

Political activity kicks into high gear

Oregon voters may not be paying close attention to the November 2014 election yet, but for labor's political activists it's already high political season: A handful of ballot measures are up for consideration, and competitive candidate races are heating up. Ballots will be mailed out Oct. 15 and are due back Nov. 4. Oregon AFL-CIO Legislative and Communications Director Elana Guiney walked the Labor Press through the state labor federation's positions on the measures, and priority candidate races.

Ballot Measure 88 (Drivers card) VOTE YES. Ballot Measure 88 is a law passed by the Oregon Legislature that opponents in the group Oregonians for Immigration Reform collected signatures in order to overturn. A yes vote upholds the law, which was passed in response to a new federal rule that says state drivers licenses can only be issued to those who can produce a birth certificate or passport. Oregon and a handful of other states passed laws allowing the issuance of temporary driver's cards as an alternative: They can't be used as identification, but they can be used as a driver's license and to obtain automobile insurance. Guiney said from labor's perspective, the measure is about ensuring that people are able to get to work safely. Besides the Oregon AFL-CIO, the measure is backed by Oregon AF-SCME, the Carpenters, SEIU, and UFCW Local 555.

Measure 89 (Equal rights amendment) VOTE YES. The measure may have been authored and financed by corporate lobbyist John DiLorenzo and his wife, but it's a pretty straightforward amendment to the Oregon Constitution: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the State of Oregon or by any political subdivision in this state on account of sex." Guiney said the measure is largely symbolic since an Oregon Supreme Court ruling already establishes equal rights for women, but the Oregon AFL-CIO is recommending a "yes" vote on the amendment, which would be a good start to an effort next year to pass a pay equity law.

Measure 90 (Top-two primary) VOTE NO. Placed on the ballot by a coalition of centrist millionaires and business groups, Measure 90 would end the use of the primary as the way Democratic and Republican voters choose their party's candidates; instead, all candidates regardless of party preference would compete against each other in the primary, and the top two vote-getters would face off in the general election, even if they were from the same party. "We've seen in states that have top-two that people are hardly any more likely to vote in the primary," Guiney says,

"but it limits our options coming out of the primary. And in states that have top-two primaries, it has drastically increased the cost of elections, and drawn



out the process, making it harder for working people to run for office." Oregon voters rejected a similar measure in 2008.

PRIORITY CANDIDATE RACES

Jeff Merkley for U.S. Senator. One of America's most pro-worker senators is up for re-election, and his name is Jeff Merkley. In his first term, Merkley pushed to rein in Wall Street abuses, and to reform the filibuster — the minority veto that has slowed the Senate's work to a trickle. It's thanks to Merkley's filibuster reform efforts that the Senate confirmed a new labor secretary and returned the National Labor Relations Board to working order. Returning him to office is a prime concern for both lo-

cal and national unions.

John Kitzhaber for Governor. Guiney acknowledges that Kitzhaber has made some decisions that upset union members, but says when it comes down to it, he's the type of elected leader who asks how legislation is going to affect working people. Though unsuccessful, he fought hard for a new I-5 bridge over the Columbia River. Meanwhile, challenger Dennis Richardson had a fairly anti-union voting record in the Legislature: He voted against bills to expand the prevailing wage and efforts to make it easier for workers to unionize, and opposed a proposal to strengthen state enforcement against wage theft.

Alan Bates for Oregon Senate (District 3-Medford)

Sarah Gelsler for Oregon Senate (District 8-Albany)

Jamie Damon for Oregon Senate (District 20-Canby)

Joe Gallegos for Oregon House (District 30-Hillsboro)

Brent Barton for Oregon House (District 40-Clackamas County)

Shemia Fagan for Oregon House (District 51-Clackamas)



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