

WSLC Legislative Report



Washington State Labor Council report and voting record from the 2010 session of the State Legislature

It's about the jobs

Democrats hear labor's message

The Washington State Labor Council's 2010 legislative agenda focused on jobs, jobs, jobs. Creating jobs. Retaining jobs. Strengthening jobs.

Working families know there is no such thing as a "jobless recovery" from this recession, the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. The restoration of quality jobs is what will signal an end to this recession, not the return of corporate profits or stock market gains.

This year, that meant investing in our public infrastructure to put workers in the decimated construction industry back to work. It also meant raising new revenue to avoid more layoffs of teachers, college faculty and staff, nurses and other health-care professionals, public safety workers, and other state employees who provide critically needed public services at the time we need them most.

Unfortunately, in 2010 it also meant defending against attacks from those who would exploit a difficult budget and economy to try to demonize state employees and extract punitive job, wage and benefit cuts.

The Democratic legislative majority heard organized labor's message on jobs loud and clear. After Gov. Chris Gregoire called a special session dedicated to resolving budget issues and approving jobs legislation, here are some of the bills that were approved:

■ **The Jobs Act of 2010**—Sponsored by Rep. Hans Dunshee (D-Snohomish), HB 2561 will let voters decide this fall whether to issue \$505 million in bonds to create some 30,000 jobs doing energy repair and retrofitting work at public schools, state colleges and universities.

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(Above) Construction trades workers, who are suffering unemployment rates as high as 30% to 50% in parts of the state, rallied in downtown Seattle on March 17 to urge approval of public works projects, including the convention center expansion.

(Below) Several thousand rallied Feb. 15 on the Capitol steps to urge legislators to "Stop the Cuts" and raise more revenue to protect public services. The turnout was more than double the size of an anti-government Tea Party rally earlier that day.



Drastic budget cuts mitigated by new revenue

Last year, the Legislature passed a painful all-cuts 2009-11 budget to close a \$9 billion gap between projected revenue and the cost of maintaining existing public services.

This year, thanks to a persistent national recession, legislators faced another \$2.8 billion shortfall. (Republicans tried to characterize it a product of excessive Democratic spending, but 47 other states, including many run by the GOP, faced similar deficits.) The Washington State Labor Council and many other community advocates for public services called on lawmakers to abandon last year's punitive, destructive all-cuts approach and to raise substantial revenue by closing tax loopholes.

Lawmakers in both the House and Senate agreed that they couldn't in good conscience cut their way out of this mess again, but it took a 30-day special extended session for them to agree how to do it. In the end, \$757 million was raised, mostly through a temporary B&O tax surcharge for service businesses (\$242 million), additional taxes on beer, soda, bottled water and candy (\$150 million), and the closure of a tax loophole for out-of-state banks and credit-card firms (\$85 million).

A nearly equal amount—about \$750 million—was cut. (Those cuts are described in detail on Page 3.) The remainder of the shortfall was addressed by tapping reserves, using federal stimulus funding, and shifting money from other accounts.

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Mixed results on collective bargaining

Advances for musicians, interpreters, but a troubling setback for child-care workers

Given budget constraints, many Washington State Labor Council affiliates focused on legislative proposals with no price tag, including expanding collective bargaining rights to more workers. Some proved successful, but one was derailed after a Republican Senator's troubling declaration that a promise was made to some prominent private charitable foundations not to allow these workers to form unions.

First, the legislative victories:

■ **Symphony Musicians**—SB 5046, sponsored by Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles (D-Seattle), places symphony musicians under the Public Employment Relations Commission's jurisdiction for purposes of collective bargaining. Musicians

in most orchestras, those grossing less than \$1 million a year, don't get basic rights through the National Labor Relations Act. Under SB 5046, they can now seek bargaining rights through the state's PERC. It passed the Senate 30-17 (see Senate Vote #3) and the House 60-36 (see House Vote #6), and was signed into law by Gov. Chris Gregoire. Rep. Ross Hunter (D-Medina) sponsored the House version, HB 3003.

■ **Interpreters**—Sen. Chris Marr's (D-Spokane) SB 6726, makes the governor the employer of record for interpreters contracted by the Department of Social and Health Services, which grants them the right to form unions.

