

Union members get key committee leadership posts in Oregon Legislature

SALEM — Oregon House and Senate leaders announced on Dec. 11 the committee assignments and chairmanships for the newly-elected Legislature. Many of the choices bode well for Oregon labor, which will be pushing an audacious pro-worker agenda next year. Having union members as chairs makes it more likely pro-labor bills will pass out of committees.

IN THE HOUSE:

• **Paul Holvey (D-Eugene)** — a

union rep for the Carpenters — will chair the Business and Labor Committee.

• **Brad Witt (D-Clastskanie)** — a union rep at United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 — will chair the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

• **Jeff Barker (D-Aloha)** — a former president of the Portland Police union — will chair the Judiciary Committee.

• **Rob Nosse (D-Portland)** — newly

elected and a rep at Oregon Nurses Association — will be vice chair of the Health Care Committee, which will be chaired by Mitch Greenlick.

• **Margaret Doherty (D-Tigard)** — a former staffperson at Oregon Education Association — will chair the Education Committee

IN THE SENATE:

• **Michael Dembrow (D-Portland)** — a longtime leader in American Federation of Teachers — will chair the newly created Senate Workforce Committee, with Kim Thatcher as vice chair and Diane Rosenbaum, Tim Knopp and Sara Gelsler also on the committee.

• **Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland)** — former head of Communications Workers Local 7901 — will chair the Rules and Executive Appointments Committee.

• **Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham)** — a member of Oregon Nurses Association — will chair the Senate Health Care Committee.

• **Sara Gelsler (D-Corvallis)** — newly elected to the Senate and with substantial labor support — will be chair of the Human Services and Early Childhood Committee.

The full list of committee assignments is online at <http://ow.ly/F0lps>.

The Legislature will convene January 12-14 for an organizational session and to elect presiding officers. Democrats will have a 35-25 majority in the House and a 18-12 majority in the Senate. The session officially begins Feb 2.



Portland International Airport food service workers Jeffrey Jones, Kevin Bell, and Van Touch joined UNITE HERE Local 8 in September. Now they're grappling with layoffs because of a restaurant reshuffling led by airport managers. They're asking the Port of Portland Commission, which oversees the airport, for a policy to allow them to work for the new company coming in.

...Port of Portland considers 'social equity' policy for airport workers

(From Page 9)

Chamberlain (who's also president of the Oregon AFL-CIO) asked to have input in crafting that proposal. In late November, Port deputy executive director Curtis Robinhold (Gov. John Kitzhaber's former chief of staff and heir apparent to Wyatt) met with Chamberlain and fellow commissioner Tom Tsuruta, a retail executive, to discuss concepts. Robinhold gave a brief report at the Dec. 10 meeting: The forthcoming proposal will touch on worker benefits, "job pathways," whistleblower rights, a project labor agreement, and labor harmony. Robinhold said the proposal will go before the Commission in February, after some legal scrutiny and six weeks of

public engagement.

Will the Port of Portland join with the other large West Coast port authorities in setting higher labor standards? At the Dec. 10 meeting, Chamberlain was the only commissioner to react to the UNITE HERE members — who had waited two hours to address the Commission.

"We have an economic system that's driven by capital," Chamberlain said. "Employers invest their money, and workers invest the most precious thing to them, which is their time. When workers invest their time, there should be some safeguard."

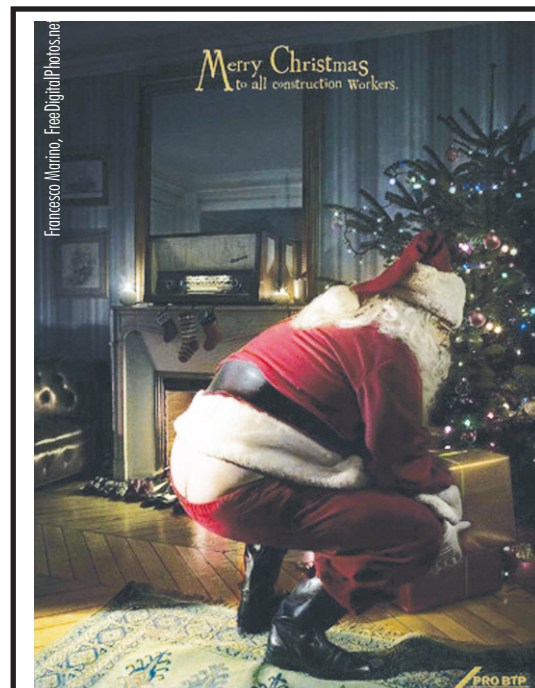
"We need to come up with a policy on workforce retention that recognizes the investment of the workers."



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