

PEOPLE

Governor appoints unionists to state boards

A recent batch of executive appointments nominated by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown contained a number of names familiar to organized labor.

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 President **Dan Clay** was appointed to the **Oregon Retirement Savings Board**. The board is overseeing the establishment of



Dan Clay

a soon-to-launch retirement savings plan open to all private sector workers in Oregon whose employers don't sponsor one. Local 555 is

Oregon's largest private sector union, representing workers in grocery and retail, food production, and other industries.

Rachel Brozovich, president of **Keizer Fire Fighters Local 3881**, was named to the **Workers' Compensation Management-Labor Advisory Committee (MLAC)**. The committee advises the Legislature about any proposed changes to the state workers' compensation system.

Siobhan Martin, deputy executive director of **Service Employees International Union Local 503**, will serve

on the **Public Employees' Benefit Board (PEBB)**, which oversees the administration of benefits for about 140,000 state employees.

Union-side labor attorney **Jennifer Sung**, a partner at the McKanna Bishop Joffe law firm, was named to the **Oregon Employment Relations Board**. The three-member board functions as a kind of Supreme Court for Oregon's public employee collective bargaining law, interpreting the law and resolving disputes between public employee unions and employers.

The appointments will take effect later this month following a confirmation vote by the Oregon Senate.

D Pei Wu leaves helm of Portland Jobs with Justice

D Pei Wu is stepping down after two years as executive director of **Portland Jobs with Justice**, a non-profit worker justice coalition made up of over 100 member faith, labor, and community organizations. A search is under way for her successor.



D Pei Wu

Who's on our side?

By Tom Chamberlain Oregon AFL-CIO President



Support House Bill 2004

Over the years, Portland has been recognized as one of America's best cities in a number of categories, including seniors, livability, food, beer drinking, vegans, and year after year the best airport in the country. All of which are good, and all recognize the uniqueness of Portland.

Recently, Portland received another first: Leading the nation in the fastest rising housing costs. Last year housing costs in Portland increased by 11.1 percent. According to a 2015-16 Wage Trend Report by the MBL Group, Portland Metro wages increased by 3 percent.

Lower income households have been disproportionately impacted. The rule of thumb of percentage of income spent on housing is 30 percent of a worker's income. In Oregon, Fair Market Rent for a 2-bedroom apartment is \$1,008 per month, and \$1,208 in the Portland Metropolitan Area. The average Oregon renter is paying upwards of 50 percent of their income on housing costs.

The housing crisis is affecting all workers, including those represented by a union on the job.

To state the problem in a different way, a minimum wage worker in Portland would have to work 100 hours per week to afford a 2-bedroom apartment — if they can find one. Oregon's housing inventories are the lowest since 2005, when Oregon's population was 400,000 people less than it is today.

Oregon's low inventory of housing has given landlords an unbridled opportunity to reap large profits at the expense of working people. It doesn't matter if you live in Medford, Bend, or Portland, workers are finding it harder and harder to pay the bills and feed their kids. And they now face a housing market that pushes them farther and farther from their workplace and essential services.

No-cause evictions and rampant rent increases are left unchecked by a state which forbids rent stabilization at the local level and, until recently, forbade inclusionary zoning.

House Bill 2004 was introduced to provide stability for the 4-in-10 Oregonians who rent their homes. Far too many renters who pay their rent on time and play by the rules are evicted without cause and in some cases, in retaliation for requesting repairs to their homes. Others are evicted because the landowner wants to raise the rent, but doesn't want to explain that to the tenant. House Bill 2004 puts an end to these destabilizing practices. The establishment of a just-cause standard for the termination of a lease prevents landlords from using no-cause evictions as a means to retaliate or discriminate against tenants.

House Bill 2004 would give local governments the ability to stabilize rents in their communities. It provides landlords with a reasonable rate of return on their investment and gives renters predictability of rent increases at a moderate rate. And, finally, House Bill 2004 allows local government the authority to develop policies to pay the cost of renter relocation by the landlord under certain conditions.

I encourage all of you reading this article to write, email or call your state legislator and ask them to support House Bill 2004. The housing crisis is affecting all workers, including those represented by a union on the job. This bill is an important way to give the necessary and immediate relief to renters in this incredibly difficult time. It is easy: go to <http://orafl-cio.org/salem> to find your legislator's contact information.

Tom Chamberlain is president of the Oregon AFL-CIO, a 130,000-member-strong federation of labor unions.

Apprenticeship Opening

Glaziers

The Oregon & SW Washington Glaziers Joint Apprenticeship & Journeyman Training Program will be opening to accept applications to create a pool of eligible applicants. Applicants must be at least 18 years old. Must apply in person and furnish a copy of a high school diploma and grade transcript or GED and test scores at time of application.

Applications will be taken **April 24 thru May 5, 2017**

Monday thru Friday, 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m.

Glaziers Training Center
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Women and minorities encouraged to apply; Veterans' GI Benefits may apply

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