

...Universal preschool

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AUPP), Portland Community College Federation of Faculty and Academic Professionals, and National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 82.

But legal challenges from the Portland Business Alliance delayed the start of the signature gathering effort for months. Amid a pandemic that made in-person signature gathering tricky, supporters weren't sure it was possible to make it on the ballot.

"To do this in five weeks in a pandemic, it's just incredible," said UP Now spokesperson Mary King, a retired economist and the former president of PSU-AAUP, the full-time faculty union at Portland State University. "I think there's a real hunger to do something big and positive that we can accomplish locally."

PAT, which represents 4,000 educators at Portland Public Schools, played a big role. Cohen, a Roosevelt High School health teacher and one of the chief petitioners, said classroom teachers know the value of preschool. When the initiative went before PAT's 100-strong representative assembly, endorsement was unanimous and enthusiastic. Oregon Education Association—PAT's parent organization—sent word about the campaign to every member in Multnomah County, and teachers ended up well-represented among the volunteers.

"This campaign showed how much passion people have about the subject," said Cohen, whose term as PAT president ended June 30. "We want to see it for every child. And we want to see the best skilled professionals in front of our students."

Funded by a progressive income tax on the top 5% of income taxpayers in the county, the measure would not only guarantee free preschool to every child, but would guarantee that preschool teachers get a living wage, and an unobstructed right to unionize if they choose to.

Right now, preschool is a heavy financial burden for parents, costing on average \$9,396 a year per child in Multnomah County, even while preschool teachers earn low pay with few benefits.

"Preschool is one of the most effective strategies we know for reducing inequality and poverty," King said. "And the most powerful impact is on the most disadvantaged communities. It dispro-

portionately benefits brown, Black and other kids of color. It improves their chances in school, but it also benefits them because it helps their parents work more hours, get more training, and it takes stress off parents."

Who could oppose such a plan? Well, possibly the Portland Business Alliance. Portland Business Alliance spokesperson Amy Lewin says the business group's board has taken no official position on the measure. But the group mounted two legal challenges that delayed signature gathering, and is threatening a third one. The day after supporters turned in signatures, PBA attorney Gregory Chaimov of Davis Wright Tremaine wrote to Assistant Multnomah County Attorney Catherine Thomas saying there will be a court challenge if the county approves the initiative for the ballot. The basis for the challenge appears to be that a grassroots coalition couldn't possibly have gotten that many signatures in that short a time.

"This is pure harassment," said King, the UP Now campaign spokesperson, about the threatened challenge.

Heading for the November ballot, the UP Now initiative faces one other big complication: Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson has been working since 2018 to craft a proposal for a more modest preschool program known as Preschool For All, which is also aimed at the November 2020 ballot. Whereas UP Now would start in high-poverty neighborhoods and expand to all three- and four-year-olds within seven years, Preschool For All would target students of color, low-income students, English language learners, and students with disabilities, starting with 500 spots to be placed by minority community nonprofit groups, and would aim to cover 80% of low-income kids within 10 years.

The UP Now proposal would raise an estimated \$260 million a year, about double the \$130 million a year that the Preschool For All proposal aims to raise. A spokesperson for the Preschool For All campaign said final language for the proposal will likely go to county commissioners in late July.

"My hope is we could get these two campaigns together," King says. "I hope they see our success at gathering signatures as great news, that they can think bigger."

Labor Day picnics canceled

Northwest Oregon Labor Council (NOLC) and Lane County Labor Chapter have announced that they will not host Labor Day picnics this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. NOLC hosts one of the largest Labor Day events west of the Mississippi at Oaks Park. But after conferring with Gov.

Kate Brown, NOLC's Executive Board voted to cancel the event. Brown wrote that there should be no large gatherings until there's a reliable treatment or vaccine, which is many, many months out.

It will be the first time since 1985 that NOLC hasn't sponsored a picnic on Labor Day.

For similar reasons, Lane County Labor Chapter also canceled its Labor Day picnic.

Southwest Washington Electricians PAC #48

HAS ENDORSED THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES
IN THE TUESDAY, AUGUST 4 WASHINGTON PRIMARY ELECTIONS

Washington State HOUSE

Tanisha HARRIS, District 17, Pos. 1
Donna SINCLAIR, District 18, Pos. 1
Brian BLAKE, District 19, Pos. 1
Clint BRYSON, District 19, Pos. 2
Monica STONIER, District 49, Pos. 1
Sharon WYLIE, District 49, Pos. 2

Washington State SENATE

Daniel SMITH, Dist. 17
Dean TAKKO, Dist. 19
Annette CLEVELAND, Dist. 49

CLARK COUNTY

County Council
Matt LITTLE, District 4

Statewide

Denny HECK, Lt. Governor
Gael TARLETON, Secretary of State
Mike PELLICCIOTTI, State Treasurer
Bob FERGUSON, Attorney General
Hilary FRANZ, Public Lands Commissioner
Chris REYKDAL, Supt of Public Instruction

U.S. Congress

Carolyn LONG, District 3

State Supreme Court

RAQUEL MONTOYA LEWIS, Position 3
CHARLES JOHNSON, Position 4
HELEN WHITENER, Position
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