

Direct from Defense of Labor in Wisconsin

Union leader to rally for justice in Portland

Mahlon Mitchell, a young African American fire fighter union leader from Madison, Wisc., will be the featured speaker at a Jobs with Justice and Campaign for Workers Rights march and rally, Saturday, April 16 at noon at

Pioneer Courthouse Square, downtown.

Mitchell, president of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin, has been the public face of the protest against Gov. Scott Walker's attack on Wisconsin public employees.

The Portland march and rally will be in the spirit of Wisconsin – family friendly and strong in spirit with excellent visuals, organizers said.



Mahlon Mitchell

Mitchell, when talking about why he led the firefighters into the Wisconsin capitol to protest Walker's proposal to outlaw collective bargaining rights for state employees, said "When firefighters see an emergency, we respond."

In Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and across the country, working people are fighting back. Here in Oregon many local unions are facing attacks in their efforts to

bargain a fair contract. Those unions and the community are rising up together for Saturday's rally to tell their elected representatives that they will not stand silent.

The March and Rally for Good Jobs, Not Cuts is sponsored by over 60 organizations ranging from Portland Jobs with Justice, the Oregon AFL-CIO to the Rural Organizing Project and the Ainsworth United Church of Christ.



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Excessive Force Review

Seattle police face questions over tactics

The U.S. Justice Department is investigating allegations that Seattle's police officers routinely use excessive force on suspects after a string of violent incidents mostly involving minorities in the Pacific Northwest city.

Seattle police have been captured on camera in several violent confrontations with black and Hispanic residents over the past few years. The shooting and killing of native American woodcarver John Williams by a Seattle police officer last August brought local concern about police tactics to a head.

A Seattle Police report said the officer who shot Williams, who was carrying a knife, acted outside the department's "policy, tactics and training," but the officer is not facing criminal charges.

The Justice Department said on Thursday it has opened "a pattern or practice investigation" into the allegations that Seattle police have been using excessive force and discriminatory policing practices, which are outlawed under several statutes, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Justice Department said it will "seek to determine whether there are systemic violations of the Constitution or federal law by officers of the Seattle Police Department."

The department has taken similar steps in jurisdictions such as New York, Ohio, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia and California.