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NATIONAL

Trump slashes federal union rights

New executive orders speed the firing of federal workers and slash the use of paid union time to defend them.

By Don McIntosh

President Donald Trump signed a trio of executive orders on May 25 to speed the process of firing federal employees, slash union officers' use of paid time to defend federal workers, and order federal agencies to renegotiate union contracts.

"This is more than union busting – it's democracy busting," said J. David Cox Sr., AFGE national president, in a press statement reacting to the orders. "These executive orders are a direct assault on the legal rights and protections that Congress has specifically guaranteed to the 2 million public-sector employees across the country who work for the federal government."

AFGE, which stands for



"This is a democracy, not a dictatorship. No president should be able to undo a law he doesn't like through administrative fiat."

—AFGE president J David Cox

American Federation of Government Employees, is the largest union of federal employees, with 318,000 members. On May 30 it filed a lawsuit asking that the order slashing paid union time be struck down by a federal court. AFSCME joined the suit June 1.

Trump's Executive Order 13837 says no federal employee can spend more than a quarter of their paid time on union responsibilities. The order also limits total union paid-time hours to one hour per employee per year. [A report from Office of Personnel Management says the federal average is currently 2.95 hours of paid time per employee.] And the or-

der requires agencies to bill unions at commercial market rates for use of meeting rooms, phones, computers, and other agency assets.

"The United States Constitution does not vest the president with the power to legislate," AFGE said in the lawsuit. "[The order] seeks to impermissibly rewrite portions of the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute, which governs labor relations in the federal civilian workplace."

Under that law, passed in 1978, union officers are allowed to fulfill their representa-

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UNION ORGANIZING

Faculty unionize at OSU and OIT

Oregon's labor movement just grew by 2,500 new members.

Faculty at Oregon State University (OSU) and Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) are going union. On June 5, union campaigns at both universities delivered union authorization cards to the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

The two schools were the last public universities in Oregon where faculty were not yet unionized. Under Oregon law, public employees unionize once a majority of a proposed bargaining unit signs cards.

At OIT the unit is 172 full-time faculty, instructors and librarians. They'll be members of American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

At OSU, it's 2,400 faculty in all departments and campuses. They'll be members of United Academics of Oregon State University, a joint project of AAUP and American Federation of Teachers (AFT). AFT already represents graduate students at OSU, while support staff there are represented by SEIU Local 503. The union campaign among OSU faculty, years in the making, has been



OSU profs Darrell Ross and Aurora Sherman turn in union cards June 5. collecting cards since February.

Union organizing committee member Darrell Ross says OSU faculty are unionizing to win a greater say in university governance and to secure better working conditions. In his 27 years as an entomologist in the OSU College of Forestry, Ross says he's seen steady deterioration in faculty working conditions.

"There's increasing reliance on contingent faculty who work in contracts of at most one year," Ross said. "They have little job security, they're not paid well, and they often don't know until the last minute if they'll have their contracts renewed."

During the campaign, OSU faculty heard from academics at UO and Rutgers about how unions halted that slide and improved job security.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

UPS Teamsters authorize strike

About 280,000 workers could walk out as soon as Aug. 1

Teamsters members at UPS voted by more than 90 percent to authorize a strike if no agreement is reached before their current five-year union contract expires July 31, the union announced June 5.

If that happens, 280,000 Teamsters would walk off the job. It would be the largest U.S. strike since UPS workers last went on strike in 1997, for 16 days. UPS is the largest private-sector union employer in the United States.

The two sides have been negotiating since late March, but Teamsters are balking at a



UPS proposal to create a new class of driver that would work weekends at no pay premium.

Current full-time drivers

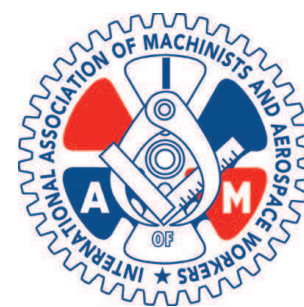
now earn an average of \$36 an hour. Last year, UPS had \$5 billion profit, and paid its CEO \$14.6 million in total compensation.

Machinists win toehold at Boeing South Carolina plant

A group of 176 flight-line readiness technicians and inspectors at Boeing's factory in North Charleston, S.C., voted 104 to 65 May 31 to join the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM). It's the first group of workers to unionize at Boeing's South Carolina factory since the IAM was voted out there in 2009. Back then, the plant employed 300. Today it employs about 6,700 workers

assembling Boeing 787 Dreamliners. In 2011, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) determined that Boeing located 787 assembly in non-union South Carolina in part to punish its unionized Puget Sound workforce for striking.

South Carolina is the least-unionized state in the nation, with just 2.6 percent of workers there in a union.



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