

Tied 4-4 after Scalia's death, US Supreme Court gives unions a win

Teachers had objected to paying fees

By SAM HANANEL
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In the clearest sign yet of the impact of Justice Antonin Scalia's death, labor unions on Tuesday won a high-profile Supreme Court dispute they once seemed all but certain to lose.

The justices announced they were divided 4-4 in a case that considered whether unions representing government employees can collect fees from workers who choose not to join. The split vote leaves in place an appeals court ruling that upheld the practice.

The result is an unlikely victory for organized labor after it seemed very likely the high court would rule 5-4 to overturn a system that's been in place nearly 40 years. The court is operating with only eight justices after the death of Scalia, who had been expected to rule against the unions.

The one-sentence opinion does not identify how each justice voted. It simply upholds a decision from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Blow to conservative groups

But it's a major blow to conservative groups that have spent years pushing the court to overrule a 1977 precedent that allows unions to collect "fair share" fees from members and non-members alike that cover the costs of collective bargaining.

The decision came as Supreme Court nominee Merrick Garland was to meet with Republican Illinois Sen. Mark Kirk, his first meeting with a



J. Scott Applewhite/AP Photo

Visitors wait on the plaza of the Supreme Court on Tuesday as the justices split 4-4 in a case that considered whether public employees represented by a union can be required to pay "fair share" fees covering collective bargaining costs even if they are not members. The deadlock is the first tie vote since the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, who had been expected to rule against the unions, and now leaves in place an appeals court ruling that upheld the practice.

GOP senator. President Barack Obama nominated Garland to fill the vacant seat, but Republican leaders in the Senate say they won't hold confirmation hearings or vote on the pick until a new president is elected.

The union case is among a handful of key disputes in which Scalia's vote was expected to tip the balance toward a result that favored conservatives. During arguments in the case in January, Scalia and the court's four other conservatives made it clear they were ready to deal a blow to the unions.

Since Supreme Court decisions are not final until they are handed down, nothing Scalia did or said in connection with the case before his death mattered in the outcome.

Free speech rights

In the case, California teachers backed by a conser-

vative group said being forced to pay union fees violated the free speech rights of nonmembers who disagree with the unions' positions. The high court had raised doubts about the viability of the 1977 precedent, *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, but it stopped short of overturning it in two recent cases. In *Abood*, the court said public workers who choose not to join a union can be required to pay for bargaining costs if the fees don't go toward political purposes.

The lead plaintiff was Rebecca Friedrichs, a public school teacher from Orange County, California, who said she resigned from the California Teachers Association over differences but was still required to pay about \$650 a year to cover bargaining costs.

Fees necessary

The case affects more than 5 million workers in 23 states

and Washington, D.C., who are represented at the bargaining table by public sector unions. Labor officials worried the potential loss of tens of millions of dollars in fees would reduce their power to bargain for higher wages and benefits for government employees.

Labor leaders called the lawsuit part of a coordinated effort by conservative groups to weaken labor rights. Union officials say the fees are necessary because the organization has a legal duty to represent all teachers, even those who are not members of the union.

Lee Saunders, president of the American Federal of State, Local and Municipal Employees, called the case a "political attack" on unions.

"AFSCME members are more resolved than ever to band together and stand up to future attempts to silence the voices of working families," he said.

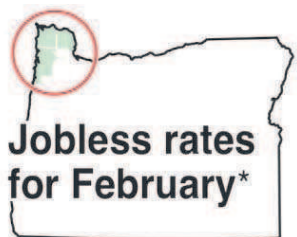
County unemployment below state, nation

The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County's seasonally adjusted unemployment last month was more than 1 percentage point lower than the same point the year prior, according to statistics from the Oregon Employment Department.

The county's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate, 4.6 percent, was the ninth-lowest out of Oregon's 36 counties, and lower than both the national (4.9) and state (4.8) unemployment rates. February's unemployment was down three-tenths of a percent from January, and 1.1 percentage points lower than the same point the year prior.

The county added 210 jobs in February, 100 more than expected. The change left nonfarm payroll employment at 17,950, 380 more than the year prior for a growth rate of 2.3 percent.



*Preliminary, seasonally adjusted rates.
Source: Oregon Employment Department
Daily Astorian graphic

Leisure and hospitality added 80 jobs in February. Local government education, which includes student workers, added another 90.

Over the past year, retail trade has added 230 positions, leisure and hospitality another 80, local government 70 and

professional and business services 50. Manufacturing lost 40 jobs over the year.

Columbia County

In Columbia County, the 6.2 percent seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in February was in the bottom half among Oregon's counties, but down one-tenth of a percent from January and more than 1 percentage point lower than the same point in time last year.

In February, professional and business services added 20 jobs, as did leisure and hospitality. Retail trade lost 20 jobs.

