

AT THE OREGON LEGISLATURE: Labor's Agenda

The big drama in this year's Legislative session is about what to do about a massive budget shortfall, and whether to heed calls by business groups to cut public employee retirement costs. Both are unlikely to be decided until near the end of the session in June. But Oregon labor has been busy moving other priorities.

Which side are they on?

Will the Oregon Legislature ban anti-union 'right-to-work' ordinances?

There's no greater litmus test than "right to work" to separate union friends from union foes. Right-to-work is the confusing name for a law that outlaws any contract between union and employer that requires the union-represented workers to pay union dues or fees. Its sole purpose is to weaken unions financially and organizationally. Until recently, only states (in the South and Plains regions) passed such laws. But anti-union groups decided to test if federal courts would let local jurisdictions like counties and cities pass right-to-work laws too. Last November, in a case called *UAW vs. Hardin County*, the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that local bodies can pass right-to-work laws. Technically, the decision only applies to Kentucky and part of Ohio, but it opens the door for attempts elsewhere.

Oregon's labor movement wants to shut that door, and shut it now. If small rural counties and towns start passing right-to-work ordinances, it would weaken unions in areas where workers already have the least power. Senate Bill 1040 would



WE ARE WATCHING: Union members pack a hearing on SB 1040, a bill to prevent local jurisdictions from passing anti-union "right-to-work" laws.

prevent local bodies from passing such ordinances. It's pretty straightforward: "An employer or labor organization anywhere in this state may execute and apply an agreement requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment to the full extent allowed by federal law."

On April 25, the bill went to the Senate floor, and labor found out who its real friends and foes are. It passed 17-12, with every single Democrat voting for it, and every single Republican votig against it (except Herman Baertschiger Jr. of Grants Pass, who was absent).

The Senate Republican Office even issued a press release blasting the vote on the bill.

"Oregonians should be upset with politicians trying to get in the way of local job opportunities by getting in the way of private sector labor relations," said Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli in the release. [That takes the cake: Getting in the way of private sector labor relations is *exactly* what right-to-work laws do. Simply put, the laws prohibit employers from signing "union security" clauses — whether they want to or not.]

SB 1040 is now under consideration in the Oregon House.

UFCW's top priority: Winning a Fair Work Week

SB 828 would require large retail, hospital- ity, and food services employers to provide new employees with an estimated work schedule, and current employees with two weeks' notice of employee work schedule, compensation for last-minute employer-re-

quested schedule changes, and extra compensation when fewer than 10 hours separate shifts. They would also have to offer additional hours to existing employees before hiring new employees or subcontractors. It passed the Senate Workforce Committee on April 20.



"Far too often workers in Oregon — especially those in the retail, food service, and hospitality industries — are being scheduled in a way that gives them little to no control over their lives. Many receive work schedules with very little notice, often less than a week, and sometimes as little as the same day. They have no say in their own work schedules. They do not know from week to week how many hours they will work or when those work hours will be. They do not know what their weekly paycheck will amount to. . . . These inconsistent schedules are wreaking havoc on family lives and economic security."

— UFCW Local 555 Legislative Director Kevin Billman at a April 3 hearing

How to make a Better Oregon

Hint: Make Corporations pay their share

Canvasses will knock on 2,000 doors May 6 and May 19

Things are getting real in Salem. A \$1.6 billion budget deficit looms at the state level and Oregon has the lowest corporate taxes in the nation. Instead of making corporations pay more, legislators have drawn up a list of billions in cuts to critical services.

That's why the union-community coalition A Better Oregon is organizing canvasses to send a message to legislators: Cuts to critical services are unacceptable as long as Oregon is 50th in corporate taxes; so it's time to raise taxes on corporations and ask them to pay their

fair share.

Our Oregon will provide snacks and a full training and script. For more information, call Kevin at 971-241-690 or email him at sullivan@ouroregon.org

On Saturday, May 6, the coalition will be knocking doors in Portland to make sure legislators hear from their neighbors and constituents. In one day, the plan is to knock on 2,000 doors.

- **Meeting time:** Saturday, May 6, 10-2
- **Meeting place:** SEIU Local 49 hall, 3536 SE 26th Ave, Portland

Another canvass is scheduled May 13. Sign up online at <http://bit.ly/2pCceS3>.

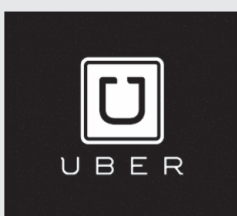
Clean Engines, Clean Air

SB 1008, sponsored by State Sen. Michael Dembrow, is backed by Oregon AFSCME and the Oregon Nurses Association. As amended, it would use \$72 million from a legal settlement with Volkswagen to reduce emissions from school buses and start to retrofit or replace high-polluting trucks. It would also direct an inventory of nonroad diesel engines. It passed the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee April 24.



A big sloppy kiss for Uber? No thanks.

HB 3246, sponsored by Salem Democrat Brian Clem, would have barred local governments from regulating and improving conditions for Uber and Lyft drivers, and could have declared that drivers are legally independent contractors. The Oregon AFL-CIO fought against it, and President Tom Chamberlain and a group of Uber/Lyft drivers assembled by the Oregon AFL-CIO testified against it. It died in the House Business and Labor Committee without a vote.



On public works, 10 percent apprentices?

HB 2162 would mandate that state construction contracts over \$5 million require contractors to employ apprentices to perform 10 percent of work hours. It passed the House 53-3 April 24 and is now in the Senate Workforce Committee. It's supported by the Carpenters, Oregon Tradeswomen Inc., and Associated General Contractors, but Oregon State Building Trades Council and IBEW 48 are opposing it in its current form. Oregon State Building Trades head Tim Frew says they want to add "responsible bidder" language to the bill.

Rent control and no-cause eviction

HB 2004 as amended, would relax a statewide preemption on local rent control ordinances: Cities or counties would be allowed to limit rent increases on rental properties that are more than five years old, so long as landlords are guaranteed a fair rate of return, and a hardship appeal process is established. The bill would also bar "no-cause" eviction after 6 months of occupancy. And it would require landlords with 5 units or more to pay tenants relocation expenses equivalent to one month's rent for a "good cause" eviction, such as significant renovation or sale. The bill is backed by a coalition that includes SEIU Local 49 and the Portland Association of Teachers. It passed the House 31-27 April 4, largely along party lines, with all Republicans and Democrats Caddy McKeown and Brad Witt voting against it. [Salem Democrat Brian Clem wasn't going to vote for it, but he was absent; Aloha Democrat Jeff Barker was also planning to vote against it, but agreed to vote for it as a favor to Cannon Beach Democrat Deborah Boone, who couldn't be there in person.] The bill is now in the Senate Human Services Committee.

All hands on deck!

Over the course of this year's session of the Oregon Legislature, many labor organizations are bringing members to Salem to talk to representatives. Next up is an all-union lobby day organized by the Oregon AFL-CIO. If you haven't met with your legislator before, don't worry - the state labor federation will provide training, and staff will be available to meet with legislators.

Oregon AFL-CIO Lobby day:

- **When:** Wednesday, May 24, 9:30 a.m.
- **Where:** Room 350, Oregon State Capitol, 900 Court St NE, Salem, Oregon
- **RSVP required:** Visit orafcio.org/lobbyday by May 15 to register.

Join union members from across Oregon to meet with legislators, advocate for working people, and make your voice heard in Salem. Visit <http://bit.ly/2oUHMVZ> to download a flier to help recruit for this important event.

