

tached to it, which was confusing because at that same meeting it was mandatory I sign papers allowing union dues to be removed from my paychecks.

When I eventually was able to obtain a copy of the Lane County Public Works Local 626 Contract, it stated that the "extra help" were "not eligible and qualified for any rights or benefits under the agreement." While the Local has collected thousands of dollars in union dues from us hapless part-timers through the years, the carrot/stick that has kept us in line has been the mantra that, yes, there are no rights or benefits, but the union negotiates on behalf of the part-timer's wages each contract period. My discussions with union reps, Lane County Human Resources and Public Works have resulted in no documentation supporting this.

But even if there was some truth to that small crumb at the table, an extra help worker, averaging 10 hours a week, pays the same dues as a 40-hour a week worker; that full-time worker has a union behind it negotiating for wages, vacation, health coverage, sick leave, retirement, grievance rights, etc. The inequity of what these two workers actually receive in benefits should be offset by a pro-rated amount of union dues for the part-timer. Of course, the fairest thing would be for Lane County to immediately extricate itself from this pact they have with Local 626 to deprive their most vulnerable workers of a fairer share to their measly gross wages.

*Robert Berman  
Elmira*

**SAFE CLIMATE ACT**

The Bush administration's proposal to list polar bears as a threatened species as a result of global warming is a welcome, though late, indication that at least some in the Bush administration are awakening to the threat posed by global warming.

But polar bears are not the proverbial canaries in the coal mine, the early warning signs alerting us to danger. The early warning signs arrived long ago. We've now reached the point at which we must take urgent action if we are to prevent the worst effects of global warming.

The good news is that champions in Congress have already started to show the way. Rep. Henry Waxman (Calif.) has introduced the Safe Climate Act, science-based legislation that would reduce global warming pollution to levels that would prevent the worst effects of global warming.

With their habitat literally melting beneath their feet, polar bears are the latest but surely not the last to pay the price, unless we get serious about cutting global warming pollution now. I urge Rep. Peter DeFazio to cosponsor the Safe Climate Act, to make sure

the climate is safe not just for polar bears, but for people too.

*Tia Wooldridge  
Eugene*

**STATE OF THE UNION**

The President is asking for more troops to be deployed in Iraq at a time when a large portion of Americans are getting very uneasy about our people being killed there and no real end in sight. Many of us still remember Vietnam and what those heroes went through, there and then when they came home. That won't happen this time.

All of the steps that the President is taking now should have been done right after the Iraqi government fell and Saddam was in custody, with the focus being on supporting the Iraqi people's elected government to govern, providing the security for ALL those who are supporting the rebuilding efforts, but most important, supporting the Iraqis to get employment and businesses open.

More troops are so that when insurgency is run out of a town, the town will have security so that the insurgents won't return, but where was the strategy when they first moved against insurgents? The new Democratic Republic promises to make things right, but where were they all of these years? It doesn't take a majority to make national news, just a representative voice.

Do you write to your representatives in local, state, and federal government? Do they respond to your questions and feelings about what they could do for the PEOPLE? If not, then you are allowing the opinions of others to write laws for you. And when I feel that those reps are not representing me, I do what I have the right to do: I vote for someone else.

Stop bitching about what "they" do and take responsibility for the vote you cast. All Americans need to get off of their obese, trans fatty, high fructose corn syrupy butts and start doing something about it before we are nothing but a nation of service employees, working for foreign manufacturing and production.

*Fred Marsico  
Corvallis*

**PSYCHOSIS CONFIRMED**

The Bush administration continues down its bloody road to Perdition, and it is a road littered with every sort of vile debris. Now our commander-in-chief chides himself a bit about personal responsibility for killing more Americans than bin Laden, plus a few hundred thousand Iraqis, while escalating his personal psycho-drama with more Americans thrown into the bloody maw.



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