

# NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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On Feb. 11, Oregon AFSCME mobilized dozens of people — including Council President Jeff Klatke and staff rep Allan MacLean above — to visit and talk to AFSCME-represented workers who hadn't become full union members.

## 'Right to work' coming to the public sector

A Supreme Court ruling that 'fair share' fees are unconstitutional is likely 6 to 13 months away.

By Don McIntosh

If public employees are required to pay at least some costs of the union that represents them, does that violate their First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and association? For 40 years, U.S. courts have said it doesn't, in obedience to a unanimous 1977 U.S. Supreme Court decision in a case called *Abood v Detroit Board of Education*. But the April 7 confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch starts the clock ticking on a case that is expected to overturn that — and result in court imposition of the anti-union "right-to-work" idea on all public sector workplaces in America.

Under the *Abood* decision, union-represented workers don't have to become union members, or pay anything to support the union's political work if they disagree with that. But they *can* be required to pay fees to cover the union's costs to represent workers in disciplinary cases and negotiate and enforce the union contract. The fees are called "fair share" fees or "agency" fees. In the 23 states that allow unions to charge fair

share fees to represented non-members, the fees typically run about 85 percent of full union dues. And in those states, on average about 7 percent of represented workers pay fair share fees instead of full union dues.

The case that could overturn *Abood* is called *Janus v AFSCME*. The lead plaintiff is Mark Janus, an AFSCME-represented public employee in Illinois. The case was dismissed by the 7th District U.S. Court of Appeals in March, but the Supreme Court could agree to hear an appeal when it begins its next session this October.

Last year, the Supreme Court split 4-4 on *Friedrichs v California Teachers Association*, a similar challenge to *Abood*. The four Republican-appointed justices voted to overturn *Abood*, and the four Democratic appointees voted to uphold it. It's assumed that Gorsuch would vote with the other Republican appointees if the court hears the *Janus* case.

That means public sector unions have between six to 13 months before union fees become strictly a voluntary decision. Many public sector unions are getting ready by appealing to their fair share fee payers one-by-one to become full members.

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Hundreds of Oregonians overflow a Northeast Portland gymnasium at a Jan. 15 "Save Our Healthcare" rally.

## The end of Obamacare?

The American Health Care Act, dubbed Trumpcare, would worsen Obamacare's flaws.

The Affordable Care Act (popularly known as Obamacare) is complicated, expensive and flawed. But the American Health Care Act (AHCA), which passed the U.S. House May 4, wouldn't "repeal and replace it" as Republicans

promised; it would tweak it and break it, making it much worse.

To see how, you need to understand a little about how the ACA works. ACA tries to reduce the number of uninsured by expanding Medicaid to cover all those below or near the poverty line, and adding financial carrots and sticks to get others onto an insurance plan. Individuals get subsidies to buy insurance on regulated state-

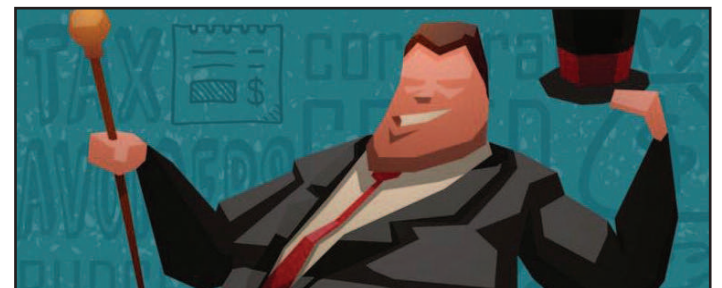
level exchanges, and face tax penalties if they *don't* buy insurance. Big employers pay penalties if they don't provide insurance. Small employers get incentives for buying insurance on exchanges. [But not union small employers that get health insurance through union-sponsored trusts; they were left out.]

And all this is paid for with

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## CEO PAY

According to the 2017 edition of AFL-CIO Executive Pay-Watch, America's average CEO got a 5.9 percent raise last year. Based on an analysis of the most recent available data, CEOs of S&P 500 companies received, on average, \$13.1 million in total compensation in 2016. [The S&P 500 is a list of 500 big companies whose stock is publicly traded on U.S. stock exchanges.] Meanwhile the average U.S. production and non-



supervisory worker earned \$37,632 in 2016, the AFL-CIO reported. **That's a CEO-to-worker pay ratio of 347 to 1.**

"This year's report provides further proof that the greed of corporate CEOs is driving America's income inequality

crisis," says AFL-CIO president Rich Trumka. "Big corporations continually find ways to rig the economy in their favor and line their CEOs' pockets at the expense of the workers who make their businesses run."

### Top-paid Oregon CEOs

- #1 **Nike** Mark G. Parker \$47,615,302 (2016)
- #2 **Precision Castparts** Mark Donegan \$15,812,373 (2015)
- #3 **Rentrak** William P. Livek \$13,233,446 (2015)
- #4 **Schnitzer Steel** Tamara L. Lundgren \$7,070,553 (2016)
- #5 **Greenbrier** William A. Furman \$6,544,136 (2016)

- #11 **Portland General Electric** James J. Piro \$3,317,633 (2016)
- #12 **Northwest Natural Gas** Gregg S. Kantor \$3,240,919 (2016)
- #14 **Columbia Sportswear** Timothy P. Boyle \$3,080,147 (2015)

### Top-paid Washington CEOs

- #1 **Expedia** Dara Khosrowshahi \$94,603,552 (2015)
- #2 **T-Mobile US** John J. Legere \$24,457,987 (2015)
- #3 **Starbucks** Howard Schultz \$21,815,498 (2016)
- #4 **Boeing** Kevin G. McAllister \$20,865,820 (2016)
- #5 **Microsoft** Satya Nadella \$17,692,031 (2016)
- #9 **Weyerhaeuser** Doyle R. Simons \$10,338,964 (2016)
- #13 **Costco** W. Craig Jelinek \$6,503,276 (2016)
- #14 **Nordstrom** Peter E. Nordstrom \$5,838,769 (2016)
- #23 **Alaska Air Group** Bradley D. Tilden \$4,246,312 (2016)
- #38 **Amazon.com** Jeffrey P. Bezos \$1,681,840 (2016)

SEE THE WHOLE LIST at [aflcio.org/paywatch](http://aflcio.org/paywatch)