

UNION ORGANIZING

Oregon legislative staffers unionize with IBEW 89

Workers at the Oregon State Legislature took the first step towards forming the first union of legislative staff in the country Dec. 8—turning in signed union authorization cards saying they want to be represented by International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 89.

The bargaining unit will consist of about 110 employees who work for both Democratic and Republican legislators. Oregon's 90 legislators—60 in the House and 30 in the Senate—generally have just one staff person year-round, but sometimes bring on additional staff when the Legislature is in session. They perform a variety of tasks, including constituent service, office managing and scheduling, outreach, and legislative support.

"Legislative staff are the glue keeping the Capitol together, and we love serving the people of Oregon on behalf of our legislators," said Senate staffer

Nathan Soltz in a statement released by the union. "Staff deserve to have a seat at the table when decisions are made about our workplace."

Once the Employee Relations Board (ERB) certifies the authorization cards, the union will be officially recognized, and will begin negotiating a collective bargaining agreement with the Legislative administration.

Staffers chose IBEW Local 89 because IBEW has a record of cooperative rather than contentious relationships with employers, and because Local 89 is nonpartisan and politically neutral, with neither a political action committee nor any agenda at the Legislature.

Headquartered in Mt. Vernon, Washington, the 900-member local represents telecommunications line workers in Oregon and Washington, and parts of Idaho, Montana, and California.



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