

...GOP tax plan sparks backlash

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what the [Republican] majority is counting on. They are rushing their tax giveaway to big corporations and the wealthy through the Congress so quickly that nobody catches on.”

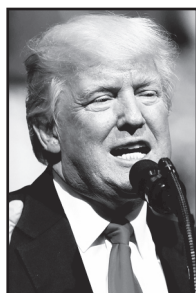
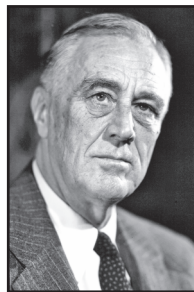
The framework announced Sept. 27 would lower the top federal income tax rate from 39.6 percent to 35 percent on the highest incomes. It would slash the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 20 percent.

It would also cut or eliminate the taxes multinational corporations pay on their offshore profits. American multinational corporations hold an estimated \$2.6 trillion offshore, and have resisted bringing those profits home because they would be taxed in the U.S. at standard corporate rates. Advocates of giving corporations a “repatriation” tax holiday argue that the money, once returned, would be invested and put Americans to work. That’s pure fantasy: Almost all the companies with overseas cash hoards already have cash hoards in the United States that they have chosen not to invest.

The GOP also wants to end the estate tax, which has been around since 1916. Today’s estate tax affects only a few thou-

“People know that vast personal incomes come not only through the effort ability or luck of those who receive them, but also because of the opportunities for advantage which government itself contributes. Therefore, the duty rests upon the government to restrict such incomes by very high taxes.”

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt, June 19, 1935 address to Congress



“I look forward to working with Congress to deliver historic tax cuts and reforms to the American people. These tax cuts are significant. There’s never been tax cuts like what we’re talking about.”

— President Donald J. Trump, Sept. 27, 2017, Indianapolis

sand wealthy estates each year: Those over \$5.49 million per person. The tax is set at 40 percent of estates above that threshold.

Initially, at least, GOP leaders were set to eliminate the federal income tax deduction for state and local taxes — a deduction claimed by 44 million Americans (though corporations would get to keep that deduc-

tion). But so great was the backlash against it that Republican leaders were reportedly backtracking as of press time, leaving in place the deduction for property taxes, but not for state income taxes.

Republican leaders were set to reveal specific details of their tax plan on Nov. 1, the Day of the Dead — which was after this issue went to press.

Union-bashing Willamette Week tramples the facts in airport story

By Don McIntosh

“Organized labor wants to push out local restaurants and raise prices at Portland International Airport.” That’s word-for-word what *Willamette Week* reported in its Oct. 18 issue. Only problem? It’s not true, says the union organizer involved, Stefan Moritz, of UNITE HERE Local 8.

UNITE HERE Local 8 represents about 150 restaurant and retail workers at the Portland airport.

In the article, reporter Nigel Jaquiss asserts that UNITE HERE wants the airport to abandon “street pricing,” and award all its concession contracts to one or two operators — to make it simpler for workers to unionize. But the article provides no evidence that those are the union’s positions, and Moritz, who was quoted in the article, says the union has never said either of those things.

“If you look at the work we do in other airports, we work with small businesses all over the place,” Moritz told the Labor Press. “In San Francisco, our union represents workers at many small businesses that have good union contracts, while the small businesses are highly successful.”

As for street pricing, the popular-with-travelers rule that restaurants can’t charge more at the Portland airport than at their other locations, Moritz says the union hasn’t called for an end to that either.

Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain *has* criticized street pricing, however. Chamberlain, one of two labor voices on the nine-member Port of Portland Commission, says the street pricing rule pinches business profit margins and makes it that much harder for them to pay living wages and benefits to their workers. It’s not like the airport applies

“Local” restaurants at the Portland Airport

Laurelwood Pub and **Kenny and Zuke’s** (operated by SSP America, a division of SSP Group, a British multinational that operates branded catering and retail at over 125 airports worldwide)

Stumptown Coffee Roasters, Peet’s Coffee, and Potbelly Sandwiches (operated by Texas-based LaTrelle Inc., which also runs airport Wendy’s and Subway franchises)

Henry’s Tavern (operated by Restaurants Unlimited, which is owned by Sun Capital Partners, a global private equity outfit)

Rogue Ales Public House, Rose’s Restaurant and Bakery, and Tamale Boy (operated all-union by HMS Host, a subsidiary of Italy-based Autogrill S.p.A. — the world’s largest airport concessions company)

“street pricing” to the rents it charges concession contractors.

But details like that would get in the way of Jaquiss’ union-bashing narrative, in which the Pulitzer-prize winning journalist relies on lazy clichés about unions. “Unite Here” is described as a “powerful” “New York based” union, “one of the nation’s largest,” that has shown an ability to “dictate terms” at other West Coast airports.

Actually, UNITE HERE (spelled all-caps because it’s an acronym), is only America’s 20th largest union. Its Local 8 is based in Seattle. And far from dictating terms, it took 10 years, a union-community coalition, and a hard-fought ballot measure to get \$15 an hour and worker protections at SeaTac.

As for the local businesses the article celebrates? Some concession businesses at PDX are locally owned. But most, as detailed in the box above, are in fact local “brand concepts” that are operated by giant out-of-town companies.



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