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'It's Not Over'



Sens. Merkley and Wyden, and Rep. Bonamici urge Oregonians to keep pushing back on GOP efforts to repeal and replace Obamacare.

Union members were among more than 200 people at a rally July 6 in Northeast Portland calling on the U.S. Senate to reject Republican efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as Obamacare.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-

Kentucky) tried to jam a bill through the Senate before the July Fourth break that contained drastic cuts to Medicaid, and huge tax breaks for the wealthy. A backlash by constituents nationwide forced him to postpone the vote — for lack of Republican support. [The GOP-led House passed their version of health care reform on May 4 that contained similar cuts.]

“This is the fight of our lifetime, and a lot of people don’t even know what’s coming at

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Jon Jensen, a union rep for IBEW Local 48, and Nicole Rappaport, general counsel for Operating Engineers Local 701, testify before Portland City Council opposing a proposed Community Equity and Inclusion Plan resolution.

Unions oppose City's revamped policy to increase women and minorities on construction projects

They say it's a step backward from the existing 'Community Benefits Agreement.'

A controversial proposal on how to increase minority and women participation in City construction projects is expected to go before Portland City Council for a vote in August. The proposal was developed behind closed doors by a work group of City managers with little experience in construction. Union and nonprofit leaders who have worked for years to increase the number of women and minorities in the construction workforce say the proposed resolution/ordinance is poorly written, and won't accomplish its stated goal.

“We do see significant concerns regarding the Community Equity and Inclusion Plan (CEIP) in its current form, mostly on issues of accountability, transparency, and enforcement,” said Kelly Haines, senior project manager for WorkSystems Inc., at a July 12 City Council hearing on the proposal. Haines staffs the Metropolitan Alliance for Workforce Equity, a union-backed coalition known as MAWE, which mobilized to attend the hearing and testify against the proposal.

Critics say it's a step backward from the City's existing policy. In 2012, Portland City Council approved a model “Community Benefits Agree-

ment” (CBA) that committed general contractors, unions, minority contractors, and workforce training and community groups to work together to achieve ambitious numeric targets for participation by women and minorities—both as apprentices and journeymen, and as subcontractors—on City-funded construction projects. That CBA is supposed to be applied to all City construction projects larger than \$15 million.

Haines pointed to the success of the CBA on two completed Water Bureau projects. “The CBA pilots not only hit the goals, but doubled and tripled them many times,” she said.

Under the new proposal going to City Council, a separate policy known as the CEIP would apply to public improvement contracts valued at between \$10 million and \$25 million. Any project in excess of \$25 million would require “consideration of a modified CBA.” The new proposal would leave it to the discretion of City bureau chiefs whether to implement a CBA on any given project.

Nicole Rappaport, general counsel for Operating Engineers Local 701, said compared to the CBA, the proposed CEIP seems to be oriented more toward minority and women contractors at the expense of minority and women workers.

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Lawsuit says nonunion ODOT contractor tolerated severe sex and racial harassment

The lawsuit against Ross Island Bridge contractor Abhe & Svoboda seeks a jury trial in federal district court.

By Don McIntosh

Members and staff of the Painters and Allied Trades union have for months been handing out fliers near the west end of the Ross Island Bridge — to publicize unscrupulous employment practices at nonunion bridge painting contractor Abhe & Svoboda.

A new federal lawsuit filed by a former employee suggests they were only scratching the surface.

The suit was filed by Portland attorney Craig Crispin on behalf of Tywan Brown, a former employee on the Ross Island Bridge painting project. The 14-

page legal complaint, filed June 30 in U.S. District Court, accuses the company of extreme race and gender discrimination, and retaliating for making a safety complaint.

According to the suit, Brown's experience at Abhe & Svoboda began with broken promises. A resident of Virginia, she responded to an ad on Craigslist to work on the Ross Island Bridge project in Portland. Abhe & Svoboda offered her a position as a sandblaster and promised to pay her moving expenses. When she arrived in Portland, the company put her to work as a painter instead, and reimbursed her for only one-fourth of her moving expenses, promising to pay the rest after she'd worked there a year. She didn't last that long.

Soon after she began, a co-worker allegedly began subjecting her to unwanted sexual advances. On one occasion, he cornered her in a shed at work and said he wouldn't let her out unless she performed oral sex on him; he backed down when she threatened to call police. When she complained to the company project manager, the manager immediately told the perpetrator that she had complained about him; the co-worker yelled at her and threatened her. When she reported that to the project manager, he told her to apologize to the offending co-worker and avoid him in the future by staying on the other side of the bridge. Brown provided a writ-

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