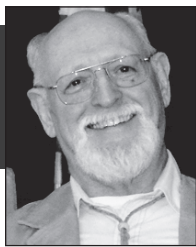


## Guest Opinion

By John Vandermosten, Retired IBEW Local 48



### Think about right-to-work

The question is not whether you have a right to work, but rather under what conditions that work is performed.

Federal, state, and local laws define some of the basic rights an employee has in the workplace. Such things as safety, non-discrimination rights, minimum wage requirements, rights for workers to organize, and age-related laws are applied to most workers.

Beyond this, the wages, hours, and working conditions are agreed to through the employer/employee agreement. This employment relationship may be arrived at in a variety of ways:

- 1. A handshake.** (This is what you are expected to do and this is what you will paid.)
- 2. An individual written contract** outlining the job responsibilities and the rate of pay for that employee.
- 3. A written contract defining a specific group of employees,** their wages, hours, and working conditions, along with certain agreed to

responsibilities of management. The written contract may include a method for resolving differences in interpretation of the contract (grievance procedure).

In the first situation, there is likely no detailed description of the responsibilities of the employee or the employer in terms of wages, hours, and working conditions. The employer, in many cases, has the ability to change the details and the employee may have little recourse. Even in the case of legal violations and an absence of a grievance procedure, the employee's option is to use the courts (something that may be quite difficult when there is no income).

In the second case, any issues arising outside of the details of the contract may be decided unilaterally. Again, absent a grievance procedure, the recourse is limited.

In the case of a group contract (union) with the employer, and agreement as to wages, hours, and working conditions is jointly agreed to, along with a procedure to set-

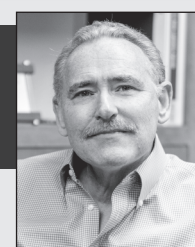
tle disputes. Those issues that are included in the contract define the rights and responsibilities of each party. The ability of a larger group of employees seeking improved wages, hours, and working conditions can provide increased leverage when negotiating with management. Federal and state labor laws may give employees additional protection when engaging in organizing and negotiating.

It can be argued that the employee has rights as well as responsibilities when it comes to employment. When the details of this is put into a contract, there is a greater likelihood that a strong working relationship will result between the employee and the employer.

John Vandermosten is retired from IBEW Local 48. He serves as labor liaison for the Multnomah County Democrats.

## Who's on our side?

By Tom Chamberlain Oregon AFL-CIO President



### America's search for our moral compass

Unbridled capitalism is failing the vast majority of Americans. You see it every day as the gulf between the rich and the rest of us widens beyond anything we have experienced in this country. You see it in cities and towns as the ranks of homeless swells, spilling over into our streets. You see it as secure retirement dissipates: Social Security was designed to be about 40 percent of a retiree's retirement benefit, but for most Americans today it is the primary source of retirement income. You see it as the vast majority of job growth is for the very rich or the very poor. Middle-wage job growth has yet to return to pre-recession levels. You see it in the hopelessness of college graduates who worked hard for a degree and a good job, only to find they are working low-paying jobs, saddled with tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt. You see it in our woefully underfunded and overcrowded schools. You see it in our tax system, where the rich and corporate America refuse to pay their fair share, and you see it in our health care system, driven by profit instead of what is best for our people.

Those of my generation were told if you work hard and played by the rules you would have a better lifestyle than your parents. That promise worked because of a strong social safety net and high union density. This is no longer achievable for far too many.

America's capitalist model, which evolved after the Great Depression, post-World War II, and into the 1980s, was a model of capitalism with strong checks and balances. These checks and balances ensured workers would share in the wealth and prosperity of our country, and those who were sick, disabled, or poor would be provided for by a strong social safety net to lift them out of poverty. These were times when America's moral compass was evolving. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s pushed an agenda of equality that resulted in a comprehensive legislative agenda that never was meant to be the end, but rather the beginning of a transformation to a fair and equitable America. President Johnson's Great Society agenda sought to end poverty, and with the passage of Medicare and Medicaid began the march to universal health care.

We once lived in an America with a strong moral compass, which showed us the way to improve the living standards for most Americans. Today we live in an America lost in darkness. The darkness of hate driven by the despair of millions of Americans who work multiple minimum wage jobs. Americans who see work outsourced to not just other countries, but to states who pride themselves on their anti-union policies and rhetoric, which results in a low-wage, benefit-poor workforce.

It is no wonder that Donald Trump's message of hate and discrimination focused on recent immigrants and communities of color has proven to be seductive to those who search for something to blame for the erosion of their living standard. They are being duped: scapegoating other workers is a diversion from what ails America, an agenda of greed. An agenda where Congress passed a multi-billion dollar giveaway to corporations and the richest Americans in the guise of tax reform, and begins to underfund programs for the aged, poor, and disabled.

For those of us who haven't been seduced by Trump's agenda of hate and deception, know that the Koch brothers and their cronies who fund the anti-worker agenda have overreached and are feeling an organic backlash. The #MeToo movement, teachers on strike across America, vast marches in protest, and the increased numbers of workers joining unions are not only components of this backlash, but are a symptom of America's search for our moral compass to readjust our course back to an America that works for all and not just a privileged few. We all must understand that this is just the beginning of the journey where success will not be measured in hours, days or months, but years and decades. But the journey has begun.

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Share	.10% APY*	.03% APY	.01% APY	.01% APY	.01% APY
Money Market/ Special Club	0.50%	.03%	.03%	.03%	.05%
<b>CDs/Share Certificates</b>					
6mo	.40%	.02%	.01%	.01%	.05%
12mo	.85%	.05%	.01%	.05%	.10%
24mo	1.25%	.10%	.05%	.15%	.20%
36mo	1.25%	.12%	.05%	.20%	.35%
48mo	2.00%	.15%	.10%	.25%	.50%

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