"Interpreters' wages have been going down, not just in the short-term because of a crisis, but systematically over the years," testified Dennis Eagle of the Washington Federation of

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Conservative caucus endangers Dems

Another decade begins with leaders of the Republican Party—in both Olympia and Washington, D.C.—advocating primarily for corporations and obstructing the Democratic majority's efforts to revive the economy and help struggling



President's Column
Rick Bender

working families. Hoping that the political winds will shift their way in the elections this fall, GOP leaders consistently weigh legislation not by whether it is the right thing to do, but by its value as a partisan political opportunity.

As always, there are exceptions to party labels.

In our State Legislature, there are some Republicans who keep an open mind, meet with labor, consider our perspective and ultimately vote our way, instead of toeing the party line. Likewise, there are Democrats who listen to business lobbying groups and side with Republicans on some issues.

The commercial media are fond of labeling such legislators as “moderates,” or better still, “mavericks.” Given how sickeningly extreme that partisanship has become in government, it's easy to see why individuals who buck their leaders from time to time would be applauded for their independence.

But this year, something different emerged, masquerading as moderate. It's a group of Democrats calling themselves the Roadkill Caucus. They espouse a pro-corporate, anti-government agenda. They use the same rhetoric Republicans use about Washington having a horrible business climate, about the need to “reduce government's footprint,” and even labeling their fellow party members as “too liberal.” They pit constituencies against each other -- rural areas vs. Seattle -- in open defiance of the party's theme of “One Washington.”

True moderates espouse their party's traditional values but occasionally dis-



The Roadkill Caucus

The following state legislators are listed as members of the Roadkill Caucus of conservative corporate Democrats on the group's Facebook page:

SENATORS Steve **Hobbs** (founder), Jean **Berkey**, Brian **Hatfield**, Jim **Kastama**, Derek **Kilmer**, Chris **Marr**, Mary Margaret **Haugen**, and Paull **Shin**.

REPRESENTATIVES Brian **Blake**, Judy **Clibborn**, Deb **Eddy**, Mark **Ericks**, Fred **Finn**, Kathy **Haigh**, Chris **Hurst**, Troy **Kelley**, Lynn **Kessler**, Kelli **Linville**, Jeff **Morris**, Al **O'Brien**, Dave **Quall**, Tim **Probst**, Larry **Seaquist**, Larry **Springer**, and Dean **Takko**.

agree with their leaders' positions and agenda. The Roadkill Caucus is a group of lawmakers attempting to move their party's already-centrist agenda to the right, in open opposition to their party's base constituencies.

Here are some of the things that the Roadkill Caucus fought for in 2010:

■ **Block unemployment insurance benefits**—Sen. Chris Marr (D-Spokane) said the caucus opposed any revenue increases but, in exchange for caucus votes to raise taxes, he urged his party's leaders to kill labor-backed legislation to extend unemployment insurance eligibility to part-time workers and to workers facing undue hardship. The bill, which would have captured \$98 million in federal UI modernization funds, died and the Roadkillers took full credit.

■ **Privatize state services**—Using rhetoric straight out of the Republican playbook about private-sector efficiency versus public-sector inefficiency, Roadkillers fought to close the State Printer (killing 100 family-wage jobs) and to privatize state liquor stores (killing 1,000 family-wage jobs).

■ **Impose health care takeaways on state employees**—The Roadkill Caucus

fought to scuttle a \$65 million budget proviso, arguing that state employees should have to pay higher co-pays and deductibles. They joined Republicans in urging Gov. Gregoire to reopen state employee contracts and force them to pay a higher percentage of premiums.

Roadkiller Rep. Christopher Hurst (D-Enumclaw) recently claimed that “Seattle liberals” have moved his party leftward. The reality is the Roadkill Caucus has abandoned the traditional Democratic value that government can play a positive role in improving the lives of working families. Instead, with their fingers to the political winds, they suddenly embrace conservative positions, especially on labor issues.

Their efforts to privatize liquor sales are a case in point. Sen. Tim Sheldon (D-Potlatch), a conservative Democrat who supported the election of George W. Bush for president, has sponsored legislation every year for two decades to privatize liquor stores. Each year, it has died with nary a peep from Roadkillers.

But this year, everything changed. Sen. Sheldon was surprised to get a first-ever hearing on his bill and even more surprised to watch Roadkillers

aggressively push this issue despite opposition from Gov. Chris Gregoire and powerful testimony on issues of public safety and the potential loss of state revenue. That's right, because there was no guarantee it would create revenue, this liquor privatization effort was passed off as an effort not to save money, but to “reduce the footprint of government.”

The party platform hasn't changed, the Roadkillers have, by adopting a newfound election-year conservatism.

I was a state legislator for 18 years until 1991. We used to have a name for legislators who held conservative views about restricting access to unemployment insurance and workers' compensation, privatizing government and cutting state employee compensation, all while occasionally supporting revenue increases in budget emergencies. They were called *Republicans*. (That was before the neo-conservatives took over, moving the GOP further right and turning it into a wholly owned subsidiary of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.)

All of this serves to reinforce my commitment to the Washington State Labor Council's new political strategy to identify and support the *real* champions of working families. (See pages 4-5 for more information.)

As I wrote in this column after last year's debacle of a session, the political pendulum swings back and forth. More often than not, it's because the party in control begins to focus more on preserving its majority and appeasing its critics than it does on actively pursuing its own agenda. The folks who put them in the majority are left disillusioned as their support is taken for granted.

Majorities don't disappear because voters wake up one morning and decide they are more liberal or conservative (though some legislators apparently do). Voters decide they aren't being represented or that the party in charge is self-serving and out of touch.

The Roadkill Caucus is doing their dead-level best to make Democrats' election fears a self-fulfilling prophecy.

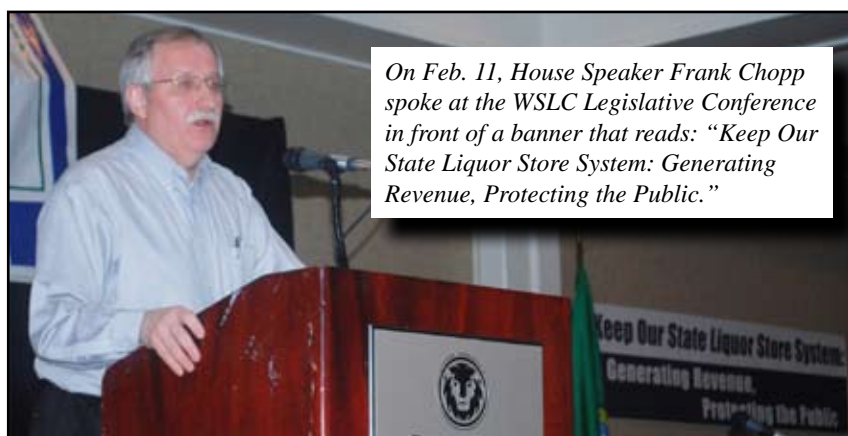
Liquor store privatization pushed

Led by the Roadkill Caucus of conservative Democrats (see story above), majority Democrats in both houses decided 2010 was the year to pursue privatization of our state-run liquor store system.

Legislation to do this has been introduced and rejected just about every year since the state began operating liquor stores in 1933. Most years the idea hasn't generated enough support to merit a hearing, much less a vote. The last time liquor privatization advocates succeeded in getting it on the ballot in the 1970s, voters resoundingly rejected it. Subsequent initiative efforts couldn't get the necessary signatures.

But this year, in a short 60-day session focused on resolving a \$2.8 billion revenue shortfall, some Democrats decided it was time to earn *bona fides* with the anti-government crowd. Several liquor privatization bills, sponsored by both Republicans and Democrats, were filed. In legislative hearings, representatives of liquor store employees (United Food and Commercial Workers Local 21) and distribution warehouse workers (WPEA/UFCW and Teamsters) made a strong case for keeping our successful state-run system.

Task forces have repeatedly determined that private stores would not create more revenue for the state in the short or



On Feb. 11, House Speaker Frank Chopp spoke at the WSLC Legislative Conference in front of a banner that reads: “Keep Our State Liquor Store System: Generating Revenue, Protecting the Public.”

long term. What it would accomplish is the elimination more than 1,000 family-wage jobs. These experienced, safety-oriented state employees have the best compliance rate in the nation for preventing liquor sales to minors.

At the WSLC Legislative Conference on Feb. 11, Gov. Chris Gregoire expressed opposition to the effort. “How much will (liquor store privatization) help us get out of this \$2.8 billion shortfall? Zip,” she said.