Columbia County's nonfarm payroll employment in February was 10,450, up 120 from the year prior for a growth rate of 1.2 percent. Over the past year, the county's manufacturing industry has added 70 jobs, leisure and hospitality 50 and professional and business services 40. Construction has dropped 60 jobs

over the last year and local education another 50.

Tillamook County

In Tillamook County, the 5 percent seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in February was near the middle of Oregon's 36 counties, down one-fifth of a percent from the month prior and more than one-half a percent lower than the year prior.

Food manufacturing added 20 jobs in February, and local government education grew by 30.

February's nonfarm payroll employment was 8,830, 40 more than the year prior for a growth rate of 0.5 percent. Industries adding the most positions over the past year included manufacturing with 90 and retail trade with 60. Leisure and hospitality was down 50 jobs over the year.

The state Employment Department will release March's county unemployment rates April 19.

Man arrested for sexual abuse of teenage girl

The Daily Astorian

The Clatsop County Sheriff's Office arrested an Ilwaco, Washington, man Monday for the online sexual corruption and abuse of a local teenage girl.

Jesse Lee Jetland, 21, was charged with two counts of second-degree sodomy and one each of first-degree online sexual corruption, rape and burglary.

The arrest comes after a monthlong investigation by the Sheriff's Office, which received a report in January indicating the parents of a local middle school student had found Jetland in their daughter's bed.

According to the Sheriff's Office, evidence revealed Jetland had secretly entered the residence nearly a day earlier and hid in the bedroom with the girl while intermittently have sexual contact with her throughout the day.



Jesse Lee Jetland

Jetland used a social network to arrange an in-person meeting with the girl, providing her and a friend with marijuana and tobacco while at the residence. Par-

ents of both girls are aware of the situation and have been assisting law enforcement. And further evidence indicates Jetland was communicating with other underage females in the county.

Nuclear power plant unexpectedly shut down after equipment breaks

Associated Press

RICHLAND, Wash. — Washington state's only nuclear power plant has been shut down after operators received an indication that a system used to cool equipment wasn't working. Officials said there was no release of radiation and no danger to the public.

The Columbia Generating Station near Richland was shut down about 1:30 p.m. on Monday, Energy Northwest spokesman John Dobken said.

Officials hope to restart the plant sometime this week, Dobken told The Associated Press early Tuesday.

The Tri-City Herald reported that the plant was shut down after operators were alerted to problems with the system that uses water to cool heat exchangers and pumps, including those that control the power level of the reactor.

Energy Northwest says it seems that a water system

valve may not have been in the right position, but adds that an investigation is ongoing.

The last time the plant had an unplanned shutdown, known as a scram, was in November 2009, when there was a hydraulic fluid leak.

Mike Paoli, an Energy Northwest spokesman, said a decision on restarting the plant will be made after a thorough review of the event and when operators have confidence that all systems can operate to standards.

"Scrams are not unusual events in the industry, but they are not what we like to see to meet our generation numbers," Paoli said.

The nation has 99 operating nuclear reactors and they had more than 110 scrams in the last two years, he said.

The plant broke generation records in December and January, operating in January above its peak capacity factor.

It produces enough electricity to power a city about the size of Seattle.

Bundy, co-defendants appeal to remain in Oregon

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Ammon Bundy and three co-defendants who are jailed in Oregon for the occupation of a national wildlife refuge have appealed an order that requires them to fly to Nevada next month to face charges in a federal case there.

Assistant federal public defender Rich Federico sent notice Monday that the four men are appealing to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

A federal judge in Portland last week ordered the defendants to be flown to Nevada on April 13 and returned to Oregon on April 25. During that window, they would make their first court appearances on charges stemming from a 2014 standoff at Cliven Bundy's ranch near Bunkerville, Nevada.


Defense attorneys say the clock shouldn't start on the Nevada case until the Oregon one is finished, because it could violate their clients' right to effective counsel.

WANTED

Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber

Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA

Contact: Steve Axtell • 360-430-0885 or John Anderson • 360-269-2500



Early Childhood Health & Education Clinic For Clatsop County Kids

SIGN UP TODAY!

FREE For all 2-5 year olds, regardless of income

April 13, 2015

Astor Elementary School
3550 Franklin Ave., Astoria

April 19, 2015

Seaside Convention Center
415 First Avenue, Seaside

Early screening is an important step to successful learning.

Your child will receive the following exams and screenings:

~ Physical ~ Hearing ~ School Readiness ~ Speech
~ Nutrition ~ Vision ~ Dental ~ Immunization

Call your local elementary school or Head Start center for an appointment by April 6 for the Astoria clinic or April 14 for the Seaside clinic.

Limited transportation help is available upon request. se habla espanol.

Sponsors are NW Early Learning Council, NW Educational Service District and Clatsop Kinder Ready. Major health & education groups of Clatsop County are partnering to make this clinic possible.

Get your rear in gear
Colorectal Cancer Is the Cancer You Can Prevent



Talk to your doctor
about the right test for you.

COLUMBIA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
503-325-4321 • www.columbiamemorial.org