

## Payday Loans Gouge Consumers

SEIU members know that high-interest loans devastate low-income families. Payday loans, typically gouging consumers with 500% interest, have been responsible for trapping working families into spiraling and sometimes inescapable debt. Payday lenders had successfully blocked any efforts to provide protections for working families for years. We worked in broad coalition with legislative leaders and other Oregonians - consumer groups, faith based organizations, and hunger and homeless advocates - to successfully pass a 36% interest cap on all consumer loans (HB 2871). This legislation will strengthen families by ensuring loans are both accessible and affordable when families face tough times.



*"Payday loans are important to me because when my paycheck isn't enough to pay my bills for the month, sometimes I need a payday loan. Now that the interest rate is capped it has stopped the vicious cycle of having to take out a loan to cover my loans and I can pay it off the first time."*

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## Health Care a Priority for Pro-Worker Legislature

**From the first day of session, legislative leadership set the tone for health care and related issues. In an unprecedented move, six committees were established to focus on various aspects of health care. Two health care discussions rose to the top.**

### Affordable Accessible Health Care

The Oregon Health Fund (SB 329), coordinated by *Senators Ben Westlund (D-Redmond) and Alan Bates (D-Ashland)* is viewed as the vehicle to pass comprehensive health care reform. The Senate Special Committee on Health Care Reform dealt with SB 329 and the extensive list of health care issues within the bill. Legislators and advocates realized that to achieve statewide health care reform, more time and collaboration is needed. In the end, the passage of SB 329 will result in the outline for developing statewide health care reform in the 2009 legislative session. SEIU will play a major role in the process.

### Insuring All Oregon Children

Governor Kulongoski stepped forward early in 2007 with his plan to insure Oregon's uninsured children. The plan consisted of an 84.5¢ increase in cigarette taxes to bring an additional 100,000 children into the Oregon Health Plan. The plan was contentious from the beginning and in spite of multiple votes, we could not garner the 3/5th's majority in the house or senate necessary for passage. The Governor and Legislative Leadership made the decision to refer "Healthy Kids" to the ballot rather than let the policy die. The tobacco industry broke all spending records killing the ballot measure.