

# NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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## Still no DCTU deal at City of Portland

Several hundred people rallied in downtown Portland July 19 in a show of support for the District Council of Trade Unions (DCTU), which is bargaining a new contract with the City.

The DCTU is comprised of a half-dozen locals that bargain jointly for about 1,200 workers. The unions are AFSCME Local 189, Machinists Lodge 63, IBEW Local 48, Plumbers and Fitters Local 290, Operating Engineers Local 701, and Painters Local 10.

The previous contract expired June 30, and the sides have completed their required 150 days of bargaining. At any time, either side can declare impasse and proceed to “self remedy.”

“That’s not something I like to think about, but it’s really our final bullet, it’s our final answer, and it’s the only bullet in our gun,” said Rob Martineau, president of AFSCME Local 189 and spokesperson for the DCTU. “The city says it’s a progressive town, but they’re moving toward a labor dispute,” Martineau said, responding to calls to “shut it down.”

At the rally, the DCTU drew support from the Oregon AFL-CIO, the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 (the state’s largest private sector union), and many other unions.



Chris Brown (right), a member of IBEW Local 48, Nancy Boch (center), a member of Local 48, Zach Odil, a member of AFSCME Local 189, and Tracey Briggs (holding camera), take a selfie to send to Mayor Ted Wheeler. Brown and Boch work at the Maintenance Bureau, Signals, Streets, and Light Division. Odil works at P&D, (Portland and Distributing). Briggs is a supporter.

Martineau said the DCTU is looking for three things: a 2 percent wage increase across the board, a retroactive cost of living adjustment (COLA) to June 30, and no HIPAA (Health Insurance Privacy and Protection Act) release requirement to maintain lower out-of-pocket insurance costs.

“If the City can’t produce those three things, unfortunately, we’re going to be in a very different spot in a few

months,” Martineau said.

Several speakers scolded City commissioners for not being more involved in the bargaining process.

“They are hiding behind their HR department,” said Oregon AFL-CIO president Tom Chamberlain. City workers, who live and work in one of the most expensive cities on the West Coast, “are just trying to keep their

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## LOOKING BACK The 2017 Oregon Legislature

Lawmakers passed landmark labor laws, but dropped the ball on tax fairness and housing

By Don McIntosh

In its now-concluded 2017 session, the Oregon Legislature passed two pieces of first-in-the-nation labor legislation: cracking down on abusive scheduling practices by employers, and preventing local jurisdictions from passing antiunion “right-to-work” ordinances. Lawmakers also passed a \$5.3 billion transportation funding package that was stalled for years. And they passed a tax on health care providers to make up for a long-planned drop in the federal Medicaid funding that pays for the Oregon Health Plan.

Could they have done more? Democrats held a 35-25 majority in the House and a 17-13 majority in the Senate. Tackling the affordable housing crisis was a top priority for Democratic House Speaker Tina Kotek. Her bill — to curb no-cause eviction and eliminate the statewide ban on local rent control ordinances — passed the House but failed to win passage in the Senate.

And most importantly, the Legislature once again failed to pass tax reform, with the result that Oregon continues to have underfunded schools and services, and the lowest overall tax burden on business of any state in the nation. No proposal was able to get the required 3/5ths supermajority to raise taxes. Here are the top union-backed

bills this session:

- **Fair Scheduling:** SB 828, which was the top priority for UFCW Local 555, requires large retail, hotel, and food service establishments to provide at least 10 hours between work shifts, post work schedules at least two weeks in advance, and pay for last-minute employer-requested schedule changes. [Passed House 46-13, Senate 23-6]
- **Transportation:** HB 2017, the top priority for the Oregon Building Trades, authorizes \$5.3 billion over the next eight years for congestion-reducing projects on I-5, I-205, and OR-217, plus highway, bridge, and transit projects around the state. Funds come from a 10-cent gas tax hike, a \$16 vehicle registration fee increase, a 0.1 percent payroll tax and a 0.5 percent tax on new car sales. The projects are likely to employ many hundreds of union construction workers. [Passed House 39-20, Senate 22-7]
- **No local ‘right-to-work’:** SB 1040 guarantees the right of private-sector employers and unions to negotiate ‘union security’ agreements (requiring represented members to pay union dues). The law is intended to head off local ‘right-to-work’ ordinances, such as one proposed in Coos County, that seek to ban such agreements, capitalizing on a November 2016 federal court decision. [Passed House 41-17; Senate 17-12]
- **Cover All Kids:** Under Obamacare, most Oregon children get free health insurance if their parents make less than triple the poverty line. SB 558 extends that eligibility to an estimated 15,000 immigrant children who lack legal residency status — at a cost of about \$36 million. [Passed House 37-23, Senate 21-8]
- **Shore up Medicaid** HB 2391 raises over \$300 million a year in new funds to

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