

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)

Established in 1900 in Portland, Oregon as a voice of the labor movement. Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit mutual benefit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Office location:
4275 NE Halsey St., Portland, Oregon

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 13150, Portland, OR 97213

Phone: (503) 288-3311

Web address:
<http://nwlaborpress.org>

Editor & Manager: Michael Gutwig
Associate editor: Don McIntosh
Office manager: Jill Lukens

Printed on recycled paper, using soy-based inks, by members of Teamsters Local 747-M.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Individual subscriptions are \$15 a year for union members, \$23 a year for all others. Pay by credit card online at nwlaborpress.org/subscribe, or send a check to our mailing address (above) along with your name, address and union affiliation, if any. **Group rates of \$11.28 a year per person** are available for 25 or more subscriptions; call 503-288-3311 for details.

CORRECTIONS: See an error? Please let us know at editor@nwlaborpress.org or by phone at 503-288-3311.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT PORTLAND, OREGON.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: If you move, let us know at nwlaborpress.org/subscriber-services or by mail at our mailing address (above). Be sure to provide your old and new addresses and the name/number of your local union. Please allow three weeks for the change to take effect.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS, P.O. BOX 13150, PORTLAND, OR 97213-0150



For working Washingtonians, a breakthrough session

From Page 1

TAX REFORM

Tax mansions more than starter homes

SB 5998 makes Washington taxes a little less unequal by replacing the state's flat 1.28% tax on home sales with a graduated tax instead: The real estate sales tax rate will drop to 1.1 percent for regular people's homes (up to \$500,000 sale price), then rise in stages until it reaches 3 percent for homes over \$3 million. Incredibly, even though four-fifths of home sales will now be taxed at a lower rate, the tax increase on purchases of high-end properties by the well-to-do will result in a net increase of about \$150 million a year to state coffers.

Bankers can afford to pay

House Bill 2167 doubles the business-and-occupation tax to 1.2 percent for large financial institutions that have annual profits of at least \$1 billion.

Tuition-free higher education

HB 2158 makes those who benefit the most from higher education contribute to make it affordable for the next generation. It raises the business and occupation tax by 20 percent on architecture, engineering, legal, insurance, financial, medical, telecom, and software firms, and uses the

proceeds to make state college tuition free for families making up to \$50,000 a year, and provide a state-sponsored student loan program for middle-class students above that. It also increases salaries for community college faculty who teach high-demand classes.

SOCIAL INSURANCE

Public-option health insurance

SB 5526 creates a public health insurance option known as Cascade Care that will compete with private insurers on the state's health Obamacare individual insurance exchange. The state will hire insurance companies to set up the individual health insurance plans at different coverage levels, with coverage starting in 2021. A rate cap will limit the amount Cascade Care pays health care providers to 160 percent of the rate set in federal Medicare plans.

First-in-the-nation longterm care insurance

HB 1087 sets up a long-term care benefit program. Beginning in 2025, the program will provide individuals up to \$36,500 to pay for services like in-home care, assisted living, nursing home and respite care. The benefit will be paid for by a 0.58 percent employee-paid payroll tax that starts in 2022. That works out to about \$24 a month for a worker making

\$50,000 a year. Workers become eligible for the benefit once they've contributed for five years.

WORKERS RIGHTS

Hospital worker rest and meal breaks

HB 1155 requires Washington hospitals to provide uninterrupted meal and rest breaks to nurses and medical technicians. If a rest break is interrupted because of an emergency, the worker must be given another 10-minute break. Unions have been trying to pass this for 10 years. This year, the issue went viral nationally when Washington Republican Maureen Walsh spoke against it in the senate floor, saying nurses "probably play cards for a considerable amount of the day." More than 770,000 people signed an online petition calling on Walsh to walk alongside a nurse for a 12-hour shift.

Crack down on noncompete agreements

Employers have increasingly been requiring workers to sign pledges agreeing not to go to work for competitors. SB 5478 prohibits such "non-compete agreements" for workers making less than \$100,000, bars their use in cases where an employee is laid off, limits them in all cases to no more than 18 months, and prohibits franchise

chains from restricting franchisees from hiring other franchisees' employees.

Protect hotel housekeepers and other solo workers from sexual assault

SB 5258 aims to prevent sexual harassment and assault of hotel, retail, behavioral health, and custodial employees who work alone. It requires their employers to adopt sexual harassment policies, conduct sexual harassment training, and provide panic buttons to enable solo workers to call for help.

Refinery safety

HB 1817 requires petroleum refineries to use a skilled and trained workforce: All workers must be either registered apprentices or skilled journeymen. And workers at high-hazard facilities must be given advanced safety training by Jan. 1, 2022.

JOB

Transition to clean energy

SB 5116, backed by the Washington State Labor Council, requires Washington electric utilities to phase out coal by 2025 and use 100 percent clean energy by 2045. Tax incentives to speed that along are tied to labor standards like prevailing wage, apprenticeship utilization, and

Turn to Page 3

PLEASE SHOW OUR ADVERTISERS YOU APPRECIATE THEIR SUPPORT FOR THIS LABOR MOVEMENT NEWSPAPER!

Low Prices!
carhartt
Coats, etc.

WHITE & WESCO
"Always the best Quality!"
10" SMOKE JUMPER
16" LINEMAN
HUGE SELECTION WATERPROOF BOOTS
SIZES IN NARROW, MEDIUM & WIDE
AI's SHOES
5811 S.E. 82ND • 771-2130
Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat 9:30-5:30, Sun 12-6

Your Oregon & Washington Union Mail House.

MORELINK
PRINT & MARKETING PARTNERS

Proud Mailers of the Northwest Labor Press
morelink.com • 503-736-0111 ext. 140

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheet-metal Workers, Floor coverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheet-metal Workers, Floor coverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters

The best home improvement is when

YOUR HOUSE PAYS FOR ITSELF

Whether you have small projects or big dreams, ask about our Home Equity Line of Credit.

9955 SE Washington Street Portland, OR 97216
503.253.8193 ext. 340

IBEW AND UNITED WORKERS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION