

# Political Action Leads to Contract Victories

**Our contract victories started in 2006 when we worked to elect pro-worker legislators, but members lobbied hard all session to ensure that there was adequate funding for good contracts. All the work electing pro-worker legislators and lobbying for contracts paid off: workers won wage increases and health care at the bargaining table.**

**Political activity supported the worksite actions across the state and the tough negotiations at the bargaining table.** The money that the state set aside for the wage and benefit reserve was critical in guaranteeing a contract that provided for wage increases, health insurance, and a living wage for all DAS and OUS employees. Members lobbied to get adequate funding in the reserve and pro-worker legislators listened. For the first time we bargained a living wage for the lowest paid public employees, ensuring that all workers earn a wage that keeps them from needing food stamps. In addition, all workers received the largest wage increase in over a decade and continued to protect their health care.



**Members delivered thousands of postcards to Tim Nesbitt, deputy chief of staff for Governor Kulongoski, asking for fair wage increases, a living wage for all workers, and health insurance.**

While a number of state managers got significant raises, legislative leaders wrote into the budget a provision shielding money for front-line workers' wages from being used for management raises.

For homecare workers the initial funding set aside by the Governor would not have funded an adequate contract. So members stormed the Capitol and got an additional \$4 million for contract funding. The homecare contract partially funded a statewide registry that tracks caregivers so that workers can take their days off. The contract provided for wage increases, increases in health benefits, and paid time off, giving homecare workers a contract victory.

Child care workers, the newest members to our union, had their first negotiations. After the Legislature gave child care workers the right to unionize, they set aside money to increase wages and decrease co-pays for working families. Child care providers received their wage increase as of October 1, 2007 and the state decreased co-pays to make Oregon a top-tier state in providing child care for working families.

In addition, nursing home workers and workers in private non-profits won contract victories because of increased funding for their services from the Legislature. Nursing home workers received wage increases and will see increased staffing in the spring of 2008, and many private non-profits throughout the state were able to win substantial wage increases because of the additional funding for human services from the state.