

# ...Oregon labor's election night scorecard

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stormy weather instead of sunshine when it comes to the state budget in the next biennium. The corporate tax measure would have raised \$3 billion a year for schools, health care and senior services, and could also have resulted in a boom in road and infrastructure spending. Instead, Oregon will remain the state with the lowest effective corporate tax rate, and lawmakers will have to deal with a projected \$1.4 billion biennium budget shortfall.

**Brad Avakian's** defeat in the race for secretary of state was another big loss for labor. Secretary of State is responsible for overseeing elections and auditing government agencies, and becomes governor in the event of a vacancy. Probably no politician in Oregon has spent as much time as Avakian cultivating a relationship with unions, and they backed his race heavily: Top contributors included Oregon Education Association (OEA), \$145,000; United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, \$60,000, and Oregon AFSCME, \$34,000. But in the end, Republican **Dennis Richardson** outpolled Avakian by 43 to 41 percent, more than 75,000 votes, becoming the first Oregon Republican in 14 years to win a state-wide election. Avakian will continue to serve as head of the Bureau of Labor and Industries. His current term

runs through 2018.

Oregon labor organizations put considerable money and volunteer hours into increasing Democrats' majority in the House and Senate. Democrats currently have a 35-25 majority in the House; a 36th House seat would have given them the needed super-majority to approve revenue-raising legislation without Republican votes. But on election night the House kept the same 35-25 split, and Democrats actually lost one seat in the Senate, which will now be split 17-13.

The Senate loss came in District 3, where the death in August of Sen. **Alan Bates** meant a hasty catch-up campaign for Ashland attorney **Tonia Moro**. Moro lost to Republican **Alan DeBoer** by less than 600 votes out of 65,000 cast, despite \$55,000 in support from Oregon AFSCME and \$40,000 from OEA.

Moro's loss may mean dimmer prospects for pro-labor legislation over the next two years. Under Speaker Tina Kotek's leadership, the Oregon House of Representatives has been a powerhouse for worker-friendly legislation, but again and again in recent legislative sessions, labor-backed bills have died or been watered down in the Senate thanks to opposition from corporate Democrats and a lack of support from Senate President Peter Courtney.

Labor's political efforts did have some success. Top benefi-



ciaries included Democratic candidates **Teresa Alonso Leon**, **Mark Meek**, **Janelle Bynum**, and **Janeen Sollman**, all of whom won election in hard-fought races for open house seats that are currently held by other Democrats. Labor efforts also helped several incumbent Democrats stay in office — Reps **Paul Evans** and **Susan McLain**, and Sen. **Arnie Roblan**.

But labor-backed efforts by Democrats to take open seats currently held by Republicans fell short: IBEW Local 48 organizer **Ray Lister** lost to **Richard Vial** in House District 26 (Wilsonville) and **Ken Moore** lost to **Ron Noble** in House District 24 (Bend).

In those and other hard-fought races, labor found it had a new deep-pocketed adversary — billionaire Nike founder **Phil Knight**. In his first big foray into Oregon politics, the state's best-known corporate mogul gave

\$355,000 to seven Republicans who were in competitive races. Knight's money helped defeat **Lister**, **Moore**, and **Moro**, and helped Hood River incumbent **Mark Johnson** survive a challenge from schoolteacher and OEA member **Mark Reynolds**. But in seats currently held by Democrats, the Knight-backed Republicans lost to **Alonso Leon**, **Bynum**, and **Sollman**.

Labor also tried to oust a particularly anti-union legislator, Republican **Mike Nearman** in House District 23. His district west of Salem is hostile territory for Democrats, so the Oregon AFL-CIO and UFCW backed challenger **Jim Thompson**, a lifelong Republican running as the candidate of the Independent Party, while four public sector unions put \$100,000 into an independent effort that produced anti-Nearman ads. Nearman is an advocate of anti-union "right-to-work" legislation, and an ally of the anti-union group Freedom

Foundation. Nearman won reelection with 52-37 percent.

In at least one race, labor found itself on both sides. **Mark Reynolds** was backed by his union, OEA, but Republican **Mark Johnson** had the endorsement of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council.

Labor organizations often pride themselves on being non-partisan, and **Johnson** wasn't the only Republican to get union support. In District 57 (Heppner), incumbent **Greg Smith** won with the endorsement of the Oregon AFL-CIO and the Building Trades. The Building Trades also endorsed incumbent Republican senators **Cliff Bentz**, **Brian Boquist**, **Vic Gilliam**, **Bill Hansell**, **Dallas Heard**, **John Huffman**, **Bill Kennemer**, **Tim Knopp**, **Andy Olson**, and **Gene Whisnant**, all of whom won re-election in their Republican-majority districts.

**ELECTION NIGHT HUDDLE:** At the Convention Center, union volunteers watch results come in. Through the Oregon AFL-CIO, union volunteers filled over 1,000 shifts — knocking on 100,000 doors, making 260,000 phone calls, and handing out 2,800 fliers at worksites.

## 76th Annual Children's Holiday Party!

**FREE!**

**Saturday, December 3,**

**9:45 a.m. to noon**

**Historic Elsinore Theatre**

**170 High St., SE, Salem**

*All the children of Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties and their families are invited! The fun includes live Christmas music, a showing of the movie "The Secret Life of Pets," goodie bags and — of course — a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus.*



Sponsored by:

**Marion, Polk, Yamhill  
Central Labor Chapter, AFL-CIO**

## NW Oregon Labor Council scorecard

Northwest Oregon Labor Council, AFL-CIO took a position on 16 candidates and measures. Ten won. Six lost.

### METRO

**Measure 26-178** (Clean, Safe, and Healthy Water) PASSED 77-22

### MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Commissioner: **Amanda Schroeder** LOST 53-44.

### CLACKAMAS COUNTY

County Chair: **Jim Bernard** WON 52-46, defeating John Ludlow.

Commissioner: **Ken Humberston** WON 50-48, defeating Tootie Smith.

**Measure 3-494** (Annexation of Boring RFPD boundaries into Clackamas Fire District #1) PASSED 79-20.

### COLUMBIA COUNTY

Commissioner: **Margaret Magruder** WON 51-47.

### CITY OF PORTLAND

Commissioner: **Steve Novick** LOST 47-51.

**Measure 26-179** (Affordable Housing Bond) PASSED 62-37.

### CITY OF GLADSTONE

Mayor: **Tammy Stempel** WON 55-43.

Council: Pos. 2: **Bill Osburn** LOST 48-50.

Council: Pos. 4: **Neal Reisner** WON 50-48.

Council: Pos. 6: **Frank Hernandez** WIN 51-47.

### CITY OF HILLSBORO

Mayor: **Aron Carleson** LOST 41-58

### CITY OF LAKE OSWEGO

Mayor: **Jon Gustafson** LOST

Councilor: **Theresa Kohlhoff** WON

### CITY OF WEST LINN

Mayor: **John Carr** LOST 43-56.