



Who's on our side?

By Graham Trainor Oregon AFL-CIO President

A year of impactful change

As I look back at 2019, I find myself filled with a lot of pride and excitement for the future of our workers' movement. For too long, working people have been cheated out of a fair share of economic growth, and 2019 was no different. The three richest people in the United States, all men, now own as much wealth as the bottom half of the U.S. population, or 160 million people. The organized labor movement has always been the greatest check and balance to ruthless, relentless greed. That means when we see depressing statistics about the rigged economy and the challenges facing workers, we analyze them with a sense of responsibility, an understanding that we don't have to accept the status quo, and that the economy is really just a set of rules that can be changed.

Reflecting on our accomplishments over the past year, the Oregon Union Movement has, yet again, helped lead a lot of impactful change for workers.

After Oregon Women Labor Leaders (OWLL) led an inspiring conversation about gender justice at the 2017 Oregon AFL-CIO Convention, followed by witnessing brave women come forward to share their stories of sexual harassment and discrimination on the job as the #MeToo and Times Up movements heated up, Oregon's unions saw an opportunity to make our workplaces safer for all workers. The Oregon AFL-CIO went to work crafting and then passing the groundbreaking Oregon Workplace Fairness Act, Senate Bill 726. This critical piece of legislation will provide workers new game-changing protections if they face sexual harassment or discrimination of any type at work. The status quo wasn't working, and we did something about it.

After more than a decade of debate, we passed the most progressive paid family and medical leave insurance program in the country. This program will ensure that all Oregonians

can give or get the care they need without risking their ability to pay the bills.

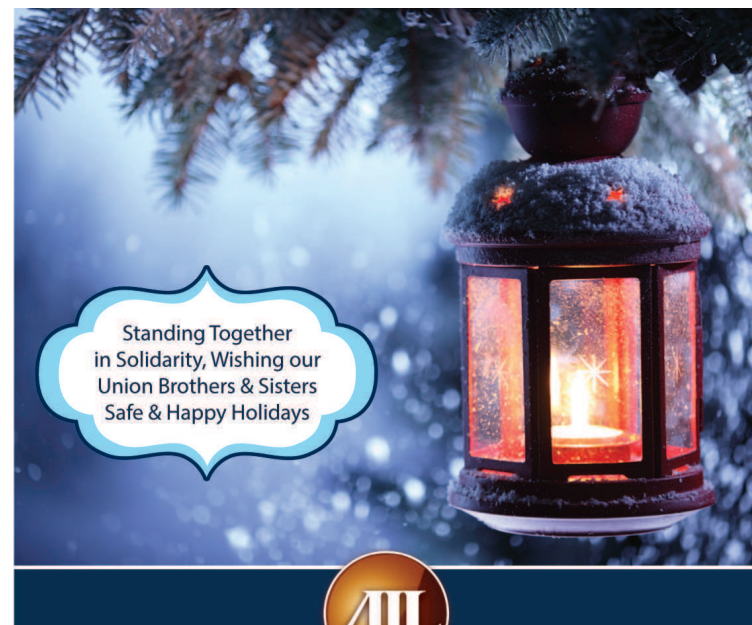
On the shop floor, Oregon workers successfully pushed against the status quo all year long as well. From retail workers fighting for fairness and exposing the gender pay gap in their industry to graduate employees pushing back against the corporate agenda on our public university campuses to healthcare workers fighting for patient safety, tens of thousands stood strong and won strong contracts in 2019.

And with union favorability at a 50-year high, more and more workers are forming unions as a way to push back against their status quo. Construction workers, behavioral healthcare workers, fast food and restaurant workers, graduate researchers, and hospital workers have all joined unions in 2019 and more reach out hoping to join a union every single day.

While working people in Oregon made great strides in rewriting the rules of the economy in 2019, I'm also mindful of several serious disappointments and ongoing challenges. Core pro-worker policies didn't advance in the Oregon Legislature despite pro-worker supermajorities in both chambers, PERS benefits were cut after promises were made to defend the retirement security of our hard-working public employees, and workers continue to face union-busting tactics from their employer when they organize.

With a clear perspective on the challenges ahead and confidence in the strength of our Movement, we will continue to push for the more fair and just economy that workers deserve in 2020. Because there is nothing that can stop an organized, determined, and united group of workers.

The Oregon AFL-CIO is a 138,000-member-strong federation of labor unions.



Standing Together
in Solidarity, Wishing our
Union Brothers & Sisters
Safe & Happy Holidays



www.aillife.com
Protecting Working Families
100% Union Label Company

AMERICAN INCOME LIFE
insurance company

Lori Vaughn
Public Relations
503.849.5757

Season's Greetings
Warm Wishes for a
Wonderful Holiday Season
and a very Happy New Year
from
**Plasterers Local 82 &
Plasterers Joint Apprenticeship**
Kent Sickles: Business Manager
12812 NE Marx St. Portland, OR 503-232-3257

...Grand Central Baking workers join union

From Page 1

union committee explained some of why workers want a union. Wages of \$16.43 to \$21.42 an hour are far lower than union-represented bakers at Franz and Bimbo/Oroweat, who make over \$25 an hour. Opportunities for advancement and raises are limited. Complaints of sexual harassment have been poorly handled by management. And workers have no say over changes that affect them. Safety is also a big concern, said the Grand Central worker, who asked not to be named. Workers use buckets to scoop a pre-fer-

ment called poolish out of 500-pound mixing bowls, and that can lead to injuries.

The union campaign launched at the busiest time of the year for the company, and yet for four days, Grand Central Baking managers pulled workers off the floor half a crew at a time for special meetings to try to talk them out of unionizing.

"If you become this union, we are not able to deal with you directly regarding your wages, hours, employment," CEO Claire Randall said at a Dec. 6 employee meeting, according to a word-for-word transcript of the meeting produced by one of

the workers present.

Note to Randall: That's kind of the point of unionizing, isn't it? Workers feel that dealing one-on-one with managers hasn't produced satisfactory results, so now they'll try to deal with management collectively. As the slogan workers picked for their campaign lays it out: "United we bargain, divided we beg."

SAID THE CEO TO WORKERS ...

It's rare to have so complete a record of what's said in an anti-union meeting. For more of what Grand Central's CEO told workers, visit nwlaborpress.org/gcb



From the Officers and Staff of

ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS LOCAL 23

12067 NE Glenn Widing Drive, Suite 108
Portland, Oregon
503-252-5852
IUEC23.org