

The high cost of low wages

In Oregon, an estimated 412,000 workers (25 percent of the workforce) make \$12 an hour or less, and 9 percent make minimum wage (which is currently \$9.10 an hour), according to a study released Jan. 8 by the University of Oregon's Labor Education and Research Center (LERC), "The High Cost of Low Wages in Oregon."

The figures are worse for women and minorities: 45 percent of Latino workers and 50 percent of African-American workers are in low-wage industries. And those at the bottom of the barrel for hourly wages are also more likely to have little or no health or retirement benefit, less predictable work schedules, more volatile paychecks,

and to work part-time.

Low-wage jobs are concentrated in a handful of occupations, including retail, restaurant, janitorial and landscaping, personal care, and health care support.

The report argues that many low-wage workers rely on publicly-funded safety net programs to meet basic needs — particularly food stamps, Medicaid, and employment-related day care assistance — and thus that those programs are being taken advantage of by big corporations.

The report was funded by six labor organizations and authored by LERC faculty members Raahi Reddy and Bob Bussell, along with UO sociology professor Ellen Scott and Ph.D. student Shauna Dyer, and Daniel Morris, research director Our Oregon.

The full report is available online at <http://bit.ly/1xVK6r7>.

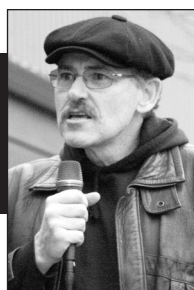
Illinois to sponsor public retirement for private sector

Illinois governor Pat Quinn signed a bill into law Jan. 4 that's predicted to help around two million workers save for retirement. Starting in 2017, employers with at least 25 employees will have to start deducting 3 percent of workers' paychecks into the program. Workers can opt out manually, or may choose to deduct more than 3 percent. The program, known as Secure Choice,

is intended to address inadequate retirement savings by workers. Many employers don't offer retirement plans because of the administrative and cost burden. In this case, the employer burden will be limited to administering a payroll deduction, which they're already doing for taxes. President Obama has advocated a similar program at the federal level.

Who's On Our Side?

By Tom Chamberlain



Oregon ended 2014 by bucking the national trend in the November general election, giving progressive, pro-worker candidates a decisive win. This was due to the coordination, determination and dogged dedication of like-minded people and organizations.

While Oregon workers look forward to a 2015 legislative session that could increase the minimum wage, implement paid sick leave and move toward universal retirement security, one thing is clear: we are not immune to what happens in Washington, D.C.

For the first time in eight years, Republicans hold majorities in the United States Senate and House of Representatives. We are beginning to see, in bits and pieces, the formation of their agenda.

On the first day of the 2015 Congress, House Republicans passed legislation establishing parliamentary rules for the year. The rules include a little-noticed provision that blocks Congress from shifting funds to prevent a 2016 shortfall in Social Security's disability insurance programs. The Social Security Administration has projected that, without a transfer of funds from other Social Security accounts, 11 million Americans will see their disability benefits reduced by 20 percent. Keep in mind that the maximum month disability benefit is just under \$1,300 per month.

The second day of the 114th Congress, the U.S. House passed legislation that would increase the number of hours necessary to qualify for healthcare under the Affordable Care Act (ACA); from 30 to

40 hours per week. This is the first step in the attempt to systematically dismantle the ACA. Never mind the fact that almost 10 million Americans, including 240,000 in Oregon, now have healthcare coverage under ObamaCare. Never mind that the ranks of the uninsured have dropped by almost 14 percent, or that the Congressional Budget Office predicts over the next four years Americans will see \$500 billion in health care savings.

The Affordable Care Act is working. After voting 50 times for an outright appeal of the ACA in the House and failing to get rid of it, Republican leadership is now rolling out a strategy to kill Obama Care by a thousand small cuts.

Also in the crosshairs of the Right are overturning President Obama's Executive Order to ease the threat of deportation of millions of undocumented workers, as well as easing regulations on Wall Street and large financial institutions. These financial regulations were put in place to end racketeering banking practices that resulted in the worst financial meltdown since the Great Depression, and the subsequent bailout of financial profiteers.

Thinly veiled in the cloak of job creation, Republican leadership will attempt to roll back environmental standards, along with worker and consumer protections, and reduce the power of the National Labor Relations Board, as well as to repeal the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires contractors to pay prevailing construction wages for federally-funded projects.

