

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

IN THIS ISSUE

WORKERS RIGHTS Burgerville workers stage one-store strike on Labor Day. | Page 2

UFCW LOCAL 555 Members re-elect Dan Clay and Jeff Anderson to top union posts | Page 8

Labor Day Picnic Photos p. 6-7 **Meeting Notices** p. 9

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At the Labor Day picnic, Northwest Oregon Labor Council President Jeff Anderson encouraged Jeff Merkley to run for U.S. president. Soon after, with Merkley speaking in the background, Victor Weekes of Bakers Local 364 held up a hastily drawn sign: "Next President of the United States — Jeff Merkley."

Will Sen. Jeff Merkley run for president in 2020?

As U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley waited to take the mic at the Oaks Park Labor Day picnic, union members roared approval at the suggestion that he consider running for president of the United States in 2020.

Northwest Oregon Labor Council President Jeff Anderson told audience members of several news articles suggesting that Oregon's junior senator might make a run for president in 2020 if there isn't a strong progressive in the field.

"I would like to stoke the fire and make that true," Anderson said to wide applause.

Merkley didn't respond to that wish on stage, but he told

the Labor Day crowd that over the last four decades virtually every penny of new income has gone to the top 10 percent in America.

"How about instead of policies for the top 10 percent we have policies for working America?" Merkley said. "The wealth of the country has gone up, up, up. Let's have the wealth of working Americans go up, up, up!"

Merkley was the only Democratic U.S. senator to endorse Bernie Sanders' presidential bid, and he made national news when he staged a 15-hour filibuster in opposition to President Donald Trump's nominee for Supreme Court — Neil Gor-

such.

On Sept. 1, Oregon's senator authored an op-ed in a newspaper in Iowa, which has the nation's earliest presidential caucus.

Dan Mahr, labor liaison for Oregon's junior senator, says Sen. Merkley is focused on the 2018 mid-term elections, where he is part of the Democratic leadership team trying to win back the U.S. House and hold the line in the U.S. Senate.

"You could tell by his speech that he's fired up and ready to go to the mat for working folks," Mahr told the Labor Press. "First things first."



2017 OREGON AFL-CIO CONVENTION REPORT

Union delegates endorse Gov. Kate Brown for reelection — and pass resolutions on race, immigration, and women's issues.

CONVENTION COVERAGE

See a Q&A with Governor Brown, which unions got top honors, and more on Pages 4 and 5.

BEND, Oregon — Representing unions from around Oregon, 213 delegates and 77 guests attended the biennial convention of the Oregon AFL-CIO Sept. 8-10 at the Riverhouse on the Deschutes convention center. Oregon AFL-CIO is the statewide federation that most of the state's unions belong to. At its convention, delegates from each union approve policy.

This time, delegates voted to endorse Kate Brown for another term as Oregon governor, heard about legislative attacks on union rights in other states, and saluted Oregon unions, union volunteers, and legislators who were singled out for special honors [See Page 4.]

The convention began with a Friday night welcome dinner at which the Oregon AFL-CIO distributed its scorecard for the 2017 Legislature [See Page 5] — and lauded state legislators Dan Rayfield, Arnie Roblan and James Manning for their contributions to workers' rights.

On Saturday morning, Brown entered the convention hall to a standing ovation and addressed delegates. Before she left the room, a motion to endorse her reelection campaign passed on a near-unanimous voice vote. The general election is 14 months

away, and Brown doesn't expect to face a Democratic primary challenger. Bend State Rep. Knute Buehler is the only candidate seeking the Republican nomination so far. [Just before she entered the convention hall, Brown sat down for a 10-minute interview with the Labor Press, with her labor liaison Elana Guiney and communications director Chris Pair looking on. See Page 5.]

On Saturday and Sunday, delegates passed 18 resolutions setting policy, including four sponsored by the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), which had a robust presence at the convention. Some of them:

- **Defend Medicaid** Opposing a ballot initiative that aims to overturn a new \$670 million health care tax on Oregon hospitals and insurance companies. The tax will fund Medicaid for 350,000 Oregonians. Chief petitioner Julie Parrish has until Oct. 5 to gather about 59,000 signatures.

- **Immigration** Opposing a ballot initiative that seeks to repeal a 1987 state law against using state and local resources to enforce federal immigration law

- **Celebrating LERC** Saluting the University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) on the occasion of its 40th anniversary, and urging its