

# WYDEN: Democrats 'feeling very, very good' about fall elections

BEND — U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden said Democrats are “feeling very, very good” about winning the presidency and re-taking control of the U.S. Senate this fall — which would put Oregon’s senior senator in a strong position to become chair of the powerful Senate Finance Committee.

Wyden shared his thoughts about the upcoming general election Aug. 12 at the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council convention. Wyden is up for re-election this year, but he didn’t mention it during his speech. [The Oregon Working Families Party is running a candidate against Wyden because of his support for fast track and the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Republicans didn’t field a viable candidate.]

Wyden said Democrats are running “particularly strong” in Illinois and Wisconsin, and the party is opening leads in Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Nevada, and Indiana. He said races are close in Ohio and Florida. [AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka announced last month that the labor federation will focus its election efforts on six battleground states — Pennsylvania, Ohio, Nevada, Wisconsin, Florida, and Missouri. In Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, one in five voters will live in a union household, Trumka said.]

“But I don’t want anybody to think this is going to be a walk



U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden speaks at OSBCTC convention

in the park,” Wyden warned. “We’re going to have our work cut out for us.”

If everything falls in to place and Wyden becomes Finance Committee chair in 2017, he vowed to immediately go to work on a major infrastructure bill. Not doing so, he said, “would be legislative malpractice.”

He said it could be paid for by closing a tax deferral loophole that allows corporations to park money overseas.

“It’s the granddaddy of all tax boondoggles. It’s something that costs you \$80 billion, as taxpayers, every year,” Wyden said. “The first thing we’re going to do is roll as much of that back as

we can, and use it to create incentives for red, white, and blue jobs — the kind of jobs that people in the building trades do.”

Wyden also would like to expand the Build America Bonds program, a tax credit program that he helped initiate in the Economic Recovery Act of 2009.

Wyden pledged to Building Trades Council delegates that if he is chair of the Finance Committee, “you will be partners with me every single step of the way. You are going to be at the table.”

**On free trade agreements:** Wyden said both political parties have failed to enforce current trade laws. He told delegates that he currently is pushing back

against Canada, which is “ripping off” the U.S. on softwood lumber. “Canadians subsidize their softwood and basically are dumping it in the United States,” he said. “Too often, both political parties have walked away from it (enforcement). So I told the Obama people, this is the time when we have got to go to the mat on those kinds of issues that relate to family wage jobs.”

Wyden said his trade policy is simple: “Make it in Oregon. Grow it in Oregon. Add value to it in Oregon. And ship it somewhere.”

He said trade-related jobs pay better than non-trade-related jobs. “One out of five jobs in Oregon revolves around international trade, and those jobs pay 18 percent more because they’ve got more value added in it,” he said. “And you’ve got to do it. Ninety-five percent of the consumers are outside the United States, folks.”

**On multi-employer pension plans:** Wyden says he is fully aware of the problems with underfunded multi-employer pension plans and the financially struggling Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC).

“Obviously, we’ve got a lot to do. PBGC is very much under

siege. And clearly we have liabilities in industries nobody ever expected,” he said.

Wyden believes Congress will act on a bill this fall to help the insolvent coal miners pension and health care fund. Then lawmakers will turn their attention to the under-funded Central States Teamsters pension plan.

He said Congress then must tackle the question of how to shore up the entire multi-employer pension system and whether or not it should start looking at alternatives.

**On Donald Trump:** “Never in my imagination did I think that an American political candidate would appeal to foreign spies to ask for help winning an American election,” Wyden said. “We’re talking about imagination-defying statements,” from the Republican presidential nominee.

However, “Trump has done a lot of smart things over the years. He got out of real estate, which has some risk, and he got into all this branding stuff. He just put his name on buildings and steaks, and bottled water. No down side, lots of up side. So this is not a stupid man. We’re going to have our work cut out for us.”

## Frew takes helm of Oregon Building Trades Council

BEND — Tim Frew, a 32-year member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), succeeded John Mohlis as executive secretary of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council (OSBCTC), effective Sept. 1. Frew has job shadowed Mohlis for the past several months, including during the short session of the Legislature in February.

Frew, of Eugene, is a member of IBEW Local 280 based in Tangent. He said he will make the commute from Eugene to Portland, where the building trades office is located.

“I will be wherever I need to be to represent the building trades council,” he said.

Frew, 58, joined IBEW Local 177 in Jacksonville, Florida as an apprentice in 1984. Prior to that he spent a year at Florida State University, then joined the U.S. Navy, where he was an electricians mate.

With his journeyman card in hand, Frew traveled with his girl-

friend (and future wife, Jackie) to several states, working along the way. They settled in Eugene in 1991, where he became an active member of Local 280.

Frew volunteered as an organizer and steward. He chaired the IBEW-NECA Safety Committee, and attended Oregon AFL-CIO conventions as a delegate for the local. He served one term as vice president of Local 280, and two terms as business manager, from 2009 to 2015.

Frew currently sits on the Oregon Elevator and Electrical Board, as well as the Construction Industry Energy Board.

Because Frew is a member of the IBEW, OSBCTC president Gary Young, business manager of IBEW Local 48 in Portland, had to resign. The council’s constitution states that leadership positions cannot be held by members of the same union.

So, delegates elected Joe Bowers, business manager of Iron Workers Local 29, to finish out Young’s term as president.

## OSBCTC RESOLUTIONS

The Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council passed the following resolutions at their convention:

### Support of Local Unions Forming Partnerships with CTE Programs

Urge affiliated Local Unions to make a concerted effort to partner with high schools in their area, AND to offer use of their facilities and faculty for Career Technical Education (CTE) training of high school students to high schools that currently offer or will offer CTE programs.

### Support In-State RPS Generation Requirements

Urge the Oregon Legislature to implement a requirement that 85% of Oregon’s energy generated to meet Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) should be generated within state boundaries, and the construction and design of these new facilities should be done by members of the Oregon Building Trades, and prevailing wage requirements should be the standard.

### Support Transportation Infrastructure Financing

The number one priority of the OSBCTC is to get legislative approval of a robust, multi-modal transportation infrastructure financing plan in the 2017 legislative session.

### Support Measure 98, the High School Graduation and College and Career Readiness Act

The OSBCTC supports Measure 98, and the investments it proposes, with the goal of ensuring that all high school students have access to meaningful career-technical education programs, college credit courses, and the supports they need to stay on track to graduation beginning

in 9th Grade; the Council will work with the campaign — Oregonians for High School Success — to ensure the measure’s approval by the voters in the November 2016 general election.

### Use Entire Bonding Capacity to Fix Water/Air Pollution Crisis

Recognizing Oregon’s crumbling infrastructure, which is beginning to poison the air and water, OSBCTC urges the Legislature and the Governor’s office to use all of the state’s \$167 million in unallocated bonding capacity to put Oregonians to work to solve this urgent problem.

### Support of the Jordan Cove LNG Export Terminal and the Pacific Connector Natural Gas Pipeline

The OSBCTC calls upon Governor Brown, members of the Oregon Legislature, and members of Oregon’s Congressional delegation to fully support the permitting and construction of the Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) export terminal at North Bend, Coos County, Oregon, to improve the economy of the Pacific Northwest.

### Continue Funding OMCS

The OSBCTC will levy for one year, starting at the date this resolution is adopted, an assessment of \$1 per member, per month, for the purpose of supporting the efforts and work of Oregonians to Maintain Community Standards, OSBCTC’s political action committee. The Executive Board will review any further increases or decreases in six months, and have the authority to adjust according to need.