



Homecare workers and supporters celebrate their filing

Thirteen thousand homecare workers across the state are banding together to improve the quality of care they provide to their clients by demanding better training and working conditions that cultivate a more stable workforce. On October 23, they formally filed for an election to win Union representation by SEIU Local 503, Oregon Public Employees Union. This is the largest Union election filed this year in the United States, and the largest union election ever in the State of Oregon.

Homecare workers all over Oregon cheered their long-awaited filing: "As workers, we need quality care from the State, so we can stick around to give quality care to our clients," said *Joye Willman*, Homecare Worker in **Portland**. "A strong Union is the way to accomplish this." *Tena Vazquez* of **Oregon City** agreed. "I know that I, myself, can provide great in-home care, but alone I have no power to fight for positive change for others. We need unity to make the State homecare system better for clients and workers who care for them. We are powerless alone, but powerful together."

"Every American Homecare Worker should be entitled to a Union," said *Donita Hunter*, of **Albany**, "we need health benefits, sick time, and reasonable respite. When we have these things, we can keep good workers and entice new workers to consider this meaningful profession. Our united voice will maintain and improve the quality of care we can provide, which, in the end, benefits our clients because they are most important to us all."

"I believe that clients will have better quality care when caregivers get some benefits," said *Patti Bender*, of **Madras**. "Then we will be able to afford to stay in this field of important work."

"If we vote Union Yes, we will be better able to take care of our ourselves, which will mean

better care for our clients," said *Sue Molloy*, of **Baker City**. "Together as a Union, we can make things happen." *Marla Denson* of **La Grande** echoed the same sentiment. "We need to give the power back to those who deserve it, namely Homecare clients and workers," said Denson. "That's why we formed our Union, it will help us fight for better quality care for senior and disabled people all across the state."



Homecare workers feel victorious at their filing

"Right now, too many good caregivers choose different jobs because we can't survive without benefits," said *Janet Jeffries*, a **Canby** Homecare Worker. "Our clients lose when we quit, and so I want to organize to keep clients from losing their dedicated caregivers."

"Clients will receive quality care because they're going to get dedicated caregivers who are respected by the State in the form of benefits and training," said *Bonnie Robinson* of **Newport**. *Diane Chandler*, a Homecare Worker from **Coos Bay**, agreed. "The people of Oregon want a better quality of Homecare. They voiced that when they resoundingly passed Measure 99 in November 2000. Unionization of workers will increase the quality of care provided to seniors and people with disabilities, by allowing us to advocate for the respect we and our

Homecare Workers on the Verge of Victory

On December 14th ballots will be counted in largest Union election filed this year in the United States, and the largest Union Election ever in the State of Oregon!



Boxes of petitions are delivered to ERB

clients deserve."

"Our Union will fight for excellent quality care for senior and disabled Oregonians who choose to live independently in their own homes," said *Lee Meyers* of **Salem**. "Training, reduction of worker turnover, and greater access to respite care are issues important to us and to our clients. Together, we can greatly improve the quality of long term in-home care."

"Caregiving is a wonderful job but we need stabilization to provide the training necessary for caregiver," said *Jessie Spurling*, Homecare Worker in **Grants Pass**. "We need the Union." *Tammy Adams* of **Medford** and *Debby Anderson* of **Myrtle Creek**

agreed. "Our Union gives us the power to advocate for ourselves and those in our care," said Adams. "This will be a win-win situation for workers and clients" Anderson said. "As Homecare Workers, we practice patience and compassion every day. Quality care is more than this. We need training and respite so we can better serve our elderly and disabled clients."

Homecare Workers currently average about \$7 an hour, have no health care, sick leave, or holiday leave, and are ineligible for Workers' Comp. The senior population is expected to explode in the next several years, making the care that Homecare Workers deliver even more critical. Ballots will be mailed to Homecare Workers on November 26 and are due back to the Employment Relations Board on December 13.