

# NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

## IN THIS ISSUE

**UNION MEMBER OSCARS** Not the Academy Awards, which began as a way to stop unionization | Page 3

**MARTIN LUTHER KING'S UNFINISHED LABOR** In the end, he turned his focus to economic justice | Page 8

Meetings p.4   Classifieds p.7   Union Sportsmen p.6

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## U.S. Supreme Court case could deal blow to public-sector unions

Judging by questions they asked Jan. 11, it appears that a 5-4 majority of the U.S. Supreme Court is about to rule that public employees don't have to pay anything to the unions that represent them. Such a decision would weaken public-sector unions considerably, with far-reaching consequences for the American labor movement.

In the case — *Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association* — plaintiffs seek to overturn a 1977 Supreme Court decision called *Abood vs. Detroit Board of Education*. In *Abood*, the Court said that it would violate the First Amendment if public employees were required to pay for a union's political speech. That's why today in states that allow



Photo by Rick Reinhard, courtesy of the National Nurses Union

Union protesters from National Nurses United gather outside the U.S. Supreme Court Jan. 11, the day oral arguments were heard in *Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association*.

public-sector collective bargaining, union-represented public employees who object to union political stances may opt out of union membership

and dues and instead pay a lower "fair share" fee that pays just for bargaining and enforcing the union contract. Now, in

Turn to Page 5

## Bakers demand union recognition

On the morning of Jan. 11, two dozen workers at an industrial bakery on Northeast 172nd Place in Portland did something they'd never done: They marched to the company president's office to let him know they and their co-workers intend to unionize.

The company — Portland Specialty Bakery — is a privately-held contract bakery with about 180 production workers. Almost none are paid more than \$11 an hour, and most are within a dollar of Oregon's \$9.25-an-hour minimum wage. It's a diverse workforce, with as many as 10 languages spoken.

The union campaign has been under way for about a year, with staff support from the national AFL-CIO. If the campaign proves successful, workers will become members of Bakers Local 114, which represents workers at other industrial bakeries in the area. At Franz, Safeway, Bimbo/Oroweat, and Kroger,



**BOSS, WE HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU:** Workers at Portland Specialty Bakery completely fill the hall outside the company president's office Jan. 11 to let him know they intend to unionize.

union workers earn \$22.75 an hour plus benefits for similar work. Portland Specialty Bakery makes pretzels, cakes, bagels, muffins, and other products under contract for Starbucks, Franz, Safeway, Costco, Winco and other companies.

Visiting their boss, workers had back-up: Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain, State Rep. Chris Gorsek (D-Gre-

sham), and Local 114 Secretary Treasurer Terry Lansing.

Company president Josh Richardson listened respectfully as they and half a dozen workers explained why they'd come: To ask the company to voluntarily recognize the union. If it doesn't, the National Labor Relations Board will conduct an election. — DM

## Who should union members back for Portland mayor?

By Don McIntosh  
Associate editor

Unless someone else enters the race by the March 8 deadline, we know this much already: Portland's next mayor will be an Ivy-League-educated white male who graduated from Lincoln High School and lives in Southwest Portland with his wife and child.

Ted Wheeler and Jules Bailey have all that in common, and more. Both say Portland's biggest challenges are a lack of affordable housing and too few family-wage jobs. Both support a phased-in \$15-an-hour minimum wage for Portland — if state law is changed to allow it. And both have spent years cultivating good relationships with organized labor.

To find out how they differ on issues that matter to working people — and delve into their records — I talked to over a dozen union leaders and political staffers, spent close to an hour interviewing each of the candidates, and tagged along to public events to see what they say to non-labor audiences.

Neither candidate criticized the other, but I was struck that each of them emphasized in themselves the thing their opponent is perceived to lack.

Wheeler, 53, emphasizes his experience. He's 17 years older than Bailey, and has a longer résumé. After getting an economics degree from Stanford, an MBA from Columbia, and a

masters in public policy from Harvard, he worked as an executive at Bank of America and then for Copper Mountain Trust, an investment management firm. He entered politics in 2006, defeating incumbent Diane Linn to become Multnomah County Chair. Three years into his four-year term, he was appointed State Treasurer by Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski after the death of Ben Westlund. He was re-elected in 2012, and sources say he would have run for governor in 2016 if it weren't for the resignation of John Kitzhaber, which gave Kate Brown that promotion. So he challenged incumbent Charlie Hales for mayor of Portland ... and was as surprised as anyone when Hales dropped out of the race in late October.

Bailey meanwhile — with an environmental science degree from Lewis & Clark and master's degrees in public affairs and urban planning from Princeton — entered politics in 2008 (two years after Wheeler), running for a vacant state House seat in Southeast Portland. He served three two-year terms in the Oregon House and won a seat on the Multnomah County Commission in 2014. Two years into that four-year job, he's running for mayor — at age 36.

While Wheeler emphasizes experience, Bailey emphasizes his humble origins: The son of

Turn to Page 2

## LABOR 100 YEARS AGO



Beginning with this issue, the Northwest Labor Press will take a peek back at front page stories from 100 years ago. On Page 7 you will see a photo of the front page of the Jan. 15, 1916, Oregon Labor Press, along with an article that was re-typed for easier reading. A digital version of the page can be seen on our web site at [www.nwlaborpess.org](http://www.nwlaborpess.org).