

'Fast Track' Democrats won't be on stage at Labor Day picnic

Members of Oregon's Congressional delegation who supported Trade Promotion Authority (Fast Track) legislation won't be invited to appear on stage with other politicians at this year's Labor Day picnic at Oaks Park.

This is the second year running that picnic-sponsor Northwest Oregon Labor Council has banished U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Reps. Earl Blumenauer, Suzanne Bonamici, and Kurt Schrader from the stage.

All are Democrats who supported a Fast Track bill that narrowly passed Congress in June 2015. [The vote was 218-208 in the House and 60-38 in the Senate.] The legislation makes it easier for Congress to pass more corporate-friendly free trade agreements like the proposed Trans-Pacific Part-

nership (TPP).

Given the Senate's 60-vote filibuster rule, any senator who voted for Fast Track could have halted its passage if they'd voted the other way. Wyden not only voted for it, he brokered a deal with Republicans that brought other fellow Democrats along.

And in the House, had five "yes" votes gone the other way, Fast Track would have failed.

In the wake of that vote last year, delegates to the Northwest Oregon Labor Council passed a resolution to not invite any congressional member who supported the bill to the annual Labor Day picnic, which attracts some 18,000 people.

This year, the members of Congress will be invited to come out to the park, but they still won't be allowed on stage to speak during a special political event at 1 p.m.

All five are up for re-election this year, though none faces a serious challenger. A vote on the TPP has yet to take place.



UNION PENSION FUNDS KEEP PORTLAND BOOMING. Representatives from nearly a dozen Portland area craft unions helped break ground June 20 on the \$160 million Broadway Tower, a 19-story office and hotel tower located on the corner of Southwest Columbia and Broadway in downtown Portland. Washington Capital Management will provide a portion of the construction financing with union pension funds. The exact amount was not disclosed, but it's enough that the project will be 100 percent union-built. BPM Real Estate Group is the developer and Howard S. Wright Construction is the general contractor. It is the same team that was behind the recently completed Pearl West office building in Northwest Portland — another union pension fund project. "Pearl West came in on time and on budget, and today it's 85 percent occupied," BPM CEO Walter Bowen said at the Broadway Tower groundbreaking. The 430,000-square-foot, 254'-3"-tall Broadway Tower will include 175,000 square feet of office space, 247 underground parking spaces, and a 180-room Radisson RED hotel. The project is expected to create 1.5 million hours of construction work. Completion is set for the third quarter of 2018. "Without investor support, this project would not happen," said Bowen.

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