

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)

Established in 1900 in Portland, Oregon as a voice of the labor movement. Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit mutual benefit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

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Printed on recycled paper, using soy-based inks, by members of Teamsters Local 747-M.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Individual subscriptions are \$13.75 per year for union members, \$20 a year for all others. Send a check for that amount, indicating mailing address and union affiliation, to P.O. Box 13150, Portland, OR 97213. For 25 or more subscriptions, group rates of \$9.60 a year per person are available to trade union organizations. Call 503-288-3311 for details.

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PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID
AT PORTLAND, OREGON.

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...Oregon Legislature: A lot at stake for workers

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and it would make certain prevailing wage violations a Class C felony.

Unemployment for locked-out workers

State Rep. Dan Rayfield (D-Corvallis) is pushing a bill that will help the 180 locked-out union Steelworkers at ATI Technologies in Albany. Currently workers who are locked out by their employers in a labor dispute — through no fault of their own — are eligible for six months of unemployment. Rayfield's bill would extend that to 12 months. That could make a real difference for the ATI workers, who believe their employer has a strategy to starve them out once their unemployment benefits run out this month.

Inclusionary zoning

In Portland and around the state, there's a housing affordability crisis under way: Rents and home prices are fast becoming unaffordable to many working people. With labor support, housing activists tried but failed last year to get lawmakers to



Several hundred supporters of a \$15 minimum wage rallied at the State Capitol in Salem on Jan 14.

move a ban on local governments mandating that a certain percentage of new units be affordable. But the problem has only gotten worse. This month, they'll consider a bill to let cities mandate that up to 30 percent of new units meet a definition of

affordable. The bill is backed by the Oregon AFL-CIO, Oregon AFSCME, and the Service Employees International Union.

Oregon AFL-CIO Political Director Graham Trainor said it's a symptom of how rampant income inequality has become

that lawmakers are ready to take up such momentous issues in a one-month off-year legislative session.

"We can't wait another year for movement on the most pressing issues facing working people," Trainor said.

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