

AT THE OREGON LEGISLATURE: A Robust Labor Agenda

Labor muscle helped elect many of Oregon's legislators. Now Oregon unions are mobilizing behind an agenda of fair taxes, good jobs, and expanded protections for workers rights. Here are some recent highlights.

Tax corporations — or else cut services

Sound familiar? Oregon is once again in a budget crisis. State revenues are projected to come in \$1.7 billion short of what it would take to preserve all current services for the next biennium. To deal with the shortfall, the state is considering increasing state college tuition, laying off teachers, reducing social services, closing the recently opened Junction City psychiatric hospital, and cutting as many as 335,000 adults from Medicaid. But Oregon labor leaders are saying they won't accept those cuts while Oregon corporations still have the lowest taxes in the nation. And union members have been bringing that message to a series of "budget town halls" that state lawmakers have held. Two more of those remain.

WANT TO STOP THE CUTS? COME OUT TO A BUDGET TOWN HALL

- **EAST PORTLAND** Saturday, March 4, 12-2 pm, IRCO, 10301 NE Glisan St., Portland
- **WASHINGTON COUNTY** Thursday, March 9, 7-9 pm, Beaverton High School, 13000 SW 2nd St., Beaverton



Oregonians should not accept cuts to schools and senior services as long as corporations continue to pay the lowest in the nation, said Steve Demarest, president of Oregon's largest union, SEIU Local 503, at a Presidents Day rally on the State Capitol steps.

Fair Work Week: an end to scheduling abuse

Unpaid on-call hours. "Clopening." Schedules that change week to week. Increasingly, national retail and restaurant chains are using sophisticated scheduling software to shift business risk onto the backs of low-wage workers. San Francisco and Seattle have cracked down on some of those practices, requiring advance notice of schedules and extra pay for last-minute schedule changes. Could Oregon lawmakers be the first to pass state-wide legislation?

SB 828 — which UFCW Local 555 has declared a priority — got its first hearing Feb. 27 at the Senate Workforce Committee. It would require large retail, hospitality, and food services employers (those with 100 or more U.S. employees and 25 or more in Oregon) to provide:

- a good faith estimate of an employee's work schedule at time of hire
- 14 days notice of work schedules
- compensation for last-minute employer-requested schedule changes
- extra compensation when fewer than 10 hours separate shifts
- an offer of additional hours to existing employees before hiring new employees or subcontractors.

AT THE SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING: FOR AND AGAINST

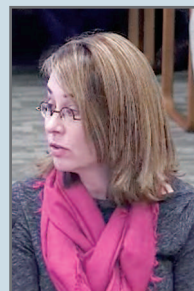


"Most employers in Oregon are doing the right thing and using adequate scheduling practices ... but some employers, especially those in food service, retail and hospitality, are not, and are keeping workers in a cycle of poverty."

—Oregon AFL-CIO chief of staff Graham Trainor

"SB 828 would impose rigid scheduling mandates that reduce flexibility of both employers and employees and would significantly impact our members' ability to manage store operations."

—Associated Oregon Industries VP Betsy Earls



ONLINE EXTRA

How widespread are scheduling abuses? Very, says a new study co-authored by researchers at University of Oregon and Portland State University. Of the 750 Oregonians they surveyed in 2016, 1 in 6 reported having had less than 24 hour notice of shifts. The study also found that many workers have wildly varying shifts, so that total hours and weekly paychecks also vary substantially. See their report, "The Impact on Oregonians of the Rise of Irregular Scheduling," at <http://bit.ly/2ISV14Z>



FIVE GOOD IDEAS

- **Bargain over class size** Parents and students hate large classes. So do teachers. HB 2651, sponsored by Tigard State Representative Margaret Doherty, would make school class size a mandatory subject of collective bargaining.
- **Rent control: The most effective response to an affordable housing emergency** HB 2001, sponsored by House Speaker Tina Kotek, would repeal the statewide ban on local rent control ordinances AND cap rent increases statewide at 5 percent through July 1, 2018.
- **Put lawless contractors on notice** Tired of seeing businesses that break the law continue to get public contracts? HB 2670, sponsored by Portland State Rep. Rob Nosse, bidders on public contracts of over \$100,000 to disclose whether in the last three years they've been found to have violated labor laws like the National Labor Relations Act and laws on minimum wage, overtime, and the prevailing wage.
- **Pay prevailing wage on construction projects funded with tax breaks** Why are Oregon building trades workers paid the area prevailing wage when the state spends money on construction, but not when the state funds construction via tax subsidies? HB 2194 and SB 291 would expand the prevailing rate requirement to include public works funded via tax credits or tax abatements.
- **Require non-profit hospitals to do something to deserve their tax-exempt status** Hospital bills are a key reason health care is so expensive, yet most of the Oregon hospitals charging sky-high prices are "non-profit" institutions that pay no taxes, and the law is very vague about the charitable and educational service they must provide. HB 2115, sponsored by State Rep. Mitch Greenlick, would lay out stricter requirements for nonprofit hospitals health systems to be exempt from taxation.

AND THREE BAD ONES

- **Privatize liquor sales** When the State of Washington privatized liquor sales, hundreds of union members lost their jobs, and liquor prices soared. Now a bill from Salem State Rep. Brian Clem would pave the way to privatization in Oregon. HB 2032 would set up a task force to develop proposals for privatizing the sale of distilled liquors and phasing out the role of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.
- **Keep young workers poor** HB 2378, sponsored by Keizer State Rep. Bill Post, would allow employers to pay 85 percent of minimum wage to employees under 21 years of age for the first 90 days of employment.
- **Public subsidy for private payroll** HB 2375, sponsored by Grants Pass State Rep. Carl Wilson, would give employers an income tax credit — if they pay employees wages greater than the minimum wage.

LABOR IN COALITION

For the third year in a row, some of the state's biggest labor organizations are heading to the Capitol as part of a broad labor-community alliance known as Fair Shot For All. Labor partners in the alliance include the Oregon AFL-CIO, Oregon AFSCME, AFT-Oregon, Oregon Education Association, Oregon Nurses Association, SEIU, and UFCW. Community partners include the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Basic Rights Oregon, Bus Project, Causa, Community Alliance of Tenants, Family Forward Oregon, Forward Together, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, Northwest Workers' Justice Project, Oregon Latino Health Coalition, Oregon NOW, Partnership for Safety and Justice, PCUN, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon, Portland Jobs with Justice, Rural Organizing Project, Sankofa Collective Northwest, Unite Oregon, Urban League of Portland, Voz Workers' Rights Education Project, and YWCA. This year, they're united behind a five point agenda:



- **Establishing paid family medical leave for all Oregon workers**
- **Ending "no cause" evictions and the ban on rent control**
- **Ending racial profiling by police**
- **Ensuring health coverage for all Oregon kids**
- **Extending reproductive health services to all Oregon residents, not just citizens**

Unionists descend upon state capitol

Over the course of this year's session of the Oregon Legislature, a number of labor organizations will be bringing members down to Salem to talk to their representatives. Next up is Oregon AFSCME



Oregon AFSCME Lobby day:

- **Meeting time:** March 13, 8 a.m.
- **Meeting place:** State Library Conference Room 103, 250 Winter St NE, Salem