

THE 2005 legislative session was one of the most partisan in Oregon's history. Both the pro-worker Senate and the anti-worker House had the power to block substantive legislation of any type. In that context, SEIU Local 503 members fared well.

We protected funding for the contract settlement for DAS and OUS workers. Homecare workers fought off serious negative changes to their program and protected enough funding for a fair contract settlement.

AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

We moved the issue of affordable health care to the forefront of the legislative agenda. We successfully identified drug companies, the insurance industry, and greedy hospital corporations as the primary factors in out-of-control health care costs. This was important because anti-worker forces were eager to blame state budget woes on the cost of public employee benefits.

SB 835: Department of Revenue workers get a public hearing on Spanish-language documents

For years our members at the Department of Revenue have been pushing for the creation of basic tax documents written in Spanish. This year we went over management's head, straight to the legislature. Members like Maria Barba were successful in convincing State Senator Frank Shields (D: Portland) to hold a public hearing, forcing management to explain why the 9% of Oregon taxpayers who speak Spanish have been neglected. Members like Maria are frustrated because they spend much of their time at work repeatedly translating basic tax issues over the phone, when they could avoid this with Spanish-language documents. While we didn't succeed in passing the legislation, we did succeed in moving the Revenue Department to change its practices. More than 30 forms have now been translated.



“It was truly empowering to testify at a public hearing about an issue that is so close to my heart. Together, we really are strong enough to make a difference.”

Maria Barba, Revenue Agent