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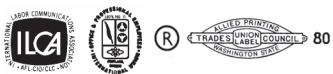
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Drawn-out bargaining at City of Portland

Negotiators for the District Council of Trade Unions (DCTU) report that bargaining with the City of Portland has been moving at a snail's pace. DCTU bargains jointly for about 1,200 City workers in six unions: AFSCME Local 189, IBEW Local 48, Machinists District Lodge W24, Operating Engineers Local 701, Painters Local 10, and Plumbers and Fitters Local 290. Their contract expires June 30.

DCTU is proposing annual 3 percent raises on top of inflation-based cost-of-living increases, plus selective increases for some of the lowest-paid classifications, and spot increases for classifications like electricians that are in high demand. The unions argue that bigger-than-inflation raises are needed because housing costs are going up so much more quickly than overall inflation in Portland.

The two sides have been meeting once a week for up to four hours, but Oregon AFSCME representative Rob Wheaton, DCTU chief negotiator, said progress has been slow.

"I've never been in a situation where I've been at the 150-day mark and not known how



AFSCME Local 189 president Rob Martineau addresses a June 7 rally of about 100 City employees in a park across the street from the Portland Building. The rally's message: "Bring us a counterproposal."

far apart we are because we haven't seen any comprehensive counter-offer from the City," Wheaton said. The 150-day mark is the point, under state law, at which either side can declare impasse and call for mediation. In the case of the DCTU negotiations, that was June 11.

The City is proposing to require employees to get a comprehensive medical exam. If they fail to do so, the City would increase the employee share of health care costs. Wheaton said the union would like to see something other than a penalty-only model to get employees to get the checkup.

The City also wants to end a provision that gives existing employees first chance at promotions, Wheaton said. Instead, managers would have free rein to hire from outside. City negotiators say that's so the City can increase diversity, but Wheaton says the City is most diverse at the lowest ranks, and argues those employees deserve an opportunity for advancement.

ONLINE EXTRA

Keep tabs on the union negotiations at DCTUpdx.org, or by liking the city union coalition's Facebook page at facebook.com/DCTUnited

Former Trump nominee will headline anti-union group's fundraiser in Portland

Remember Andy Puzder, President Trump's first nominee for U.S. Secretary of Labor?

Puzder was CEO of the company that owns the Hardee's and Carl's Jr. fast food chains, and a big critic of raising the minimum wage.



Andy Puzder

He withdrew from consideration to be America's top labor law enforcer after it came out that he'd employed an undocumented immigrant housekeeper, and had been accused by his ex-wife of domestic abuse. Then he lost his job as CEO. But he's been keeping busy with media appearances on MSNBC and Fox. And in September, he'll be the featured speaker at an annual dinner to raise funds for the Freedom Foundation, a group whose sworn mission is to undermine organized labor and talk workers into dropping union membership. Union foes will pay \$115 to hear him speak Sept. 28 at the Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel, or \$150 for a VIP reception and photo.

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