

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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Oregon Can't Wait

About 500 Oregonians gathered at the Oregon Capitol June 6 for a union-organized rally to deliver the message: Oregon can't wait to invest in schools and services — and the time to make big corporations pay their fair share in taxes is now. "Big business associations have been clear that they want to see the budget balanced on the backs of working people in Oregon through cuts to retirement plans, health-

care, layoffs in our public schools and universities, and cuts to services for seniors and people with disabilities," SEIU 503 President Steve Demarest told rallygoers. Prominent at the rally in their union T-shirts were members and staff of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, and Service Employees International Union Local 503.



A ballot initiative campaign to end abusive scheduling launched June 3 at the headquarters of the Oregon Working Families Party. Within a day, the campaign had half of the signatures it needs to get to the next phase.

Labor may go to the Oregon ballot on tax reform and workers rights

Oregon's biggest unions have begun the groundwork for ballot measures aimed at the 2018 ballot — in case the Democratic-led Oregon Legislature doesn't deliver. Lawmakers have just weeks remaining in the 2017 legislative session, and several key labor priorities — including major tax reform and a curb to abusive workplace scheduling practices — have failed to win passage so far.

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555 is backing a pair of prospective initiatives that would legislate a "Fair Work Week."

Oregon AFSCME and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503 are backing initiatives to make corporations disclose how much they pay in state income tax.

And Oregon Education Association (OEA) is behind a pair of initiatives to increase revenue and direct it to schools.

Local 555 Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Anderson, chief petitioner on the Fair Work Week initiatives, says that to win one of those ballot measures would consume the union's entire political budget for the 2018 election cycle, leaving little or nothing available to support candidates for office. But Local 555 is prepared to make that choice if legislators don't come through, Anderson said, because ending schedule abuses is the union's top legislative priority.

Under Oregon law, ballot ini-

tiative campaigns must first submit 1,000 valid signatures before the state attorney general's office determines what ballot title and description voters will see alongside the initiative. That wording can make a big difference in how well an initiative does at election time, so it's usually a contested process that can take six months to complete. That means initiative campaigns that are starting now can expect to be approved for general circulation by about January 2018, giving them about six months to gather the signatures they'll need to get on the November 2018 ballot.

Here are each of the initiative petitions in greater detail.

IP 23: Fair Work Week I

Employers would have to pay to cancel or reduce shifts at the last minute: at least four hours pay, or the scheduled work shift (if it's shorter than four hours), any time a worker gets less than 24-hours notice that a shift has been cancelled or reduced. Also, state laws that prevent local governments from passing ordinances on work schedules or sick leave would be repealed. Chief petitioner: UFCW Local 555 Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Anderson

IP 24: Fair Work Week II

Same as Fair Work Week I, but in addition, retail, hospitality and food service establishments with 50 or more employees in Oregon would face a number of requirements. They would have to provide employees a written good faith estimate of their work schedule at time of hire. They'd

Unions react to the MAX killings

One of the murdered Good Samaritans was a union member at the City of Portland.

By Don McIntosh

The May 26 attacks on the MAX light rail train hit close to home for many local union members.

Jeremy Christian, an ex-con and self-described political nihilist, got on a westbound train at Lloyd Center at about 4:30 Friday and immediately targeted two African-American girls, one of them wearing a hijab, with a loud and frightening racist rant. Three men stepped up to defend the girls and were stabbed in the neck by Christian. Micah David-Cole Fletcher survived. Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche and Rick Best died of their wounds.

Best was a well-liked member of the COPPEA chapter of Professional & Technical Employees (PTE) Local 17 at the City of Portland. An army veteran and a father of four, he had been a tech-



At the Hollywood Transit Center, an impromptu memorial was erected to the victims of the May 26 attack on the MAX light rail.

nician at the city's Bureau of Development Services since 2015.

Local 17 posted a tribute to Rick on its website, and asked members to contribute to a GoFundMe page to fund scholarships for Best's children: Erik, Isaac, David, and Tramanh. The

union also wrote a check to cover COBRA payments for June so Best's family can maintain health insurance it was getting through the City. Portland City Council is working on ordinance to pay the COBRA payments for three

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