

Some Oregon unions endorse Ballot Measure 91 to legalize marijuana

Oregon minimum wage will rise 15 cents Jan. 1, 2015

Oregon's Ballot Measure 91, which would legalize, regulate, and tax marijuana, has attracted support from several local labor unions.

American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 88 on Sept. 24 became the third union to endorse the measure. Local 88 represents employees of Multnomah County. Jason Heilbrun, Local 88 vice president and Political Action Committee chair, said the measure will generate new revenue — and public sector jobs — in things like public safety, schools, and senior services. Local 88 also supported the measure on the grounds that marijuana enforcement wastes police resources, and because criminal sentences create barriers to employment, housing and education loans for those convicted.

AFSCME Local 328, representing employees of Oregon Health and Science University, also voted to endorse Measure 91.

And United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555, the state's largest private sector union, is energetically backing the measure, in line with the union's national policy. Local 555 Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Anderson said the union is contributing \$35,000 to the campaign, and is working to register and educate voters and its own members.

Anderson said participants at Hempstalk — an



annual festival calling for marijuana legalization — were surprised and pleased Sept. 28 when he came on stage in Portland's Waterfront Park to announce his union's support for the measure. UFCW represents about 600 cannabis workers in other states thus far, Anderson said, and passing Measure 91 is a

priority for the national union.

"We look at this as a jobs issue," Anderson said. "Our union is in a position to organize growers, retailers and medical dispensaries."

One other labor organization — Northwest Oregon Labor Council — voted a resolution in favor of the measure, in the form of a recommendation that the Oregon AFL-CIO endorse it, but the board of the state labor federation declined to take action.

Twenty-three states including Oregon have legalized medical use of marijuana, and two states — Colorado and Washington — have legalized recreational use by adults. Full legalization is also on the ballot this year in Alaska.

The Oregon measure 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.

Nearly 142,000 employees earning minimum wage in Oregon will see a raise of 15 cents an hour this January, with the state's lowest legal wage rising to \$9.25 in 2015 to keep pace with inflation. The minimum wage increase is the result of labor-sponsored Ballot Measure 25 passed in 2002, which ties the wage to the Consumer Price Index.

The Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries announced the 2015 increase last month.

The wage will increase from the current \$9.10; that means a full-time employee will earn roughly \$6 more a week, good for \$370 a week in gross income. Over the course of 2015, that employee can earn \$19,240 in gross annual income — if he or she works a full shift every week of the year.

Oregon offers the second-highest minimum wage in the nation, behind Washington. Minimum wage in Washington also is tied to inflation.

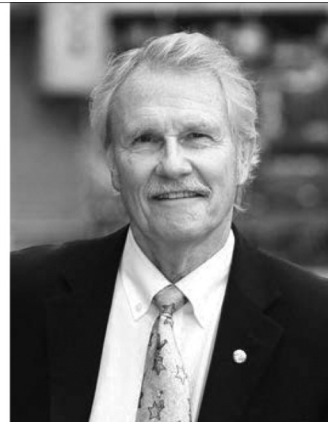


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Kitzhaber Governor 2014

Labor's Choice for Governor



"John Kitzhaber puts workers first — it's why he negotiated the deal that got anti-union measures off the ballot, it's why he's personally called on employers to stay neutral during organizing drives and bargain in good faith, and it's why he's looked for new ways to grow jobs in Oregon and bring us out of the recession."

— **Tom Chamberlain**
Oregon AFL-CIO President

"Gov. Kitzhaber shares our core belief that the key to economic growth and prosperity is the creation of family wage jobs. His economic development plan, focus on attracting industrial sector jobs to the region, his effort to raise the median income of Oregonians, and his commitment to bring vocational training back into the classroom leaves no doubt that he is the leader Oregon needs."

— **John Mohlis**
Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council Executive Secretary

"Time and time again Governor Kitzhaber has stood with the private sector to organize a union and raise standards for our communities."

— **Meg Niemi**
SEIU Local 49 President

"There are two things we like about John Kitzhaber — nobody owns him and his door is always open. He's always going to be honest and he is always going to do what he feels is in the best interest of Oregon."

— **Ken Allen**
AFSCME Council 75 Executive Director

"We are proud to be an early endorser of Governor Kitzhaber. As firefighters we've seen the effects of the recession on the ground, with more families relying on emergency medical services and other safety net programs. John Kitzhaber has the on-the-job experience and character we need to create jobs, protect public safety and stand up for front line firefighters and all Oregon families."

— **Kelly Bach**
Oregon State Firefighters Council President

"Oregon Nurses support Governor Kitzhaber and applaud his focus on access to quality, affordable health care for all Oregonians."

— **Katy Cooper, RN**
ONA President

ENDORSED BY:

AFSCME Council 75
American Federation of Teachers — Oregon
Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Local 1
Cement Masons 555
Central Oregon Building and Construction Trades Council
Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council
Communications Workers of America Local 7901
Glaziers Local 740
IATSE Local 28, 488
IATSE Studio Mechanics Local 488
IBEW Local 48, 112, 280, 659, 932
Intl. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48, 280
Intl. Brotherhood of Teamsters Joint Council 37
Intl. Union of Operating Engineers Local 701
Intl. Union of Painters & Allied Trades District Council 5
Ironworkers District Council of the Pacific Northwest
Ironworkers Local 29, 516
IUPAT District Council #5
IUPAT Local 10, 724, 1236, 1277
Joint Council of Teamsters No. 37
Laborers Local 296, 483
Linoleum/Carpent Local 1236

Operating Engineers Local 701
Oregon & Southern Idaho District Council of Laborers
Oregon AFL-CIO
Oregon District Council of Laborers
Oregon Machinists Council
Oregon Nurses Association
Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council
Oregon State Firefighters Council
Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters
Pendleton Building and Construction Trades Council
Pinaros y Campesinos del Noroeste, (PCUN)
Salem Building and Construction Trades Council
SEIU Local 49 & 503
SMW Local 16
Teamsters Local 162
UA Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 290, 598
UFCW Local 555
UNITE-HERE Local 8
United Steel Workers
United Steelworkers Union of Oregon
United Union of Roofers and Waterproofers Local 49
PARTIAL LIST

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