

...Oregon unions gird for defensive fights

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thwart majority rule. It would change the Oregon constitution to require a three-fifths supermajority for lawmakers to approve any legislation that would result in increased taxes or fees — including efforts to rein in tax breaks. Thanks to Ballot Measure 25 in 1996, Oregon already requires a three-fifths legislative supermajority to raise taxes. But in 2015, the Oregon Supreme Court determined that doesn't apply to the repeal or scale back of tax breaks. IP 31 is financed in part by people in the real estate industry, who reportedly hope it will prevent the Legislature from scaling back the mortgage interest deduction. Their campaign is represented by attorney Jill Gibson, who was the chief petitioner on an aborted anti-union "right-to-work" ballot initiative in 2016.

IP 37, which turned in signatures May 23, declares groceries exempt from any new taxes. It's aimed in part at preventing any local government from levying a tax on sugary drinks like soda. The Attorney General's office has said the way the constitutional amendment is worded, it would also prevent any tax on restaurants, and would exempt food businesses generally from

any increases in the corporate minimum tax. The measure will appear as Constitutional Amendment 103 on the ballot.

"We are encouraged that a growing number of businesses are joining this effort to defeat these harmful measures," said Oregon AFSCME Executive Director Stacy Chamberlain and SEIU 503 President Steven Demarest in a joint statement released by the governor's reelection campaign.

Dropping IP 25 was seen as a green light to potential business allies. The initiative would have required publicly traded corporations to disclose information, including how much they pay in state taxes, as well as their total Oregon sales, and the total Oregon wages and compensation they pay. But it was always seen as a means to the end of greater tax fairness.

"There's always tradeoffs," SEIU Local 503 Executive Director Melissa Unger told the Labor Press. "The reality is we wanted to make sure we had a broad coalition to defeat these ballot measures."

IP 31 and 37 aren't the only measures unions are expecting to oppose. As of June 5, the Oregon AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education is also opposing IP 1 and IP 22:

- IP 1, the Stop Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act of 2018, would reduce access to abortion by eliminating funding for abortion and women's healthcare for people on Medicaid and public employees.

- IP 22, the Stop Oregon Sanctuaries measure, repeals a 30-year-old state law that bars the use of state resources or personnel to detect or apprehend persons solely for violating federal immigration law. The initiative's opponents say IP 22 would increase racial profiling, harm immigrant communities, and jeopardize public safety.

Unions had earlier introduced several prospective initiative petitions aimed at the November 2018 ballot. But United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 withdrew a pair of measures aimed at curbing work schedule abuses after the Oregon Legislature passed some of those ideas into law. And the Oregon Education Association filed but never put resources into a pair of measures that would have addressed school funding.

As for the corporate tax transparency idea, it could come back in the future, but in next year's legislative session Unger said SEIU would rather focus on how to fund services and achieve greater corporate tax fairness. Oregon businesses continue to have the lowest overall tax burden of any state.

UNION ORGANIZING

...Union vote at Clackamas pet clinic

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brought its holdings to 2,000 pet hospitals. The Federal Trade Commission, responsible for enforcing anti-trust laws that are supposed to prevent monopolies, allowed the acquisition on condition that Mars sell 12 of its clinics to three other national chains.

Veterinary medicine was once an industry made up of independent veterinarians and clinics. Today it's rapidly consolidating into the hands of several giant national companies, of which Mars is by far the largest.

ILWU spokesperson Craig Merrilees said in the wake of the sale to Mars, workers at VCA's Clackamas facility were concerned about training, advancement, and turnover, and contacted ILWU for help with unionizing. Merrilees said company management opposed the

unionization effort, brought in union avoidance consultants, and held meetings in the workplace to discourage employees from voting to unionize. The proposed bargaining unit consists of all non-professional employees, including veterinary technicians and assistants, kennel assistants, and client service reps. Assuming they prevail, they'll be the third pet hospital workforce to unionize, ever, all in the last year.


- At a VCA unit in San Francisco, a similar group of employees joined ILWU in a 56-to-20 vote on April 5.
- And at a Mars' BluePearl subsidiary in Seattle, workers joined the National Veterinary Professionals Union in a 48-to-4 vote on May 31. NVPU formed last year with the goal of making veterinary support staff positions into a sustainable, life-long career choice. Merrilees said ILWU is working in partnership with the fledgling union.

Maintenance goes non-union at Tillamook Cheese


A group of 31 workers who maintain cheese-making equipment at the Tillamook Creamery voted July 11 to go nonunion. The vote, which was initiated by company management, was 19 to 10 in favor of decertifying

Operating Engineers Local 701, based in Gladstone, Oregon. The election took place the day before bargaining on a new contract was to begin.

About 250 production workers at the facility continue to be represented by Teamsters Local 58.



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UNIONIZATION → MAY-JUN 2018

The following are Oregon and Southwest Washington workplaces where workers have decided whether to be represented by a union. The thumbs-up symbol means workers will be union-represented. Thumbs-down means they'll be on their own. "Decert" means a decertification election, where union-represented workers voted whether to remain union. The information comes from the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

Employer (Location) Union	Yes-No	
Burgerville (Milwaukie) Burgerville Workers Union, IWW ■ 25 workers at the chain's 19119 SE McLoughlin Blvd restaurant	17-5	👍
Outside In (Portland) Oregon AFSCME ■ 125 workers in about 50 classifications, from physicians to syringe exchange staffers	88-18	👍
PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center (Vancouver) OFNHP ■ 8 surgical support aides	6-0	👍
Legacy Silvertown Medical Center (Silvertown) ONA DECERT ■ 146 registered nurses	93-53	👍
Providence Milwaukie Hospital (Milwaukie) SEIU Local 49 ■ 156 hospital support workers, including CNAs, cooks, and ER techs	92-54	👍
Serco, Inc. (Aurora) National Air Traffic Controllers Assn. ■ 3 air traffic control specialists at the Aurora State Municipal Airport Air Traffic Control Tower	2-1	👍

Unionization by majority signup

Employer (Location) Union	
Oregon State University (Corvallis) United Academics of OSU (AAUP/AFT)	■ 2,400 faculty members
Oregon Institute of Technology (Klamath Falls) AAUP	■ 172 faculty members