

# NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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PORTLAND, OREGON

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## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

# UFCW members approve grocery contract

By Don McIntosh

At sites around Oregon and Southwest Washington Oct. 4-11, members of UFCW Local 555 voted to approve more than 90 individual collective bargaining agreements. Negotiated all together, they cover about 20,000 workers at the big grocery employers in Oregon and Southwest Washington, including Fred Meyer, Safeway, Albertsons, and QFC.

The agreements were reached Sept. 28 after a six-day boycott of Fred Meyer that garnered significant local publicity and appeared to have an immediate and significant impact on Fred Meyer sales. Now that the agreement has been reached and ratified,

Local 555 is calling on shoppers who formerly shopped at Fred Meyer to return.

The agreements run three years. For the first time, they guarantee at least 20 hours a week for workers who want the hours and are available to work them. That's huge for some who've struggled to get more than 20 hours, which is the threshold where health and retirement benefits kick in. And because it removes employers' economic incentive to limit work hours, the guarantee could result in workers getting fuller schedules generally.

The agreements also contain substantial wage increases. Most journey-level workers will get

hourly raises of 55 cents each year. [About half the workforce is journey-level, having worked the equivalent of four years at full time.] And the mostly-female workers whose jobs are paid at the "Schedule B" wage scale will get hourly raises of 90 cents each year. During its campaign for a fair contract, Local 555 called on employers to address a gender pay disparity that stems from a tendency to place female applicants into the lower-paid and historically female-dominated deli and bakery departments that make up Schedule B. The new pay raises for Schedule B will move them one-third of the way

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# Union contract avoidance: Multnomah County says seniority rights don't apply

Nonunion non-profit CareOregon is taking over work done by unionized County employees.

By Don McIntosh

On Oct. 4, Multnomah County Commissioners heard a heartfelt plea from a delegation of County health department workers: Honor the County's contract with their union, AFSCME Local 88.

Several dozen workers who administer Medicaid-funded mental health benefits won't be Multnomah County employees as of Jan. 1, because the work they do is being transferred to non-profit CareOregon.

Article 21 in the union contract says workers with the most seniority are supposed to be the last to be laid off. Faced with layoff, senior workers even have the right to "bump" (replace) less senior workers in the same job classification anywhere in the County.

But County legal and human resources staff — citing a state law that they say supersedes the union contract — are saying they don't have to follow that



Facing the transfer of their work to a non-profit in January, Local 88 members Raymond de Silva, Charmaine Kinney, Kristine Britton Dills, and Sherry Yan appealed directly to the County Commission Oct. 4 to honor the union contract seniority provisions.

union contract seniority rule because the workers aren't losing their jobs, just having their jobs transferred to CareOregon.

For workers like those who addressed County commissioners Oct. 4, there are important differences between public and private sector work. At CareOregon, they expect to have lower pay and less generous health benefits. They'd also be leaving the Public Employee Retirement

System, and would lose their union and the job security and workplace rights it protects.

"Many of us have chosen a life in public service," said Sherry Yan, one of four county workers to testify during the public comment period. "Our primary objective as public employees has been ensuring that the needs of our community are

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## A UNION GUIDE TO WASHINGTON'S 2019 GENERAL ELECTION

Ballots will be mailed Oct. 18 and should arrive by Oct. 24. For your Washington ballot to count, it must be postmarked by Tuesday, Nov. 5!

### BALLOT MEASURES

#### Initiative 976

**OPPOSE** Washington's roads are among the most congested in the nation, and many bridges, tunnels and overpasses are overdue for repair. I-976, sponsored by union foe Tim Eyman, would slash vehicle license fees and taxes and thereby cut millions from local road and transit budgets, including an SR 14 widening project and potential I-5 bridge replacement. Washington State Labor Council, Washington Building Trades Council, Laborers District Council, SW Washington Central Labor Council [no976.org](http://no976.org)

#### Initiative 1000/ Referendum 88

**SUPPORT** In 1998, voters passed Tim Eyman's Initiative 200, making Washington one of only two states in the nation to explicitly ban affirmative action. This year lawmakers passed a law overturning that, allowing the state to remedy past discrimination in public education, employment, and contracting by implementing affirmative action, though without quotas or preferential treatment. Washington State Labor Council, Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters, SEIU 1199NW, Teamsters Joint Council 28, UFCW 21, Washington Education Association [approve88.org](http://approve88.org)

### CANDIDATES

#### Clark County Council District 4

**Gary Medvigy**, a Republican incumbent who was appointed to a vacant seat, is a retired California judge and Army major general. He's being challenged by Democrat **Adrian Cortes**, a special education teacher for Camas School District, chair of the C-TRAN Board and a member of the Battle Ground City Council. Medvigy is endorsed by SW Washington CLC. Cortes is endorsed by ATU Local 757.

#### Evergreen School Board Position 2

**Bethany Rivard**, a high school theater and literature teacher in the Vancouver School District, is running against incumbent Rob Perkins, who was on the board when the district withheld state funds for teacher raises, which led to a 13-day strike last

year. Rivard is a former labor council delegate and was named Union Member of the Year by the Labor Roundtable of SW Washington. Evergreen Education Association, IBEW 48, SW Washington CLC, Laborers 335, Fire Fighters 452

#### Evergreen School Board Position 4

**Rachael Rogers**, Clark County senior deputy prosecutor, was appointed to the board in February. SW Washington CLC

#### Vancouver Port Commission

**Jack Burkman** is a longtime former Vancouver City Council member. SW Washington CLC, IBEW 48 [burkmanforport.com](http://burkmanforport.com)

#### Vancouver City Council Position 2

**Erik Paulsen**, a banker, is the incumbent. SW Washington CLC, Fire Fighters 452 [ep4cc.com](http://ep4cc.com)

#### Vancouver City Council Position 4

**Bart Hansen**, the incumbent, was first elected in 2010 and serves as Mayor Pro Tem. He is unopposed. SW Washington CLC, ATU 757, Fire Fighters 452

#### Vancouver City Council Position 5

**Ty Stober**, the incumbent, is an advocate for union rights, apprenticeship, and affordable housing. SW Washington CLC, Fire Fighters 452, Vancouver Education Association, UFCW 555, ATU 757, Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters, Laborers 335 [votety.com](http://votety.com)

#### Vancouver City Council Position 6

**Sarah Fox** is a city planner. SW Washington CLC

#### Vancouver School Board Position 4

**Lisa Messer** is a high school science teacher and proud teachers union member. SW Washington CLC, Vancouver Education Association, IBEW 48, Laborers 335 [lisaforvancouver.com](http://lisaforvancouver.com)

#### Vancouver School Board Position 5

**Tracie Barrows** is a school psychologist and union member. SW Washington CLC, Vancouver Education Association, IBEW 48, Fire Fighters 452, Laborers 335.