

This year as always, Oregon labor unions asked lawmakers to make life better for working people in big and small ways. In the 2021 session that ended June 26, there was progress to report—especially for the building trades. Some highlights:

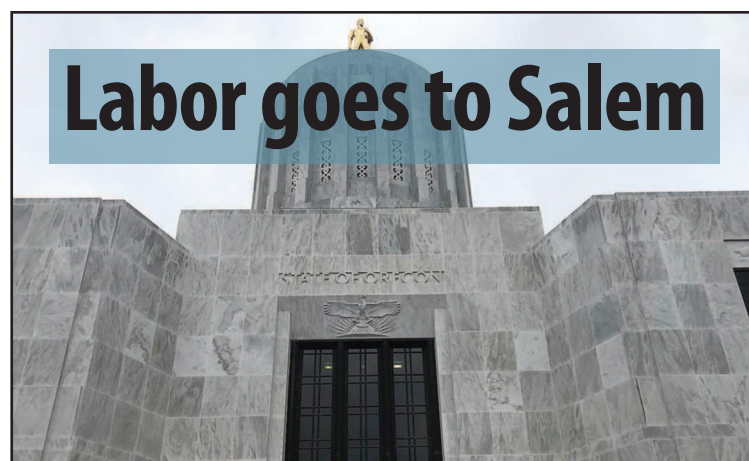
### GOOD BILLS THAT PASSED

**Health care for full time part time faculty.** AFT-Oregon never gave up. For 12 years, the union went to Salem asking lawmakers to offer faculty full-time health benefits if their combined hours at several public community colleges and universities add up to full time. This year it finally passed. The PERS retirement system already gathers the hours-worked data. Now it will share its list with the Oregon Employee Benefit Board, and Oregon's campus-juggling faculty will get health insurance benefits.

**Budget bump for BOLI.** Oregon labor secretary Val Hoyle asked for 25 more positions. The legislature gave her 20. That brings the bureau to 127.5 staff to enforce wage and hour, prevailing wage, and civil rights laws and oversee apprenticeship programs. It's still not enough, but Hoyle says it's the biggest staff increase in 50 years.

### Sick leave for hiring hall employees

When Oregon's paid sick leave law was passed in 2015, union construction workers were exempted because of the complexities



of providing paid leave through union trusts to workers who have multiple employers. Now, under SB 588, employers that are signatory to multiemployer collective bargaining agreements are considered to have met Oregon's requirements to provide sick leave if they have a substantially equivalent sick or paid time off policy.

**Safe staffing for nursing homes** SB 714 establishes minimum safe staffing ratios for nursing homes, based on patient needs.

**The prevailing wage is the union wage** Under Oregon's so-called "little Davis-Bacon" law, workers on public construction projects must be paid the prevailing wage and benefits. Up to now, Oregon has determined the prevailing wage via a complicated and time-consuming annual employer survey that sometimes gets it wrong. Now, thanks to SB 493, the state will set the prevailing wage the same way Washington does: For each craft

specialty it's simply the union-negotiated wage for that area.

**Right to bargain over class size (sometimes)** Teachers and parents both want smaller class sizes. The right to bargain over class sizes is a longtime goal of teachers unions. Oregon law up to now has said school districts don't have to negotiate that. A bill to make it a mandatory subject of bargaining passed the Senate, but it was modified at the behest of House Speaker Tina Kotek: Now they must negotiate class size only at schools that serve a lot of low-income students.

**Noncompetes** SB 169 tightens restrictions on noncompetition agreements: They're void and unenforceable for workers making under \$100,533, and the restrictions can't last more than 12 months after an employee leaves.

**Yes, CBAs are legal** SB 420 makes it clear: Local governments and agencies are allowed

to use community benefits agreements, setting standards for using union labor and employing women and minority workers and apprentices.

