

Amid Success, We Also Lost Some Battles Tough Economic Times Did Take a Toll

We had many great victories during this session, but we also lost battles that will impact lives of hundreds of Oregon families and critical services Oregonians rely on.

For the past 20 years there have been proposals to close or merge the School for the Blind. For years SEIU members have worked with advocates and OEA to protect the school, but in 2009 we lost the fight. The impact will be that disabled blind children will have nowhere to go to learn critical life skills or socialize with their community. It is a big loss to Oregon and to the many members that dedicated their careers to helping blind children at the School.



The members at the Department of Administrative Services ensure that the state can operate smoothly. They serve other agencies through maintenance, janitorial services, information technology, training and many other centralized services. In 2009 the legislature cut motor pool and janitorial services to save money, leaving agencies with fewer resources and over 100 dedicated state workers out of a job.

Two other agencies experienced significant losses. The Department of Forestry will have a tougher time protecting Oregonians from forest fires because of significant cuts in their private forest program. These workers spend much of their summer fighting forest fires and will now not be able to keep our forests safe. The University System will experience significant cutbacks in their extension services which serve agricultural and community programs throughout the state.

During the 2009 session all agencies experienced losses, members lost their jobs, and Oregonians lost critical services. The economic crisis is continuing to impact many SEIU members and we need to continue to do all we can to ensure that corporations and wealthy individuals are sharing in the sacrifice so that the burden to solve the state's problems does not fall to working Oregonians.