Holding Politicians Accountable Paid Off

In 2006, members of SEIU Local 503 worked to hold candidates accountable for their actions. This started in 2004 when we refused to support legislators who attacked our pensions. In 2006, we held the Governor accountable by backing his opponent in the primary and we also challenged then Speaker of the House Karen Minnis and a number of other legislators who worked against working families.

Our members stood alone in many of these fights. Few unions had the gumption to take powerful decision makers to task for their positions.

In the end, all the phoning and door-knocking paid off. The money contributed to CAPE and all the activity in the worksites produced real change after years of playing defense. Governor Kulongoski earned our support in the general election, turned over a new leaf, and led the charge for a pro-worker legislative session. We helped to elect a pro-worker Speaker of the House who fought for fairness for working families.

These changes magnified our voice in the political process. More than 600 members came to the capitol to make their voices heard during lobby days. Thousands of members flooded the capitol with postcards, phone calls, and letters.

What did Local 503 members win?

- **Funding for our contracts.**
- **Improved quality in public services.**
- **The biggest expansion of bargaining rights in 34 years for Oregon workers.**
- **Mandatory workers' compensation coverage for homecare workers.**
- **Significant improvements in higher education.**
- **A framework for affordable and accessible health care.**
- **Safety on the job for state hospital and youth authority workers.**
- **Huge improvements in child care for low-wage working families.**
- **Nursing home safety for workers and for clients.**
- **Across-the-board interest rate caps on payday loans.**
- **Expansion of the Oregon Prescription Drug Purchasing Pool to cover every Oregonian.**
- **Restoration of cuts in child support enforcement.**
- **$309M increase in new taxes on wealthy corporations to help pay for this.**