Although these bills died, were revived and died again during the regular session, the “Roadkill Caucus” of conservative corporate Democrats persisted with this effort in the special session. Ultimately, they succeeded in passing a budget proviso requiring a “pilot project” of privatizing at least 20 stores. An amendment by Rep. Brendan Williams (D-Olympia) to remove the proviso failed (see House Vote #10).

The WSLC Legislative Report and Voting Record is an annual publication of the

Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

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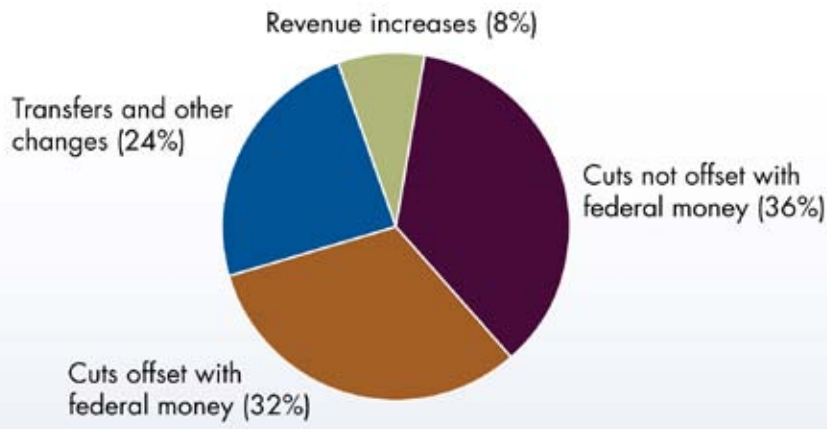
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www.wslc.org

Actions taken to balance the 2009-11 state budget



*Includes proposed striking amendment (H-5863.1/10) to ESSB 6444. Total FY2009-11 budget shortfalls = \$11.8 billion.

Source: Washington State Budget and Policy Center

Senate Democrats target state workers with forced furloughs

Gregoire's partial veto spares management

Senate Democrats led a charge this year to force unpaid furloughs upon state employees in order to "spread the pain." Nevermind that state employees had already sacrificed their cost-of-living increases, had \$300 million diverted from their pension funds, and suffered about 3,000 layoffs in the current biennial budget.

Originally, SB 6503 piled on the equivalent of a 5% pay cut through 16 forced furlough days. After vehement opposition from WFSE/AFSCME, WPEA/UFCW and other unions, the Senate scaled it back to 13 furlough days or one per month and allowed agencies to identify other ways to save the same amount of money to avoid the furloughs. Still opposed by labor, that version passed 27-17 (Senate Vote #1).

SB 6503 met with opposition from House Democrats and died in the regular session. But during the special session, it was revived by the Senate and eventually passed by narrow majorities in both houses. Intense and sustained opposition by state employee unions succeeded in further mitigating the damage of SB 6503. The final version exempted the majority of state employees but still required nearly 12,500 state workers to take 10 days off without pay over the next 14 months unless management can come up with another way to match projected savings.

But another surprise was in store

when Gov. Chris Gregoire signed SB 6503 on April 27. She vetoed the section of the bill directing that \$10 million of the cuts come from Washington Management Service and other management classes. She said the cut was unfair to management and would harm recruitment and retention.

This means an even bigger chunk of savings now must come from front-line state workers, increasing the chances that mandatory furloughs will occur for affected state employees.

GOP targets step increases

Not satisfied that they had lost two straight years of cost-of-living adjustments, Sen. Joe Zarelli (R-Vancouver) led the Republican Party's public-relations assault against state employees, calling for the Democratic majority to eliminate all step increases and to force state employees to pay 20% of health premiums instead of the current 12%.

State employee unions explained that step increases are not pay raises, they are part of the salary the state promises its employees when they are first hired. Workers get less when they first start—a discount for the state—and as they gain experience, the step increases eventually reach their "journey-level" salaries.

Sen. Zarelli & Co. would have our state become the kind of employer that pulls a bait-and-switch, abandoning its commitments to its employees. Fortunately, his effort to eliminate step increases gained no traction among majority Democrats.



A contingent of members of the Washington State Federation of State Employees, AFSCME Council 28 demonstrated at the Feb 15 rally to "Stop the Cuts."

