

# To stay afloat, Working Families Party needs more voters by August

The labor-backed political party gave up its own members to help Bernie Sanders' revolution.

The Oregon Working Families Party was so committed to Bernie Sanders that its staff called and emailed the party's own members asking them to re-register as Democrats — so they could vote for him in the May 17 primary. Sanders won Oregon, 56 to 44 percent. Now the union-backed minor party needs those former members to return.

Under Oregon law, minor parties can maintain their ballot status (the right to run candidates in the general election) in two ways. They can show that at least half a percent of the elec-

torate is registered as members. Or they can field a candidate who wins at least 1 percent of the vote in a statewide election. Oregon Working Families Party hasn't run a statewide candidate in the last two general election cycles, so if it wants to be on the ballot this November, it has to have at least 10,825 registered voters by Aug. 10.

The party had well more than that before Sanders came along. From January to September 2015, its membership grew from about 9,000 to 11,817, thanks to a paid canvass. But by the May 2016 primary, it had dropped to fewer than 9,600 registered voters.

Now the party is scrambling to re-recruit its lapsed members,

and reaching out to unaffiliated voters who became Democrats for Bernie. It helps that Oregon makes it easy to change party registration: Voters can do so online at [bit.ly/1xB8oEc](http://bit.ly/1xB8oEc).

The party is holding caucus meetings, and will decide at a July 23 meeting who to endorse and whether to run its own candidates in the November election. Shanti Lewallen — a union Longshore worker who earned a law degree — is campaigning to be an Oregon Working Families Party candidate to challenge Democratic U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden. But the party's ability to endorse or run its own candidates in the general election depends on whether it can get to 10,825.



At Bernie Sanders' primary election night party in Portland, Oregon Working Families Party field manager Ian Johnson — a member of CWA Local 7901 — staffs the beer station. Johnson was one of three Oregon Working Families Party staff devoted full-time to the Sanders' campaign in the months leading up to the May 17 vote.



## OREGON WORKING FAMILIES PARTY: WHAT IS IT?

Oregon Working Families Party is the little party that could. Though it has never elected a candidate on its own ballot line in Oregon, it has endorsed and helped to elect major party candidates who commit to its working families agenda, and it was a big part of the coalition that passed the state paid sick leave law. It's backed by a number of labor organizations, including UFCW Local 555, Operating Engineers Local 701, Teamsters Local 206, CWA Local 7901, ILWU, Laborers Local 483, IBEW Local 48, and UNITE HERE Local 8. It's also part of a national organization with active chapters in New York and other states.

## Burgerville to meet with union

At its May 23 meeting, Northwest Oregon Labor Council (NOLC) — the local council of AFL-CIO-affiliated unions — endorsed the Burgerville Workers Union, which launched April 26. Delegates passed a resolution pledging to support their struggle, and encouraging affiliated unions and members to do so too. Most workers earn at or near the minimum wage at Burgerville, a regional fast food chain with about 40 stores. Burgerville Workers Union—affiliated with the Industrial Workers of the World—is calling for a \$5 an hour raise; quality, affordable health care; paid parental leave; and childcare and transportation stipends. The union hasn't requested government certification, but no law prevents the company from meeting with the union if it chooses to.

At a Vancouver TED Talks-style event May 26, CEO Jeff Harvey had just finished speaking about Burgerville's mission of serving good food "with love" when a group of Burgerville workers approached and asked if he'd meet with them. Harvey said he couldn't meet with them as a group, but would

be willing to meet singly. Asked by the Labor Press to confirm that, Burgerville emailed a statement saying employees may express individual viewpoints to appropriate personnel, but Burgerville won't meet for collective bargaining with any employee or group of employees until a showing of majority support for a union in a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)-supervised election. Burgerville worker Jordan Vaandering says the union will take Harvey up on the individual meeting.

A delegation of students from Portland State, Reed College, Lewis and Clark College, and Cleveland High School visited Burgerville headquarters May 23 to deliver signatures of support for the union effort from over 500 students and faculty.

And at press time, union supporters await final resolution of a discipline case. Ivy Fleak, an outspokenly pro-union worker at the Vancouver Plaza Burgerville, was suspended for what supporters say were trumped-up violations. In a charge filed May 23 with the NLRB, the union says the discipline was illegal retaliation.

## INDEPENDENT RETIREMENT LIVING

### Westmoreland's Union Manor

6404 SE 23rd Ave.  
Portland 97202

503•233•5671

### Kirkland Union Manors

3530 SE 84th Ave.  
Portland 97266

503•777•8101

## Manors Make the Difference

- Studio and One-Bedroom Apartments
- Affordable Rent includes Utilities (EXCEPT PHONE AND CABLE)
- Planned Events, Clubs, and Activities
- Ideal Locations offer easy access to Bus Lines, Shopping, and Entertainment
- No Costly Buy-In or Application Fees
- Federal Rent Subsidies Available (MUST QUALIFY)



### KIRKLAND UNION MANORS I,II,III

Opened in 1980, 1985 & 1995



LABOR LEADERS IN THE PORTLAND BUILDING TRADE MOVEMENT ORGANIZED THE UNION LABOR RETIREMENT

ASSOCIATION IN 1962, WITH THE SOLE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY.

"We believe that everyone earns the right to retire, free from pressures of earlier years."



### Kirkland Union Plaza

1414 Kauffman Ave.  
Vancouver 98660

360•694•4314

### Marshall Union Manor

2020 NW Northrup  
Portland 97209

503•225•0677

WWW.THEUNIONMANORS.ORG