

UNION DEMOCRACY

NW Carpenters placed in trusteeship

The Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters has been placed under trusteeship by its national organization, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters. Evelyn Shapiro, the regional council's top elected officer since 2018, has either resigned or been removed.

For a union to be placed in trusteeship means a national president suspends local elected leaders and appoints one or more trustees to temporarily take charge of a union's affairs. Under federal law, trusteeships are meant to restore democratic procedures or correct corruption or financial malpractice.

In this case, the allegation is vote rigging in a ratification vote over a new Seattle-area contract with Associated General Contractors. The regional council announced Oct. 11 that members had voted 54% to ratify a new three-year contract that raises wages \$2.26 a year. Members had voted down four previous tentative agreements, and the announcement brought a three-week strike to a close.

On Oct. 25, 19 members of the regional council's executive committee signed a resolution saying they welcome and consent to the trusteeship, and pledge their cooperation. The resolution—posted on the regional council's Facebook page the same day—said an independent investigation is needed into election vote rigging that Regional Council staff uncovered. "We need independent supervision and oversight to promptly take control, lock down and preserve the electronic voting system to prevent tampering," the statement said.

The regional council is under trusteeship, but not its affiliated locals. Headquartered in Kent, Washington, the regional council represents over 28,000 carpenters, millwrights and pile drivers in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Alaska. It's the largest of the construction trades unions in the region, but it's not affiliated with the AFL-CIO or its building trades department.

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Daimler

From Page 1

For Machinist members, Daimler will continue to contribute 7% of payroll to a 401(k), and will triple the amount it's willing to match additional worker contributions—to 3% of payroll. [Daimler withdrew from an underfunded multi-employer pension in 2017.]

"The company did not come with a lot of asks, because they were not looking for a labor dispute," Panian told the Labor

Press. "The unions did not come with a lot of asks, because we were not looking for a labor dispute. Our ask was to keep up with the cost of living. We just needed to know that the company was going to take care of the members. And we really feel they did."

Panian said bargaining was similar in tone to negotiations in 2016 that also produced a five-year deal. That smooth sailing was a contrast to the 2013 bargaining, when machinists and painters struck for 22 days.

Members of Lodge 1005 showed resolve as the contract expiration neared: At an Oct. 23

meeting attended by more than half the bargaining unit, the vote was unanimous to authorize the union bargaining committee to call a strike if they couldn't get an acceptable agreement.

A separate Machinists bargaining unit of 15 workers who do custom work on trucks prior to delivery also ratified a new agreement on the same terms.

In a reversal of its previous pattern of shifting work to Mexico, Daimler has lately increased its workforce in the Portland plant and made new capital investments as it gears up to produce two new lines of electric trucks.



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