Majority rule restored

The first step in dealing with the state's \$2.8 billion revenue shortfall this year was to end paralyzing and undemocratic provisions of Initiative 960, which required a two-thirds majority vote for all tax increases. The effect was to allow a 34% minority to overrule the majority.

After doing everything in their power to obstruct a vote on SB 6130, which suspended I-960, every Republican in both houses voted against it. It passed anyway, 26-22 (Senate Vote #2) and 51-47 (House Vote #5).

Republicans and Tea Party activists were apoplectic that Democrats would "defy the will of the people" on I-960, which passed with 51% of the vote at a time state coffers were flush with cash. Of course, none of them batted an eye when I-728 and I-732, which reduced class sizes and increased teacher pay, were repeatedly suspended during tough budget times. Those initiatives passed with 72% and 63% of the vote, respectively.

Another 1,500 jobs cut, but health care preserved

The final supplemental budget that passed at the end of the special session cut another 1,534 state jobs, in addition to the 3,000 cut last year.

But unions representing state employees did achieve a bittersweet victory after mobilizing an outpouring of support for their beleaguered members during the special session. They got \$64.9 million included in the final budget to prevent further increases of out-of-pocket health care costs.

Higher ed cuts continue

The 2010 supplemental budget cuts \$73 million more from the state's universities and community colleges. Many colleges are expected to continue the trend of offering fewer courses, which means longer wait lists and larger class sizes. In response, the University of Washington and other 4-year institutions are expected to hike tuition the maximum allowed 14% for the second straight year.

"The governor and legislators do not have the political will to restructure our archaic tax system and stabilize it for the future," said AFT-Washington President Sandra Schroeder. "But they are willing to increase the tax called 'tuition' on students and workers who need retraining. And students will get less for more."

Printer nearly "resized"

Sen. Rodney Tom (D-Medina) fought to include closure of the State Printer in the Senate budget and to contract that work out to "resize the footprint of government." It would have eliminated more than 100 jobs at one of the state's oldest agencies, where 20 jobs have already been shed this year. Ultimately, Sen. Tom failed.

Labor supported HB 2969, prime sponsored by Rep. Zack Hudgins (D-Tukwila), to maintain the good family-wage printer jobs, protect their bargaining rights and, by merging the state printer into the Dept. of Information Services, save about \$6 million. HB 2969 twice passed the House but died without a vote in the Senate.

Maple Lane School, Pine Lodge prison closed; RHCs spared

When the session began, just about every state institution was on the chopping block. To save money, proposals emerged to close state prisons, juvenile rehabilitation administration (JRA) facilities, nursing homes and residential habilitation centers (RHCs). Here's how it turned out:

PRISONS—Between the findings of a consultant's report last year and various legislative proposals this year, every prison in the state has been a target for closure or dramatic cuts: the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla, McNeil Island prison, Ahtanum View Corrections Center in Yakima County, Larch Correctional Center in Yacolt... you name it.

Unions representing Corrections workers—including the Teamsters and the Washington Federation of State Employees—rallied to support their members' jobs and to preserve public safety, while legislators

fought to save the facilities in their districts.

In the end, some of the more drastic closure proposals were jettisoned, but nearly \$55 million was cut from the Department of Corrections, including the closure of the Pine Lodge Correctional Facility for Women in Medical Lake. At press time, controversy was erupting over this closure. *The Spokesman-Review* reports that an internal Department of Corrections memo said Pine Lodge will close, even though a consultant recommended keeping it open, so the state can open another more energy-efficient prison in Western Washington. Stay tuned.

JRA—The final budget included the three-year phased closure of Maple Lane School, the juvenile rehabilitation facility in south Thurston County that employs more than 260 people. Some of those employees could be transferred—along with the juveniles in

detention—to the Green Hill youth prison in Chehalis.

RHCs—Gov. Chris Gregoire's budget proposal included closure of the Rainier School in Buckley and the Frances Haddon Morgan Center in Bremerton, both institutions for developmentally disabled children and adults. Proposals also floated to close Fircrest School in Shoreline, Lakeland Village in Medical Lake and Yakima Valley School in Selah. The unions with employees at those facilities quickly mobilized to educate legislators about the critical services they provide to their clients and to their communities.

In the end, the RHCs were all spared, although the budget orders that a consultant be hired "to determine the optimum residential setting for (RHC) clients, including the option to remain in a residential habilitation center."