### A carbon-free electric grid . . . by 2040

One of the nation's most ambitious greenhouse gas emission plans, HB 2021 requires electric utilities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with the electricity they sell to Oregon consumers—to 80% below baseline levels by 2030, 90% by 2035 and 100% by 2040. The bill bans expansion or new construction of power plants that burn natural gas, but its requirements will also stimulate enormous expansion of renewables, and for the first time it assures that the workers who build those renewables will be well-compensated. Any new energy project 10 megawatts or larger will have to pay construction workers the state prevailing wage and benefits. The bill was supported by PGE and Pacific Power, but no Republicans voted for it. No unions supported the bill, but none opposed it either, and several union officials testified in favor of its including strong labor standards. Because of its labor standards, the law is likely to increase the chance of local union workers doing the work. That's because, among other things, it sets standards for using state-registered apprentices. It also sets goals for hiring and recruiting veterans, women, and people of color.

### BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME

**Overtime for farmworkers** HB2358 would have required employers to pay agri-

cultural workers overtime for hours worked in excess of 40 in a workweek. It died in the House without ever going to the floor.

**Right to strike for transit workers** SB 690, sponsored by legislators Chris Gorsek and Lew Frederick, would have restored the right to strike to public transit workers. But it never even got a committee hearing.

**Let workers sue when employers break labor laws** HB 2205, dubbed the Just Enforcement Act, would have given wronged workers the right to sue, whereas currently they must rely on Oregon's understaffed Bureau of Labor and Industries to prosecute cases of labor law violations. But Alaska Airlines and a slew of business groups said it was bad, and it never made it out of committee.

**Bonus check for essential workers** SEIU Locals 503 and 49, AFSCME, and UFCW 555 lined up behind a proposal to use one-time federal funds to issue \$1,000-\$2,000 checks to qualifying essential workers who masked up, did their jobs, and kept Oregon working through a pandemic. Lawmakers passed.

### WE CAN DREAM, CAN'T WE?

**\$17 minimum wage** At least a few lawmakers were prepared to think big. HB 3351, sponsored by Winsvey Campos, Maxine Dexter, Dacia Grayber, Khan Pham, and Deb Patterson, would have raised the minimum wage to \$17 across the entire state on July 1, 2022 — getting rid of the 3 separate wage zones that are due to leave Eastern Oregon workers \$2.25 behind those in the Portland area. It didn't get a hearing



## Hot August Clay Shoot

Event that gives to Local Charities



## MID-VALLEY CLAYS & SHOOTING SCHOOL

6181 Concomly Rd. Gervais, OR 97026

Light breakfast, coffee, and lunch will be provided

It's hard to believe it has been 6 years since we started this event. Looking back at the numbers, **we have given over \$40,000 to our 2 charities!!!!!!**

We have been able to make such a big difference in our Labor community here in Southwest Washington and Oregon with these 2 local charities.

We would really like to take this event to the next level and we are hoping that you can help us with that. You can help in so many ways and we have listed 3 of them below. Please consider doing something for this event to help us make a bigger difference in 2021!

### Participate!

Come as an individual or sponsor a team! Members love to come to this event! Give the spots away at your next membership meeting! Whether you are a beginner or a true marksman, all are welcome! And it is therapeutic!!! Rank-and-File Union Members, Family and Friends;

**EARLY BIRD SPECIAL Register as an individual shooter for only \$75!** You must register before JUNE 30 to receive the discount (regularly \$150)

### Sponsor!

If you choose to be a sponsor you will be identified at the event on signs and recognized throughout our luncheon and raffle. We will also include recognition on our social media pages and in the Northwest Labor Press.

### Raffle Prizes/Contributions!

We gladly accept raffle prizes from your organization or, if you prefer, you can send us a contribution and we will go get prizes for the event on your behalf. Your local's name will be prominently displayed on all donated items, and cash contributions will be announced throughout the event and listed on our contributor's board. **For more information** or to register, **contact Kristy A. Blake**, Tournament Director Hot August Clay Shoot, 360-589-0198 [kristy@sunrisedental.com](mailto:kristy@sunrisedental.com)