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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR HONORS UNION LEADERS ED BARNES AND ROY JENNINGS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE VANCOUVER, Wash. — The Labor

Roundtable of Southwest Washington held its annual awards banquet Sept. 24 after a one-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic. At the scaled-down event held at the Vancouver Hilton Hotel, the Roundtable honored IBEW Local 48 member Ed Barnes (pictured above center) and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757 member Roy Jennings (left) for their public service and dedication to the labor movement. Washington Lt. Gov. Denny Heck (right) was the keynote speaker and presented plaques to both men. Barnes, who in 1985 helped found the Labor Roundtable, which is an independent organization not affiliated with the AFL-CIO, received a Lifetime Achievement award and Jennings, a former secretary-treasurer of the Labor Roundtable, took home a Leader of the Decade award. Through a resolution, Barnes was named by the Labor Roundtable as "chairman emeritus for life." No other awards were presented this year. -MG

WORKERS' RIGHTS

The return of Joy Silk

The NLRB is about to get tough with employer unionbusting

Jennifer Abruzzo took office in July as President Biden's appointee to lead the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and immediately got to work strengthening agency methods for protecting workers' union rights. As the NLRB's general counsel, Abruzzo directs all the agency's agents and attorneys. And on Sept. 24, she announced via Twitter that she's considering a policy change that could have a major impact stopping employers from crushing union drives.

Federal law says it's official U.S. policy to encourage collective bargaining. But when they're told that a majority of workers have signed union cards, employers routinely refuse to recognize the union, and instead use the time leading up to an NLRB-held union election to whittle down support for the union among employees. Employers often violate the law dur-

ing those campaigns, spying on, interrogating and firing union supporters.

What Abruzzo proposes to do about that is restore something called the *Joy Silk* doctrine, returning to the way the NLRB operated from 1949 to 1970. The doctrine takes its name from a 1949 legal case involving Joy Silk Mills of South Carolina. Basically the doctrine says that if the reason an employer insists on an election isn't because it has a good faith doubt about majority support but instead because it wants more time to oppose the union, that violates the law. And the remedy is that the NLRB can order the employer to recognize and bargain with the union.

If the NLRB ends up restoring *Joy Silk*, it's likely to be a big deterrent to the employer lawlessness that's so common today when it comes to union campaigns.

-DM



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