

Fred Meyer underpays women employees

Oregon Women Labor Leaders (OWLL) teamed up with the Oregon AFL-CIO for a rally July 24 calling on management at Fred Meyer to fix the gap between women's and men's wages. More than three dozen members from several unions attended, including Operating Engineers Local 701's "Rat Tracker." The rally took place outside the Fred Meyer store on West Burnside in busy downtown Portland.

An analysis by UFCW Local 555 shows that Fred Meyer pays its female grocery employees less than men: \$1.31 per hour on average. That's because women are twice as likely to be hired into lower-paying Schedule B jobs at the grocer. Schedule A earns around 25% more per hour than Schedule B so, for the average worker, that discrepancy between pay schedules adds up to more than \$200 per month.

At the rally, participants collected signatures on a petition calling on Fred Meyer to "Fix the Gap." Oregon AFL-CIO's Graham Trainor and Russell Sanders drove box vans around the store with the message: "Shop Somewhere Else! Fred Meyer Pays Women Less Than Men" emblazoned on the sides and back. Learn more at FixTheGapOregon.com.

The Fred Meyer store is located across the street from Providence Park, where the Portland Thorns women's soccer team was hosting a match. Several Thorns players are part of the U.S. women's national team, which recently filed a lawsuit against U.S. Soccer alleging gender discrimination and pay equity.



WASHINGTON

Labor Council endorsements for Aug. 6 primary announced

VANCOUVER, Wash. — The Southwest Washington Central Labor Council has issued several endorsements for the Aug. 6 primary elections. Ballots were mailed July 19.

At the non-partisan City of Vancouver, the labor council endorsed incumbent **Erik Paulsen** for Position 2. The labor council took no action in the Position 6 race, where six candidates have filed for the seat being vacated by Bill Turlay.

At Clark County, the labor council endorsed incumbent District 4 Councilor **Gary Medvigy**. Medvigy was appointed to the seat in January when Republican Eileen Quiring vacated it to begin her term as Clark County Council chair. The Aug. 6 election is to complete her term of office, which expires in 2020. Medvigy is a retired California Superior Court judge and Army general. He prefers the Republican Party.

His opponent is Battle Ground City Councilor Adrian Cortes, a Democrat and chair of the C-TRAN Board of Directors. Cortes is a special education teacher for the Camas School District.

The labor council weighed in on three races for the Vancouver Public Schools Board of Directors. Twelve candidates have filed to run for three seats.

Delegates endorsed **Caressa Milgrove** for Position 1, and **Tracie Barrows** for Position 5. Milgrove, a mother of two young boys in the district, has three opponents. Barrows, a school psychologist at Evergreen Public Schools, also has three oppo-

nents. The labor council issued a dual endorsement for **Lisa Messer** and **Lindsey Luis** running for Position 4. Messer is a teacher in Evergreen Public Schools and has children in the Vancouver district. Luis, 18, graduated this year from Fort Vancouver High School Center for International Studies. There are two other candidates seeking the open Position 4 seat.

At Evergreen Public Schools, the labor council endorsed **Bethany Rivard** for Position 2 on the School Board, and **Rachel Rogers** for Position 4. Rogers, a Clark County senior deputy prosecuting attorney, was appointed to the post in February to fill a vacancy. Rivard, an English teacher at Fort Vancouver High School, is running against an incumbent.

The Southwest Washington Labor Council made two early endorsements for the November General Election. They are backing the re-election of Ty Stober to the Vancouver City Council, and they support Jack Burkman running for Vancouver Port Commissioner, Position 3.

If you are a Clark County voter and have not received a ballot for the August primary, contact the Elections Office at 564-397-2345. Replacement ballots may also be requested in person at the Elections Office, 1408 Franklin St., Vancouver. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Email requests should be sent to elections@clark.wa.gov.

After August 2, use a drop box to ensure your ballot is received on time.

Oregon AFL-CIO files ballot initiative to reduce self-checkout at grocery stores

The Oregon AFL-CIO filed a ballot initiative July 18 to regulate the number of self-checkout stations in Oregon's grocery stores.

"The goal of our initiative is to protect grocery workers and our communities," said Tom Chamberlain, president of the state labor federation and the initiative's chief petitioner.

Chamberlain said self-checkout machines are part of a strategic corporate attempt to reduce costs and eliminate jobs.

"These machines turn customers into unpaid workers and allow stores to reduce the number of full-time employees," he said.

Chamberlain said the push towards expanded automation at grocery stores places older customers and people with disabilities at a disadvantage when they are expected to use machines to purchase groceries.

It also "significantly impacts workers of color negatively, who are disproportionately over-represented as cashiers in

retail businesses," he said.

The Grocery Store Service and Community Protection Act seeks to limit the number of self-service checkout stations operating to two per store at any one time. The act gives the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industry enforcement authority.

The State of Oregon requires a minimum of 1,000 signatures of registered voters to

accompany an initiative petition application. The Oregon AFL-CIO is currently gathering those signatures. Once certified with an initiative number and title, the AFL-CIO must collect 122,020 signatures of registered voters by July 2, 2020 in order to be placed on the ballot in November 2020.

If passed, the act would go into effect starting Jan. 1, 2021.

...Vigor Industrial sold to private equity firms

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men's Local 516; another 55 are represented by IBEW Local 48. Local 516 is currently in negotiations for a contract that expires Aug. 31. IBEW Local 48's contract expires Dec. 31, 2020.

"Negotiations are going well. My belief is we will have a contract in place before the Carlyle deal closes," said Local 516 Business Manager Phil Casciato.

Casciato told the Labor Press his union also has a memorandum of understanding with Vigor to represent workers who

will be doing aluminum fabrication work at a new facility in Vancouver, Washington. Vigor landed a 10-year, \$1 billion contract with the U.S. Army to build a new class of landing craft. Reportedly, 300 jobs will be created once the facility is up and running.

Just hours before the announcement of Vigor's sale went public on July 25, owner Frank Foti sent an email to all employees saying, "Operationally, you won't see any change. Our current frontline operating leaders will remain in place."

In a press release, Foti said "this evolution takes us where we want to go, growing sustainable jobs into the future."

Foti said he will continue as CEO until a new CEO is found. He will retain a stake in the combined company and also serve on its board.

"Together, Vigor and MHI are well positioned with their unique, national assets to grow in the highly attractive ship repair and fabrication markets," noted Derek Whang, principal at The Carlyle Group.

MHI Holdings LLC consists

of MHI Ship Repair and Services, Seaward Marine Services, and Accurate Marine Environmental. It was not known at press time whether they operate union.

The 10 labor organizations affiliated with the Portland Metal Trades Council are Plumbers and Fitters Local 290, Operating Engineers Local 701, Boilermakers Local 104, IBEW Local 48, Laborers Local 737, Painters District Council 5, Sheet Metal Workers Local 16, Teamsters Local 162, Machinists District Lodge W24, and Insulators Local 36.