

2019 in review

As chronicled in the Northwest Labor Press, here are some of the year's most important developments for labor and working people.

Worker action ends shutdown

When 2019 began, 800,000 federal workers were either furloughed or working without pay—because President Donald Trump was refusing to sign any spending bills unless Congress included funding for a Mexican border wall. After some air traffic controllers stopped showing up, delaying flights throughout the East Coast, Trump backed down and signed, ending the shutdown Jan. 28.

Teacher strikes reach Oregon

The strike wave that started in West Virginia in 2018 continued in 2019 with a major strike in LA, and a May 8 statewide walkout by 20,000 Oregon teachers over school funding. Oregon lawmakers responded, passing \$1 billion a year in taxes on the biggest corporations to improve K-12 funding.

Lawmakers deliver

Oregon lawmakers passed legislation ending “no-cause” eviction, capping Oregon rent increases at 7% plus inflation, and setting up a paid family and medical leave program starting 2023.

TOP ORGANIZING WINS

- OHSU** 830 doctors in training and 250 graduate researchers (OFNHP)
- Providence Portland** 838 hospital support workers (SEIU)
- Veterans Care Center in Lebanon** 213 caregivers (Steelworkers)
- Unity Center for Behavioral Health** 202 RNs (ONA)
- St. Charles Hospital in Bend** 163 medical techs (OFNHP)

But they also greatly angered public sector union members with a cut of up to 2.5% in public employee compensation, with those funds redirected to shore up public pension finances.

Washington lawmakers meanwhile passed progressive tax reform, a first-in-the-nation long-term-care social insurance program, and a mandate to create good union jobs transitioning to 100% clean energy by 2045.

Landmark grocery contract

After campaigning for gender pay equity at Fred Meyer, UFCW won wage increases of up to \$2.70 an hour, plus a guarantee of 20 hours a week with benefits for 20,000 grocery workers.



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