

Marijuana legalization heading for the Oregon ballot, with likely union support

By **DON MCINTOSH**
Associate Editor

A measure to legalize, tax, and regulate marijuana is expected to be on the ballot in Oregon this November, and it's likely to get a full-throated endorsement from the state's largest private sector union, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555.

UFCW has supported marijuana legalization efforts around the United States, as well as a bill in Congress sponsored by Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) that would end federal marijuana prohibition and allow states to choose whether to allow marijuana for medicinal or recreational use. UFCW even has a cannabis division, dedicated to unionizing workers in the newly legal enterprises. The division is known as Cannabis Workers Rising, and has its own web site, cannabisworkers.org. Thus far, cannabis workers in six states and the District of Columbia have joined UFCW — including workers at dispensaries, coffee shops, bakeries, patient identification centers, hydroponics stores, and growing and training facilities.

Though UFCW Local 555 doesn't normally make endorsements until after initiatives qualify, Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Anderson said it's likely to

support the Oregon measure, consistent with the policy of its national union.

"We see it as a growth industry," Anderson said. UFCW represents workers in food, agriculture, pharmacies, and retail, and all of those industries could see job growth under marijuana legalization, Anderson said.

In 2012, Local 555 supported and helped contribute signatures to an Oregon ballot measure that would have created a commission to regulate commercial cultivation and sale of marijuana and hemp, but the measure failed with just under 47 percent of the vote.

This year's measure, sponsored by the group New Approach Oregon, is modeled on the one that passed in 2012 in Washington state. It would allow the possession, manufacture, sale of marijuana by and to adults, subject to licensing, regulation, and taxation by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. Of the tax revenues generated, 40 percent would fund K-12 education, 20 percent would go to mental health and alcohol and drug treatment, 20 percent would go to local law enforcement, 15 percent to state police, and 5 percent to the Oregon Health Authority. Driving under the influence would still be against the law, and cities and counties would be allowed to prohibit retail

sales. Sponsors turned in 145,000 signatures on June 26, and expect to qualify for the November ballot.

Anderson was optimistic about the prospects of New Approach Oregon's measure. Polls show public support for legalization has grown steadily over the last 30 years, and since 2011, legalization has had the support of a majority of Americans. Despite continued federal prohibition, marijuana is the third most popular recreational drug in America, after alcohol and tobacco, and nearly 100 million Americans have used it. Twenty-three states including Oregon have legalized medical use, and two states — Colorado and Washington — have legalized recreational use by adults.

Oregonians may remember signing two other initiative petitions about marijuana this year. Alongside New Approach Oregon's initiative, the Campaign for the Restoration and Regulation of Hemp was gathering signatures on a constitutional amendment and a statutory change. That might have made for ballot confusion, but the campaign folded in late June, after stiffing its signature gatherers — and opposing a union campaign by members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the union better known by its



Cannabis Workers Uprising: Mason Peace, Jessie Dreyer, Barrett Ross, Kenneth Kautz, Misha Litvak, pictured at the June 15 Pride Northwest parade, were some of the nine signature gatherers who went on strike June 9 after the Campaign for Restoration and Regulation of Hemp failed to pay their wages. That campaign called it quits, but a better-funded effort to legalize marijuana in Oregon turned in signatures June 26 and expects to be on the ballot in November.

nickname the Wobblies. Nine paid petitioners — about half of the campaign's workers — went on strike June 9 after the campaign failed to pay them three days in a row. Their twice-monthly paychecks had been late before, and sometimes bounced. Strikers drew up a list of demands, including \$15-an-hour pay rate, and provision of medical marijuana to canvassers who

have cards making them eligible. But the campaign locked them out, even after they offered to return to work, and it hired replacements, some of whom were also stiffed of pay they were owed. Signature gatherer Misha Litvak says when she and fellow strikers showed up to picket June 16, they found the campaign door locked and the mail slot blocked. Litvak says chief petitioner William Appel sped off in a Jaguar after strikers saw him leaving through a side door and tried to confront him. Strikers accuse the campaign of illegal retaliation in an unfair labor practice charge that is under investigation by the National Labor Relations Board.

AFL-CIO Summer School scheduled Aug. 1-3 in Eugene

EUGENE — The Oregon AFL-CIO Summer School is scheduled Aug. 1-3 at the University of Oregon.

In addition to workshops, classes, and entertainment, this year's opening plenary session will be, "The Rise of 21st Century Robber Barons and the Decline of the American Middle Class," presented by Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain.

A solidarity picnic is slated for Saturday, Aug. 2, followed by entertainment by civil rights activist and musician Jimmy Collier.

A sampling of core courses and workshops to be offered at the summer school include "Waging Effective Contract Campaigns and Getting the Public on our Side," "The Future of Blue-Green Coalitions in Oregon," and "The Seven Sins of Deadly Meetings: And How to Overcome Them."

The summer school is co-sponsored by the Labor Education and Research Center at UO. For more information, call Helen Moss at 503-412-3722 or register at <http://lerc.uoregon.edu/>.

 **Bright Now! Dental**

Serving union members and their families for over 35 years.

Now is a great time to
**Straighten
your Smile**

Take a Bite out of the Cost of Braces
**\$1,750 off a 24 month
case (regularly \$5,418)**

Now is a great time for you or your children to get started on the path to a confident, healthy smile.

Plus, you can be confident in your decision to choose a Bright Now! Dental orthodontist. With additional years of specialized education, our orthodontists are skilled in developing treatment plans that fit your lifestyle and budget.

Questions? Contact Rob Etulain | Bright Now! Dental National Sales Manager
360 666-8944 | Robert.etulain@smilebrands.com | www.brightnow.com

Bright Now! Dental benefits apply to individuals receiving general dental care in these offices only and not to services referred to specialists. Pricing is subject to the limitations of your plan. Specialty services are not offered in all locations. Fees will vary for specialty care.

10 Area Offices

Beaverton

4655 SW Griffith Drive, Suite 105
503 644-1400

Grants Pass

1021 NE 6th Street
541 479-6696

Gresham

443 NW Burnside Road
503 492-8487

Hillsboro

7206 NE Cornell Road
503 640-9999

Milwaukie

17186 SE McLoughlin Blvd.
503 659-2525

Portland

3580 SE 82nd Avenue
503 777-0761

Salem

831 Lancaster Mall Dr. NE
503 362-8359

Vancouver—Fishers Landing

3250 SE 164th Ave., #102
360 891-1999
Austin Phoenix D.D.S. M.S.
Peter Vu, D.M.D., Stirewalt, P.C.

Vancouver—Salmon Creek

2101 NE 129th St.
360 574-4574
Austin Phoenix D.D.S. M.S.,
Jeff Pearson, D.D.S., Stirewalt, P.C.

Wilsonville

25700 SW Argyle Ave.
503 682-8552