

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON POLITICS

Labor sees possible gains in Washington's Aug. 2 primary

In Washington's primary, much of the labor movement's attention is focused on the most competitive races, including several state legislative races where voters could increase the number of pro-labor Democrats in office.

Governor: Labor-backed incumbent Democrat Jay Inslee faces Republican businessman (and Seattle port commissioner) Bill Bryant and nine others. Bryant is backed by several business groups, including Associated General Contractors and National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA).

Lieutenant governor: Of 11 candidates, three are Democrats who have at least some support from labor. Bellevue state Sen. Cyrus Habib, current Democratic Whip, lists the most labor support, with endorsements from 24 labor organizations including the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), AFL-CIO. [WSLC's endorsement means support from union affiliates representing at least two-thirds of the labor federation's

membership.] Lake Stevens state Sen. Steve Hobbs lists endorsements from 19 labor organizations, mostly building trades unions and councils who appreciate his backing for transportation projects. But Hobbs has also antagonized some in labor, particularly public employee unions. He founded the Roadkill Caucus, a faction of conservative Democrats, and got a committee chairmanship when Republicans took control of the state Senate in 2012. Longtime Lacey state Sen. Karen Fraser lists 11 labor endorsements.

Congressional District 3: Jim Moeller, a seven-term Democratic state Rep. from Vancouver, is one of five challengers to Republican Jaime Herrera Beutler. He has a 91 percent lifetime rating from the WSLC and is backed by WSLC, Amalgamated Transit Union, and Fire Fighters Local 452.

Senate District 17: Labor hopes Tim Probst can retake the formerly Democratic East Vancouver seat now held by Republican Don Benton. Probst lost to Ben-

ton four years ago by less than 80 votes; Benton isn't running, so Probst now faces GOP state Rep. Lynda Wilson. If Democrats win for Probst and one other

pickup, the party could retake the Senate and end the gridlock that has made it near-impossible to pass any meaningful legislation since 2012.

In Washington's primary, the top two candidates go on to November, regardless of party. Ballots are due Aug. 2.



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