

The Oregon PUBLIC EMPLOYEE

MAY/JUNE 1994

The Mission of the Oregon Public Employees Union/SEIU Local 503, AFL-CIO, CLC, is to Improve the Quality of Life through Worker Empowerment and a Progressive Labor Program.

PERS benefits, the attack continues: Pension benefits - Private versus PERS



OPEU/SEIU Local 503 President Dawn Morgan, at podium, takes on chief petitioner Bill Sizemore, seated, in a debate on the initiative to eliminate the PERS pickup.

At one point in the debate Sizemore said, "Public employees: We can hug them.

But requiring them to pay 6% of their own retirement is only right and fair."

Morgan responded, "Most public employees don't come to work to get rich, but they don't come to work to get hugged either."

How do public sector pensions compare to private sector pensions in Oregon?

This is the key question in the campaign arguments surrounding the Tiernan/Sizemore initiative.

Bill Sizemore and Representative Bob Tiernan argue that public employees get better pension benefits than "the average working Oregonian," but can't back up that statement with any hard evidence.

Recently, a revealing answer to this question was found in pension plan reports filed with the Department of Labor by 26 of Oregon's largest private employers. The reports were collected and analyzed by our parent union, the Service Employees International Union, and presented to the Governor's Task Force on Employee Benefits by OPEU Political Director Mari Anne Gest on May 2. Among the findings:

- 17 of 26 plans examined were defined benefit plans (like PERS). Only one of these plans

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