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Obama's top labor enforcer: Oregon is a leader on leave, and Bonamici is a star

The labor secretary says Obama would like to do many things, but Republicans won't let him

By Don McIntosh
Associate Editor

U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez and his Secret Service escort popped into Portland Aug. 26 to chat about paid leave with Oregon Gov. Kate Brown and Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici.

As a reporter for the *Northwest Labor Press*, it's not every day I get face-time with a cabinet member, a governor, and a congresswoman, so I wanted to make the most of it.

Perez' Portland visit was the last stop in a five-city "Shared Prosperity for A Stronger America" tour. Such tours are becoming an annual ritual for the Secretary of Labor — seeking local media coverage for President Obama's plans and accomplish-



Photo by Andrea J. Wright, courtesy of U.S. Department of Labor

Laughing Planet burrito chain owner Franz Spielvogel, Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, and Labor Secretary Thomas E. Perez pose for a selfie with Laughing Planet manager Aubrey Chamber, whose six weeks of upcoming employer-paid maternity leave prompted the officials' visit to the Portland cafe.

ments in the weeks leading up to Labor Day.

This year, two of the five tour stops were in districts of Congressional Democrats who infuriated organized labor by voting for Fast Track. Fast Track is a law that will make it easier for Congress to approve corporate-

friendly trade deals like the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership. Bonamici was one of the 28 House Democrats who voted for Fast Track (out of 188) June 18, and it was her staff that organized the Portland event. [Perez

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Anti-union group targets Oregon public sector unions

Billionaire-funded group tells home care workers to save money by quitting their union

The Evergreen Freedom Foundation — a hard-line anti-union group that has afflicted unions in Washington state — has now opened up shop in Oregon, with an office, a lawsuit, and plans to harass public employee unions.

As Freedom Foundation mouthpiece Jeff Rhodes put it on a blog post, "making life miserable for government employee unions" is what his group does best. Evergreen Freedom Foundation has 26 staff members, a daily online radio show, and funding from an array of right-wing foundations. Its CEO, Tom McCabe, is well-known to Washingtonians as the former head of the anti-union Building Industry Association of Washington.

Its Oregon outpost incorporated July 22, filed a lawsuit against the state's largest union Aug. 12, and opened a Salem office Aug. 13.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court against Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503, attempts to capitalize on last year's *Harris v. Quinn* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. In that 5-4 decision, the court said state-paid home care workers in Illinois who don't want to be union members couldn't be required to pay any "fair share" dues equivalent to cover the representational costs of the union. *Harris v. Quinn* created a "right-to-work" situation for unionized home care workers: They get the benefit of the union-negotiated contract terms, but can opt out of paying any of the

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LONGTIME COMMITMENT TO OREGON

Oregon Building Trades Council celebrates 75th anniversary

The Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council celebrated its 75th anniversary with a gala banquet Aug. 21 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

The celebration was in conjunction with the Council's annual convention Aug. 20-21.

More than 500 guests attended the banquet. Among them were Gov. Kate Brown, Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum; numerous Democratic and Republican state legislators, city and county commissioners; and representatives from business and labor communities.

Presenting partners for the event were NECA/IBEW, Nike, and Jordan Cove Energy Project.

Keynote speaker Matt Shipley, Oregon manager of construction for Intel Corp., praised union construction workers for their ability to meet Intel's every need at the massive Ronler Acres campus in Hillsboro.

"Intel builds some of the most complex projects on the planet, and we do it with some of the most skilled craftspeople in the world," he said.

Gov. Brown said labor's rich tradition of apprenticeship training has served Oregon well for over 75 years — and it will continue to serve Oregon in the future,

"Unions helped build the middle class," she said.

John Mohlis, executive secretary of the Oregon State Building Trades Council, said construction unions' history of

passing traditions and best practices from one generation to the next — through apprenticeship training — has allowed the trades to become a leader in the region.

"Training is what sets the union trades apart from all others," he said. "And we do it with not one penny of cost to the taxpayer."

The Oregon Building Trades

Council was chartered on March 25, 1940, in Portland, Oregon.

John O'Neill of Iron Workers Local 29 was the first secretary, serving from its inception until late 1948, when he left to take a job as general organizer for his international union.

O'Neill was succeeded by Volney Martin, a member of Painters Local 10. Martin was the Council's first and only president up to that point. He also was the first full-time paid officer. During its first decade the elected leadership of the Council was an unpaid, part-time post. It wasn't until the early 1950s that affiliates decided to employ a full time executive secretary. Martin remained in the post until August 1958,

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