

Washington State Labor Council issues political endorsements

SEATTLE — Several hundred delegates to the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) met at the Machinists 751 Hall in Seattle in June to determine endorsements for the August 2014 primary elections. Endorsement requires a two-thirds majority vote.

For Southwest Washington, WSLC endorsed Democrat Bob Dingethal in his challenge to unseat Republican Jaime Herrera Beutler for the 3rd U.S. Congressional District. Herrera Beutler was first elected to the House in 2010. Since that time she has operated in near lock-step with John Boehner and the Republican leadership.

In 2013 she voted for a bill that

would have effectively shut down the National Labor Relations Board. The NLRB is the one agency workers whose rights have been violated can turn to for relief. The agency remedies unfair labor practices and defends the right of employees to join a union.

Herrera Beutler supported Wisconsin U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan's budget plan that called for large cuts in Medicaid, ending Medicare as we know it by converting it into a voucher program, and repealing the Affordable Care Act. It was estimated the plan could give tax cuts as high as an average of \$330,000 for households with incomes of more than \$1 million a year, and for households with incomes more than \$200,000, the tax cut would be nearly \$34,500. Families with children and incomes under \$200,000 would have seen their taxes go up by an average of more than \$3,000. In addition, it would have required deep cuts to job training, education, food, housing, legal services and advanced technology vehicles manufacturing programs.

She also supported the so-called Working Families Flexibility Act, legislation that was all about flexibility for employers, not employees. The bill allowed employers to provide workers

with compensatory time off in lieu of time and half overtime pay. The "comp time" could only be used at the employer's discretion, and the bill provided no protection for workers who would rather be paid overtime instead of "comp time," from employer discrimination, or for workers whose employers cheat them out of earned comp time.

This year, Herrera Beutler joined other Republicans in voting against an amendment to an appropriations bill that would have discouraged the federal government from giving contracts to companies that have committed wage theft. The amendment would have disqualified certain federal contracts to any corporation that committed wage theft or had other violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The idea was to ensure public dollars don't go to companies that have documented histories of denying workers their rightfully earned pay. The amendment was defeated on a 196-211 vote, with all Democrats and 10 Republicans voting "yes."

During consideration of a 2014 Military Construction/Veterans Administration appropriations bill, Herrera Beutler voted in favor of an amend-

ment to bar the use of funds to enforce Davis-Bacon Act prevailing wage requirements. The Davis-Bacon law ensures that workers on public construction projects funded by taxpayer dollars are paid a wage comparable to the local standard or "prevailing" wage. It prevents unscrupulous contractors from low-balling bids and undercutting community wages with cheap, unskilled labor. The amendment failed by a vote of 192-231.

As Herrera Beutler wraps up her third term in Congress, she has compiled a 17 percent voting record as tracked by the national AFL-CIO on issues it deems important to working people.

Other endorsements by the Washington State Labor Council included:

District 49

Position 1 Rep. Sharon Wylie (D)
Position 2 Rep. Jim Moeller (D)

DISTRICT 17

Position 1 Rep. Monica Stonier (D)

DISTRICT 18

Position 1 Rep. Michael Briggs (D)
Position 2 Rep. Maureen Winningham (D)

STATE SUPREME COURT

Mary Yu, Pos. 1; Mary Fairhurst, Pos. 3; Charles Johnson, Pos. 4; Debra Stephens, Pos. 7.

Delegates opposed Initiative 1325, sponsored by Tim Eyman, which would amend the state constitution to require a two-thirds supermajority of the Legislature in order to increase taxes of any kind.

They resolved to support Initiative 1351, which would dramatically reduce class sizes in K-12 schools.

Delegates will consider additional endorsements at the WSLC's 2014 Constitutional Convention July 22-24 in Wenatchee.

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Teamsters Local 162; Teamsters Local 223;

UFCW Local 555; Unions For Kids; United Steel-

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Jeff Merkley; and John & Shirley Vandermosten.

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Carlson, Northwest Oregon Labor Council.

