

...A union for bank workers

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mates that out of more than 4.2 million U.S. workers in finance, just 55,000 are union members. And according to CWA, no private bank employees have successfully formed a new union in over 40 years.

Globally, over 3 million bank workers have union representation, and America's rock-bottom union rate has spurred banking unions in other countries to pledge help for American workers who want a union. In 2012,

CWA was approached by banking unions in Brazil, Argentina, and Spain — concerned that the massive and largely nonunion U.S. banking sector was bringing down standards in other countries. In the United States, teller jobs have become high-turnover positions with low wages and poor conditions, but in other countries, front-line banking jobs are seen as middle class careers.

In Brazil, unions represent 39.6% of banking workers, and since 1993 a national collective

bargaining agreement has guaranteed workers at all banks in the country the same wages, hours, and economic and social rights. Together with the global union federation UNI, the banking unions in Brazil and other countries formed an alliance with CWA called the Committee for Better Banking. Mahoney said the committee has support among workers at all the major U.S. banks, but Beneficial is the first bank to go union since the campaign launched.

Christina McAlvey, a business banking underwriter at the downtown Portland branch, told

the *Labor Press* she sees the union as a way to come together and work to improve conditions at the bank.

In Portland, 34 Beneficial Bank workers will become members of CWA Local 7901 at all five local branches: 1101 SW Washington St.; 2002 NE MLK Jr. Blvd.; 5636 NE Sandy Blvd.; 320 NW 10th Ave.; and 8040 N. Lombard St.

The bargaining unit will include bankers, consumer loan servicing representatives, loan processors, underwriters, file clerks and custodial staff.

...Safeway.com drivers union

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Behind the scenes, the company brought in two attorneys from the notorious anti-union law firm Fisher Phillips. In the stores, Alex Casillas of the union-busting firm Action Resources held at least six captive audience meetings in which he allegedly slandered and maligned the union. He even rode along with drivers in their trucks to try to talk them out of the union.

"Every employee in the unit spent an entire day with that asshole," Rispler said.

With 36 workers, a majority, having signed union authorization cards, the union went ahead and petitioned the NLRB to hold an election.

In early December, Safeway.com announced a raise of \$2 an hour to match the Seattle wages. As a transparent effort to mute union support during a campaign, that's illegal, but the Teamsters didn't want to get in

the way of the raise by challenging it.

"We just told them if they ever wanted to see another raise, they should sign a union card," Rispler says.

In the end, just six workers changed their mind about the Teamsters, and the union won by 62%.

"All credit goes to the organizing committee," Rispler said. "The entire group were warriors 100% of the campaign ... They stood up and were willing to take risks every step of the way."

In the wake of the election,

even those who voted no are hopeful to see what they can win in a first union contract.

The newly unionized drivers deliver from seven Safeway stores: 1100 NE Broadway St.; 2800 SE Hawthorne Blvd., and 13485 NW Cornell Rd. in Portland; 22000 Salamo Road in West Linn; 15570 SW Pacific Highway in King City; and 13023 NE Highway 99, in Vancouver. The 11 Vancouver drivers will be part of Teamsters Local 58, and the 42 at the other stores will be in Local 162.

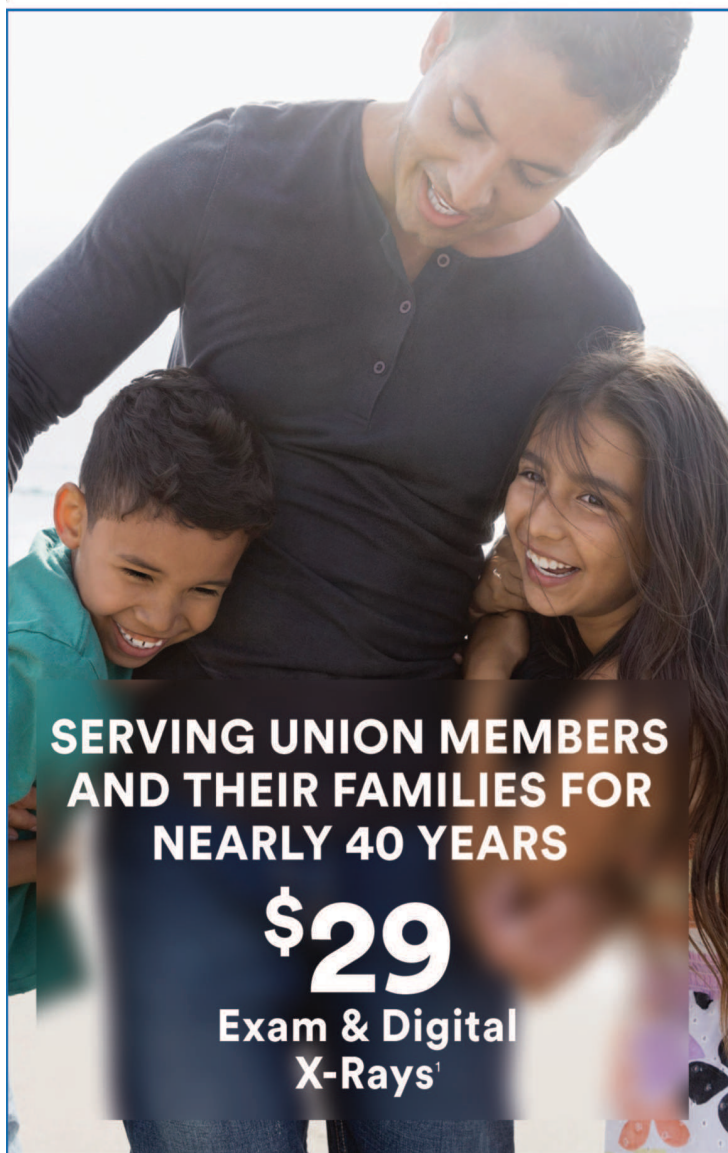
Next stop: The bargaining table.

Trump NLRB walks back the rights of franchise workers

Under the direction of Trump appointees, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) announced Feb. 25 a new rule that scales back the responsibility of companies like McDonald's for labor-law violations by their franchisees, such as firing workers for trying to unionize. The rule also applies to workers employed through contractors like staffing agencies or cleaning services. It says a company must exercise "substantial, direct and immediate" control over the most important elements of a worker's job, like discipline, hiring and firing, to be considered the worker's joint employer. It takes effect April 27.

National AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said the new rule will make it easier for companies to limit workers rights to a union by hiring intermediate companies to serve as a shield against employees.

"It is a step backward in modernizing our outdated labor laws," Trumka said.



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