Things have changed

Incumbents' evaluations now include sponsorship, advocacy

By **BENJAMIN LAWVER**
WSLC Political Director

After the 2009 session, when labor's agenda was not only ignored but also attacked by the Democratic majority caucuses, the Washington State Labor Council's affiliated unions instituted a complete review of the organization's political program.

One of the key changes adopted was to establish a more comprehensive system of evaluating the performance of incumbent state legislators, given that voting records don't always explain who is truly advocating for working families or opposing their interests. This is necessary because it has become common practice for caucus leaders to "protect" their members by either denying votes on important working family legislation or by blocking recorded roll-call votes on the floor.

That's why, beginning this year, the Washington State Labor Council's Legislative Voting Records will also include candidate scores for bill sponsorship, caucus and floor advocacy, and community support for labor's activities. These additional scores, along with the local-level questionnaire, interview and recommendation process conducted by the Central Labor Councils, will all be considered by delegates considering WSLC election endorsements at our C.O.P.E. (Committee on Political Education) Convention on May 15 and any additional endorsements that may occur at the WSLC Constitutional Convention on Aug. 9-12 in Tacoma.

The candidates' Total Point Scores will be apportioned based on the following formula:

2010 VOTING RECORD (15%) — This year's voting record on selected bills and amendments supported or opposed by the WSLC.

2009 VOTING RECORD (15%) — Last year's voting record on selected bills and amendments supported or opposed by the WSLC.

LIFETIME VOTING RECORD (30%) — The WSLC Voting Record for the incumbent's entire career in the State Legislature.

SPONSORSHIP (5%) — Legislators are

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED: OUR DELEGATES DECIDE

By Constitution, delegates representing the affiliated unions of the Washington State Labor Council will vote on which candidates and ballot measures to endorse. A two-thirds majority is required for endorsement. **All delegates will be given a comprehensive Total Point Score for each incumbent legislator, which includes all of the information in this publication plus the CLC Process (worth 20%),** which was not yet available at press time.

awarded up to 5 points for sponsoring or co-sponsoring pro-worker legislation. They can also receive negative points for sponsoring anti-worker bills. Although they can't sponsor bills, the House Speaker and Senate Majority Leader both receive 5 points because they are instrumental in moving legislation.

ADVOCACY (10%) — Up to 10 points for actively advocating for labor-supported legislation in caucus among other legislators and in floor speeches, and for accessibility to labor.

The following two criteria are not included in this publication because regional Central Labor Councils continue their evaluations at press time:

COMMUNITY (5%) — Up to 5 points for publicly advocating for pro-worker issues and participating in labor events in their districts.

C.L.C. PROCESS (20%) — Incumbents will be evaluated based on the responses to questionnaires and candidate interviews conducted by Central Labor Councils.

The changes don't stop there. The WSLC has also developed a system to more strategically target campaign contributions and grassroots political efforts.

In the past, the WSLC and many of its affiliates have made significant contributions to caucus campaign committees and to incumbent legislators who were not facing serious election challenges. Those contributions are often used by caucus leadership to fund activities that benefit individual legislators who work against the interests of our members.

To make sure that only those legislators who stand up for working families receive our financial support, the WSLC created the "Don't Invest In More Excuses"

Political Action Committee (DIME PAC) for unions to target campaign contributions more strategically.

It's up to the rank-and-file members and elected officers of every union to decide how to make their political contributions. Many have chosen to contribute to DIME PAC rather than to political party funds. Those contributing affiliates will decide how to target DIME PAC contributions and expenditures.

That said, the value of labor's endorsement has never been about money. Unions can't compete with the cash that corporate interests pump into campaigns at the state and federal levels. Labor's strength has always been in its members, who are widely seen as the "foot soldiers" for many political campaigns. That's because of our long, proud history of effective political volunteerism and activism, not because of our campaign contributions. Like the monetary support from DIME PAC, the grassroots election activities of our successful Labor Neighbor program will be targeted to elect champions for working families, not just to build political majorities.

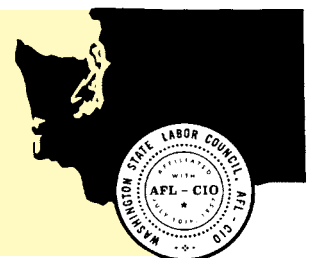
In addition, there is renewed interest among some affiliated unions to more aggressively pursue ballot initiatives that take workers' issues directly to voters—as labor did in leading the charge for our historic indexed minimum wage. Look for news on this front soon.