Finally, the outspoken anti-

worker Newt Gingrich is advocating for passage of the Employee Rights Act, a sweeping piece of legislation that, if passed, would upend labor law in the United States. The Employee Rights Act would impose greater barriers to workers who are trying to form a union and make it more difficult for unions to participate in the political process — and that's just two components of this proposed law.

Elections have ramifications, and the result of the 2014 election is a frontal assault on the men, women and children who are not a part of the privileged class. We live in a nation where the 1% controls both the Congress and the Supreme Court. The 99 percent has but one check in this unbalanced system: a presidential veto stamp.

But we can't just sit back and wait for that to happen. We have to organize and take action.

Our challenge will be to push back against anti-worker, pro-corporate bills in Congress and understand that defeating bad legislation may very well be our greatest victories over these next 24 months. We must take every opportunity to expose the corporate agenda of the 1%, and hold accountable those elected leaders who advocate it, regardless of what political party they belong to.

We must prepare for 2016 and take back America for working Americans.

Tom Chamberlain is president of the Oregon AFL-CIO.

Job Vacancies in Oregon, 2013

	Vacancies	< \$10 /hour	Part-time	Temporary
Statewide	32,441	29%	33%	24%
Portland Tri-County	16,057	22%	31%	17%
Northwest Oregon / Willamette Valley	7,808	41%	36%	29%
Central Oregon	3,003	30%	38%	36%
Southwest Oregon	2,853	25%	38%	21%
Eastern Oregon	1,262	50%	38%	41%

Oregon Employment Department

FREE **BARGAIN COUNTER**

Free classified ads to subscribers
DEADLINE: Friday prior to publication
 Published 1st and 3rd Fridays

Now accepting e-mails
 Send to: Michael492@comcast.net
 Mail to: NWLP, PO Box 13150, Portland OR 97213
(Please include union affiliation)

• 15-20 words • No commercial or business ads • 1 ad per issue
 • All lower case (NO CAPITAL LETTERS, PLEASE) •

Ads **MUST** include area code *or they will not be published*

AUTOMOTIVE

'13 TOYOTA PRIUS 3, dark blue metallic, 21,000 mi, backup camera/nav, one owner, \$17,500. 971-219-3746
 FORD TIRES, Wild Country radial XTX Sport, 275/70R18, 10-ply, 8-hole, matched set, 90%, \$550 obo. 503-799-1715
 '00 BUICK PARK AVENUE Ultra, 114 k, loaded with extras, good cond, \$3,450. 503-875-3978 (Bruce)
 '64 FORD FALCON Ventura, 4 dr, rebuilt eng and trans, \$5,500. 503-679-0017 (Ed)

HOUSING

ROCKAWAY BEACH rental, 3 bed, 2 bth, sleeps 10, Jacuzzi, 5 min to beach/shops. vacationhomerentals.com/43026
 ROCKAWAY ocean front, 503-777-5076, 5 bdrms/2 bath, book now for summer! <http://rockawaybeachfrontrental.com>

SPORTING GOODS

AMMUNITION, .22 LR, .22 Magnum, 7.62 X 39 HP Russian, 30-06 FMJ, 7.63 Mauser. 360-891-5889

MISCELLANEOUS

TRIMLINE TREADMILL, Model 7600 with heart monitor, 1 owner, used but not abused, \$200. 503-926-3253
 ANTIQUE TRUNK, dome top, great condition, \$150. 503-628-1939
 DRAFTING BOARD/parallel rule device for 1st year architecture student. 503-667-1093

WANTED

OLD WOODWORKING tools, planes, levels, chisels, handsaws, slicks, adzes, wrenches, folding rulers, axes, hatchets, leather tools, tool chests. 503-659-0009
 BUYING US & world coins to add to collection, paying fairly, any amount welcome. 503-939-8835
 COLLECTOR, cash paid, old fishing tackle, wood plugs, reels, creels, salmon fishing photos, etc. 503-775-4166
 COLLECTOR PAYS cash for older toys, oil paintings, American art pottery, and costume jewelry. 503 703-5952
 1947 FRANKLIN High School yearbook. 503-522-6542
 MOTORCYCLES, boat, tractors, trailers, cars, trucks, riding lawn mowers, guitars cash paid. 503-880-8183

IRS PROBLEMS?

- Haven't filed for ... years?
- Lost records?
- Liens - Levies - Garnishments?
- Negotiate settlements.
- Prepare offer in Compromise.

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