



## Who's on our side?

By Graham Trainor Oregon AFL-CIO President

### January 6, 2021: We must never forget

Our democracy suffered a serious attack on January 6, overshadowing the critical and hard-fought wins in Georgia in the elections of senators John Ossoff and Reverend Raphael Warnock the day before. Oregon's unions are proud to have engaged in the nationwide effort to win Georgia and support the incredible organizing on the ground. Both races were decided by slim margins, and volunteers in Oregon made thousands of calls to voters focused on delivering a pro-worker majority in the Senate.

But then on January 6, all eyes shifted back to our nation's capital. Hundreds of armed, violent extremists sought to disrupt the time-honored certification of the electoral college's votes in the 2020 presidential election, and by doing so, desecrated our democracy in a manner unseen since the American Civil War. This assault on our nation's capital—along

with the continued attempts at similar violence in our own state capitol building—has further divided our country and made it harder for elected leaders to do their jobs. Recovering from the attempted insurrection in Washington, DC, while the COVID-19 pandemic rages presents yet another grave challenge for our nation.

We cannot turn toward better days without taking a hard look at the past four years. President Donald Trump and his administration have spewed hatred, deceit, lies and baseless conspiracy theories. The fire of hatred that exploded on January 6 has been burning in our nation since its founding and colonialist inception but has been fueled to an inferno by the unhinged words and actions of the Trump Administration and many of his supporters.

We cannot ignore that the response from the police on January 6 was nothing like what peaceful Black

Lives Matter protesters experienced in Washington, DC, and in cities across the country over the past year, and throughout our nation's history.

We cannot ignore the lawmakers who encouraged the insurrection or those who participated in it. And we cannot ignore a president who has emboldened white supremacy and racism, unleashed hatred, and continued his assault on press freedom.

We must do better, and we can. The victories realized through grassroots organizing in Georgia, largely led by Black women, and a pro-worker, pro-democracy majority in the U.S. Senate present an incredible opportunity to rewrite our nation's antiquated labor laws by passing the PRO Act and rolling back the Trump Administration's attacks on immigrants, refugees, the LGBTQ+ community and more. Our successes in Oregon during the Labor 2020 campaign means we have lawmakers in office

ready to stand with us as we fight to center working families in our recovery from the pandemic. And our work in building strong, inclusive unions in every corner of our state gives our movement an opportunity to grow our ranks as working Oregonians are looking for solutions in a precarious, fissured economy.

Yet as we embark on what will be exciting, energizing, and critically important work, we cannot let January 6 stray from our minds. For too long the fires of hate have been stoked freely. The American labor movement has been a force for radical change throughout our history, and this next chapter can be no different: We must fight like hell for a fair and just economy at the same time we defend our democracy. There is power in a union. Unions bring us together to make real, lasting change. That matters now more than ever.

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



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