sold it is bringing a new one to the same spot in Portland's Swan Island industrial area.

Vigor Industrial — formerly known as Cascade General — has expanded greatly since 2001, when it sold Portland's Dry Dock 4 for \$26.5 million to satisfy a lender that called in a loan. In the last decade, the com-

pany has purchased shipyards in Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, and Ketchikan. Now it's investing \$40 million for a new dry dock — 960 feet long, 186 feet wide between the wing walls, and capable of lifting 80,000 long tons. That's just 22 feet shorter than Dry Dock 4, which is now in use at the Grand Bahama Shipyard in The Bahamas.

The new dry dock, under construction since early 2013, is being made by Daoda Marine Heavy Industry

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