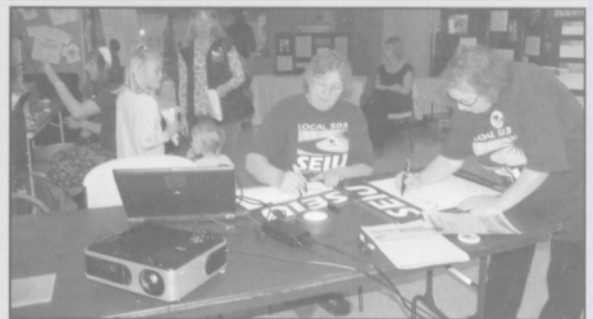


# Visibility Day Spotlights Care Providers at Capitol



SEIU members made Oregon's care providers very visible in the Capitol in March. Member activism helped defeat legislative proposals to dramatically reduce the care provider workforce.

The SEIU 503 Care Provider Division took over the lobby in the Oregon State Capitol on "Care Provider Visibility Day," May 4, to focus attention on the important and crucial services we provide for Oregonians every day.

The timing could not have been better, because legislators were considering a series of potentially devastating service cuts that were eventually turned aside.

From nursing home care and home health care to employment-related day care for children to adult foster home care, the impact SEIU 503

members who provide such services make in our communities was evident everywhere you looked in the Capitol lobby. Members, staff and supporters created interesting and informative displays, distributed pamphlets, screened a video they had produced featuring interviews with members, and engaged passers-by in conversations to create a better understanding of what care providers do and the impact they have all across Oregon.

Members outlined the services they provide and the importance of maintaining funding for valuable programs that treat seniors and people with disabilities with dignity and afford them care in their

own communities, and allow parents to head off to work knowing that their young children are properly cared for.

Worker-friendly legislators who stopped by commended us on the services we provide and our dedication to the clients we serve. Others were able to see and hear how program cuts would compromise the health, safety and peace of mind of many of their constituents.

One highlight was the delivery of hundreds of member testimonials to the Governor's office, reinforcing the importance of these programs.

## SEIU 503 Outpouring Makes a Big Difference in Legislative Victories

With the stakes very high on issue after issue, SEIU 503 activists flocked to the State Capitol in record numbers during the 2009 legislative session and helped to win some very significant victories for union members, our clients and working families across Oregon.

About 350 members lobbied in Salem and in regional hearings—some participating several times—during the session and hundreds more wrote letters, made calls and sent emails at key points. We engaged legislators on designated lobby days, focused on issues affecting specific sectors and agencies, and testified to committees about the need to pass new laws and restore budget cuts.

And we made a big difference preserving front-line jobs and services and promoting positive outcomes on a range of issues from tax reform to health care expansion to contractor accountability.

The legislature increased the corporate income tax and the personal income tax on families making more than \$250,000.

These two measures will raise about \$770 million in this biennium if they withstand an anticipated referral vote in January. That revenue became part of the solution to a \$4.2 billion budget gap, preserving jobs and health care for homecare providers, saving employment-related child care from massive cuts, sparing the Blue Mountain Recovery Center in Pendleton, and creating needed new positions to cover added workload at the Departments of Revenue, Human Services, Employment, and Oregon State Hospital.

When our lobbying helped turn the tide on a late-session vote delaying implementation of parts of Measure 57, jobs at the Oregon Youth Authority were saved as well. With some prodding from SEIU Local 503, both houses of the legislature mustered the two-thirds vote required to restore funding for the Burns and Hillcrest OYA facilities.

Here are some other key gains:

**Health Care:** The legislature expanded the Oregon Health Plan to cover 80,000 more children and 30,000 more adults. This is paid for by a tax on hospitals and health insurance companies that will be matched \$2.64 to \$1 by federal funds.

**Workers' Rights:** The Worker Freedom Act will ban employers from requiring workers to attend mandatory meetings urging workers not to form a union.

**Quality Public Services:** In response to problems that first surfaced at OYA, the legislature passed a bill to sunshine the findings of internal auditors at all state agencies.

**Contractor Accountability:** Passage of House Bill 2867 was "a great victory spawned from front-line workers at ODOT speaking out against irresponsible contracting in their agency," says SEIU political director Arthur Towers. "We took their ideas and worked with members and local and national allies to draft top-notch legislation. To get it passed, we had to compromise in certain places, but the bill that passed has produced of the best contractor accountability standards in the country." Key provisions established much tougher standards for feasibility studies and cost analysis of outsourcing proposals; set stringent standards for bidders that take into account poor past performance, delays, and cost overruns; and separated oversight, inspections, and monitoring from the contractors who too often were assigned the task of appraising their own work.

As in every session, some aspirations were unfulfilled. An effort to improve the Public Employee Collective



SEIU 503 members are briefed before heading off to meet legislators on a Capitol Lobby Day.

Bargaining Act passed the House, but fell short in the Senate. It would have allowed temporary workers to join a bargaining unit after 90 days on the job, protected public employees from permanent replacement if they go on strike, and clarified the definition of supervisory employees.

We also failed to extend bargaining rights to 6,400 homecare workers in DHS-run programs who are currently excluded from the union in the face of state claims that it would incur large administrative costs, and to improve working conditions for motor carrier enforcement officers and campus public safety officers. However, we did successfully promote legislation to allow homecare providers to have union representation at administrative hearings at which they might lose their right to provide homecare.



Making our case to DHS Director Bruce Goldberg at the Capitol.