

A UNION ELECTRICIAN RUNS FOR THE OREGON LEGISLATURE

5 Questions for Ray Lister

Journeyman electrician Ray Lister, a full-time union organizer since 2012, is applying for a new job: state rep. Since March, Lister has personally knocked on over 5,500 doors and talked with over 2,000 voters in House District 26, which stretches from Wilsonville and Sherwood to Hillsboro, Aloha, and Tigard. His candidacy is backed to the hilt by his union, IBEW Local 48, and by the labor movement generally. That gives him a fighting chance against Richard Vial, a wealthy Republican real estate lawyer. Because Oregon has a part-time citizen legislature, if Lister wins, he'll continue to work for IBEW when the Legislature's not in session. The Labor Press interviewed him by phone Oct. 10.

As someone dedicated to building the union movement, why are you running for legislative office? I think anybody who gets involved in their union has an underlying hope that all of the community can act like our unions act. We want solidarity not just for union members but for everybody. We want



DOOR-TO-DOOR DEMOCRACY: Ray Lister talks to an HD 26 voter.

Photo by Russell Sanders, courtesy of Oregon AFL-CIO.

everybody to be brought up. So this is the next logical step.

What's it like to knock on doors to try to get elected? It's funny because as an organizer I'm often knocking on people's doors offering them a legitimate opportunity for a better job, better pay, retirement, health care. But they're not always happy to see me at the door as a union organizer. As a candidate, I rarely run into somebody who isn't happy to talk to me. There's a

good chunk of people who just want to be heard. Whether they agree with you or not, they're glad you came to their door.

What's most on the minds of the voters you've talked with this year? It depends what part of my district I'm in. But housing is something a lot of people are concerned about right now. If they're renting, they're worried. And everybody I've talked to is concerned about education. Nobody likes the idea that we

have a high dropout rate in Oregon. The other thing I hear a lot about is transportation. We have so many problems with traffic. Our infrastructure just hasn't kept up.

If you win, what do you most hope to achieve in the legislature? As a freshman, I'm going to be going learning a lot. I'm going to be another voice for workers inside the caucus. The two things I'm most excited about working on are education funding and transportation. I have a 12 and 14 year old in public school. They're part of the reason I'm running. I want to make sure their teachers and administrators have not just the resources they need, but longterm strategic planning ability.

I noticed nothing on your campaign web site says you're running as a Democrat (and nothing on your opponent's web site says he's running as a Republican). Why is that? Well, for me it goes to a core ideology in general. I've been a Democrat my whole life, and

that's where my principles have always been. But I don't intend to be a Democrat in Salem. I intend to be a representative in Salem. Yes we should caucus together and talk with our party, but at the end of the day, we need to represent our district. Just like the bargaining table: I go to the bargaining table to represent *all* the workers I'm negotiating for. And that means negotiating with whoever's on the other side of that table in a real way, as a partner, not as an ideologue. In my district, if you look at the partisan makeup, the registration advantage is only very slightly Democratic, for the first time. But I've knocked on Republicans' doors, Democrats, doesn't matter who it is, and I hear all the time that people like to vote for the person, not the party.

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Visit RayLister.com to find out more, contribute funds, and volunteer to make calls or knock on doors.

Steve Novick: Fighting for Working Families

"I am a lifelong activist, always eager to get things done. Early in my term, I was impatient for change, and at first, was not always easy to work with. But now, WORKING TOGETHER with fellow city leaders and community members, I've been GETTING THINGS DONE."



Together, we've made positive changes. I hope to have you in my corner on November 8th.

- Paid sick leave
- Discounted parking for low-income people who work downtown at night

- \$15 minimum wage for full-time City workers
- Stopped city investment in Wal-Mart

"Time and again, Steve Novick has stood with our brothers and sisters in the Oregon labor movement. Steve Novick deserves our vote."

- Tom Chamberlain, President of the Oregon AFL-CIO

"Steve Novick is a proven champion for Portland's working families. He has fought along side us for good jobs and fair compensation. Steve Novick is the clear choice for labor."

- Willy Myers, Executive Secretary Treasurer, Columbia Pacific Building Trades Council



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