

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

IN THIS ISSUE

AFSCME TO COUNTY: NO THANKS Multnomah County says some, not all, on-call workers can be union. | Page 3

A PICKET LINE OF UNION DENTISTS They want pay raises and union rights in their first contract. | Page 7

Meeting Notices p.4

Unionization elections p.7

VOLUME 120, NUMBER 6

PORTLAND, OREGON

MARCH 15, 2019

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Multnomah County may require non-profit contractors to stay union-neutral

Multnomah County Commission could soon consider an ordinance aimed at deterring union-busting by the county's social service contractors.

At the direction of Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury, county legal and human resources staff are working to craft an ordinance that would withstand legal challenge while curbing misuse of public dollars. The idea was put forward by the union Oregon AFSCME after one county-funded non-profit spent resources to discourage employees from unionizing, and another ran up attorney billable hours dragging out negotiations over a first contract.

County commissioners might want to discourage those kinds of private expenses on the public



ONE YEAR, NINE MONTHS, AND 15 DAYS: That's how long it took workers at two publicly-funded addiction treatment centers run by Volunteers of America Oregon to get an acceptable first contract from their employer. Could Multnomah County pass a resolution to make non-profit executives play nice?

dime, but the county's lawyers think they'll need a different approach than one tried in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. There, a

requirement that county contractors sign "labor peace agree-

Turn to Page 7

In Oregon, having a union at work means an extra \$4,701 a year, and better benefits

A new report out from the University of Oregon's Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) attaches local numbers to something most people already know: Union workers have better pay and benefits than nonunion workers. Looking at Oregon workers, LERC's Lina Stepick and Mark Brenner analyzed statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau using a methodology developed by the UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education.

They found that — all other things being equal — Oregon workers covered by a union contract earn 11 percent more than nonunion workers, are 17.5 percent more likely to get health insurance through their job, and are 41 percent more likely to have an employer-provided retirement plan.

In dollar terms, they found that being covered by a union contract adds \$4,701 per year to an Oregon worker's annual income, on average. With close to

300,000 union members, that union differential could account for an additional \$1.4 billion in income in the pockets of working Oregonians in 2017. And that's just the impact on members: Other research has demonstrated that unions also increase wages for nonunion workers, Stepick and Brenner note, particularly when they're able to establish industry-wide standards for wages and benefits.

The report also found that union workplaces have a smaller gender pay gap. For Oregon, the gap between the average pay of men and women is 18.7 percent in nonunion workplaces, but only 5.3 percent in unionized workplaces.

Wage differences between union and nonunion, and between women and men, can be due to other factors, like differences in experience, education, and the industry in which they work. To isolate out the "union" effect, Stepick and Brenner controlled for those demographic

and industrial characteristics using a statistical method known as regression analysis. The data came from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, and they pooled data from 2011 to 2017 in order to ensure a sample size large enough for statistical analysis. In their sample, about 16.5 percent of workers were union members or covered by a union contract.



THE UNION ADVANTAGE

How Oregon Unions Raise Wages, Improve Benefits, and Contribute to the State Economy

February 2019

SEE THE FULL REPORT
<https://bit.ly/2VSu4iv>

New Oregon law bars massive rent increases

Landlords can no longer raise rent more than 7% plus CPI

By Don McIntosh

Tenants might outnumber landlords four to one, but in the Oregon Legislature, landlord money has long held sway. Landlords won a statewide ban on rent control in 1985, and tenant advocates have never since then had the clout to repeal it. But this year, a Democratic majority turned the dial in renters' direction with a new law signed by the governor Feb. 28 that took effect immediately.

The law makes Oregon the first state in the nation to enact statewide limits on residential rent increases. Unfortunately for renters, the limits they set — 7 percent a year plus inflation — are more landlord-friendly than any other rent

limit in the nation. The limit is so loose that it wouldn't have prevented the overall rise in rent that turned Oregon from affordable to unaffordable in under two decades. Still, the law will prevent massive rent increases like the kind that have taken place when new investors buy low-income housing and jack the rent up 50 or 100 percent. The new law also gives tenants much greater security by ending "no-cause" eviction.

Backed by the governor and top Democrats in the Oregon House and Senate, Senate Bill 608 moved swiftly through the Oregon Legislature, passing the Senate 17 to 11 Feb. 12, and the House 35 to 25 on Feb. 26. Every single Republican in the Legislature voted against it, and so did four Democrats:

Turn to Page 2

At a titanium plant in Albany, managers squelch union drive

By Don McIntosh

A worker-led effort to unionize the 498 employees of ATI Cast Products in Albany, Oregon, ended in defeat Feb. 22, with 179 voting to join the United Steelworkers (USW) and 285 voting against.

Why? Union supporter Dan Hoskins says union workers — who feel free to speak their mind — can't imagine the fear that sweeps through a nonunion plant during a union campaign.

"People are genuinely terrified," said Hoskins, a titanium straightener at the plant. Hoskins said he's been through seven attempts to unionize the plant since he started there 15 years ago. "There's always the week where those of us who are part of the campaign start wearing our union T-shirts and hats. When that happens, people are

afraid to be standing next to you. It's almost like people are wearing a hammer and sickle in the middle of Reagan's America. They're afraid of you."

Again and again, plant managers have waged an all-out effort to stomp out the union. That's in spite of the fact that USW represents workers at many other ATI facilities around the United States, including two plants in Albany itself: the titanium plant known as Oremet (Local 7150) and the specialty alloys plant known as Wah Chang (Local 6163).

The ATI Cast Products plant is best known to locals as Pac-Cast, short for Pacific Cast Technologies. It makes large, complex titanium components used in aircraft engines and spacecraft. Allegheny Tech-

Turn to Page 6