

UNIONIZATION → NOV-DEC 2019

The following are Oregon and Southwest Washington workplaces where workers have decided whether to be represented by a union. The thumbs-up symbol means workers will be union-represented. Thumbs-down means they'll be on their own. The information comes from the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

Union election results

Employer (Location) Union	Yes-No	
Swire Coca-Cola (Wilsonville) Teamsters Local 162 ▪ 8 checkers at a Coca-Cola distribution facility	3-5	👎
St. Charles Medical Center (Bend) ONA ▪ 21 registered nurses in infusion and medical oncology	20-0	👍
Saint Alphonsus Medical Center (Baker City) ONA ▪ 20 medical techs	9-5	👍
Grand Central Bakery (Portland) Bakers Local 114 ▪ 44 production bakers and dishwashers at Northwest Portland wholesale bakery	29-9	👍
Willamette Valley Medical Center (McMinnville) ONA ▪ 177 registered nurses	109-13	👍
Boise Cascade (Medford, White City) Pacific Northwest Carpenters ▪ 375 workers at Medford plywood and White City laminated veneer lumber plants	279-61	👎

Unionization by majority signup

Employer (Location) Union
City of Salem (Salem) Salem Police Employees Union ▪ 24 police sergeants
City of Hillsboro (Hillsboro) Hillsboro Police Officers Association ▪ 22 police sergeants and police records supervisors
Salem Area Mass Transit District (Salem) ATU Local 757 ▪ 10 operation supervisors

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Station owner trying to bust union at KOIN-TV

About 40 union-represented workers at KOIN 6-TV have been working without raises since their last union contract expired September 2017. On Jan. 8, they learned that station owner Nexstar Media Group — the largest owner of television stations in the United States — no longer recognizes their union.

According to workers, KOIN station manager Pat Nevin said in meetings that Nexstar will no longer provide information to The National Association of Broadcast Employees & Technicians (NABET) Local 51 or meet and negotiate with the union, and that workers don't need to pay union dues any more, because the union no longer has the support of a majority of workers. Local 51 is an affiliate of Communications Workers of America (CWA).

That came as news to NABET-CWA staff representative Carrie Biggs-Adams. Biggs-Adams says the two sides last

met to negotiate in December, and are scheduled to meet again Jan. 23-24 and Feb. 11-12. The union has filed several charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in the course of bargaining, accusing the company of refusing to bargain in good faith, and refusing to provide information necessary for the union to bargain. The NLRB found merit to at least some of the allegations, and a hearing before a federal judge is set for March 3.

"It really is an anti-union escalation of the highest order," Biggs-Adams told the *Labor Press*.

At KOIN, a Portland CBS affiliate, NABET represents news photographers, engineers, editors, assignment desk editors, directors, web producers, and commercial production workers.

Texas-based Nexstar owns 170 TV stations and is capable of reaching 69% of Americans. It bought KOIN in 2017.



Who's on our side?

By Graham Trainor Oregon AFL-CIO President

We need labor law reform

We hear a constant drumbeat of media coverage about the rosy economic picture, GDP records being broken, and low unemployment rates. Meanwhile, we have refreshingly seen an uptick in coverage about economic inequality and the wealth divide, challenges facing the working class, the homelessness crisis, and the face of poverty in America. But we rarely hear about the interconnectedness of today's working class struggle and our nation's eroded, undermined, and outdated labor laws.

According to a recent study by the Economic Policy Institute, between 1978 and 2018, CEO compensation rose 940% compared to a 12% rise in pay for the average worker. We in the Labor Movement know that the only real check to ruthless, relentless greed in our economy is strong, thriving unions. But let's look at the reality for workers today.

Imagine this scenario: You and a group of coworkers have made it through the daunting task of forming your first union. You commence bargaining with your employer, who is legally required to do so, and you're met by a brick wall. Your employer refuses to bargain in good faith, drags on the process for over a year, and forces your coworkers to lose confidence in the process and their ability to bargain a fair contract. Charges are filed with the NLRB, but the regional NLRB office is so understaffed with a backlog of cases that further delays ensue. As you and your coworkers have grown frustrated by union-busting tactics, several have been cultivated by managers to oppose the union. They file a decertification petition aiming to formally remove the union that was just voted in by a majority of workers and are successful.

Or imagine this: A group of workers is organizing their union when their employer flies in an out-of-state "union avoidance consultant." This "consultant" schedules a special all-employee meeting aimed at deterring the organizing effort. This meeting is followed up by mandatory one-on-one meetings with each employee where fear and intimidation tactics are used to undermine the workers ability to connect with enough of their coworkers to succeed with their campaign.

These types of scenarios might seem outlandish or far-fetched, because these types of tactics used by employers are seemingly illegal. Unfortunately, these and countless other ruthless tactics are used by the Corporate Agenda in Oregon and across the country everyday to silence the voice of working people. The "union avoidance" legal industry has grown to a multi-billion dollar industry, and it's had a string of successes. In fact, every single change to the 1935 Wagner Act, also known as the National Labor Relations Act, since it was passed has been an anti-worker change. Workers need a rewrite of our labor laws, and we need them fast.

For the first time in a decade, a comprehensive labor law reform bill is poised to move forward in the U.S. House of Representatives. The PRO (Protecting the Right to Organize) Act, H.R. 2474, has passed out of Committee, but a vote on the floor of the U.S. House has been delayed for several months. After a group of over 70 Democratic members of the U.S. House, including our own Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici, wrote a recent letter to Speaker Pelosi urging a swift vote on this critical bill, it appears that the vote could happen before President's Day. While this is an exciting step to ensure workers have an unfettered opportunity to join unions if they choose, it's one of many steps needed to fix our broken economy.

While nearly every single Democratic member of Oregon's Congressional delegation has signed onto the PRO Act as a co-sponsor, one disappointment has been Congressman Kurt Schrader who said he will not vote for the bill in its current form. Workers expect more from their elected leaders, they are looking for champions.

If lawmakers want to be a champion for workers, if they want to get real about fixing economic inequality, they MUST prioritize making it easier for more workers to join unions immediately. Workers have been told to wait for change for far too long.

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