All of these changes are part of a long-term strategy to ensure that labor's political efforts are more effectively targeted to advance a pro-worker agenda in Washington state. The true champions of that agenda are the legislators who deserve our support. That support must not be taken for granted or manipulated by party organizations and their leaders.



2010 Legislative Voting Record of the Washington State Labor Council

SENATE



KEY

(Democrats are listed in **bold**.)

- "Right" vote
- "Wrong" vote
- E** Excused

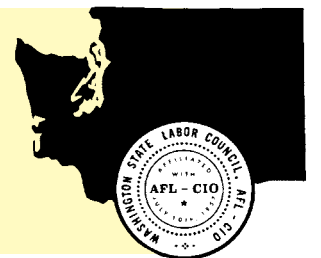
See the Senate Vote Descriptions on Page 5.

SPON. is the score (up to 5 pts.) for bill sponsorships

ADV. is the score (up to 10 pts.) for caucus and floor advocacy for or against labor legislation

Senator	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	2010 %	2009 %	LIFE-TIME	SPON. (5 pts)	ADV. (10 pts)
Becker	2	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	13	14	13	-0.5	2
Benton	17	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	29	50	26	-0.5	-4
Berkey	38	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	63	43	87	-0.5	2
Brandland	42	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	13	25	20	-1	0
Brown	3	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	63	95	5	7
Carrell	28	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	25	21	-0.5	-3
Delvin	8	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	33	25	16	-0.5	-6
Eide	30	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	88	50	90	0	1
Fairley	32	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	71	95	0.5	5
Franklin	29	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	88	63	93	2	6
Fraser	22	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	88	75	96	3.5	4
Gordon	41	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	--	75	2	4
Hargrove	24	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	38	71	-1	5
Hatfield	19	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	63	50	78	-0.5	2
Haugen	10	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	38	62	0.5	1
Hewitt	16	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	13	13	11	-2	0
Hobbs	44	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	50	57	77	-0.5	1
Holmquist	13	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	14	38	12	-3.5	-8
Honeyford	15	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	25	7	-2.5	-10
Jacobsen	46	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	86	67	91	2	5
Kastama	25	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	63	38	81	0	-2
Kauffman	47	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	63	75	86	2	7
Keiser	33	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	75	96	5	10
Kilmer	26	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	50	50	83	0.5	2

Senator	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	2010 %	2009 %	LIFE-TIME	SPON. (5 pts)	ADV. (10 pts)
King	14	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	13	25	19	-3	-6
Kline	37	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	75	95	4.5	5
Kohl-Welles	36	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	88	75	93	5	9
Marr	6	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	50	63	75	0.5	5
McAuliffe	1	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	86	50	85	1.5	2
McCaslin	4	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	25	10	-1	0
McDermott	34	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	75	95	2.5	7
Morton	7	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	13	8	-2.5	-6
Murray	43	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	63	95	2.5	2
Oemig	45	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	88	63	89	0	2
Parlette	12	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	13	38	14	-3.5	-3
Pflug	5	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	29	25	22	-0.5	-3
Prentice	11	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	43	90	1	10
Pridemore	49	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	86	88	97	1	10
Ranker	40	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	88	88	88	0.5	7
Regala	27	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	63	63	94	1.5	2
Roach	31	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	43	50	39	0.5	2
Rockefeller	23	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	43	86	-0.5	2
Schoesler	9	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	25	12	-2.5	-10
Sheldon	35	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	50	38	31	-4	-6
Shin	21	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	50	87	1	5
Stevens	39	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	33	13	9	-1.5	-8
Swecker	20	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	25	21	-2	-1
Tom	48	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	50	50	59	-1	-3
Zarelli	18	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	13	25	14	-0.5	-6



HOUSE

KEY

(Democrats are listed in **bold**.)

- "Right" vote
- "Wrong" vote
- E Excused

See the House Vote Descriptions below.

SPON. is the score (up to 5 pts.) for bill sponsorships

ADV. is the score (up to 10 pts.) for caucus and floor advocacy for or against labor legislation

Representative	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2010 %	2009 %	LIFE-TIME	SPON. (5 pts)	ADV. (10 pts)
Alexander	20	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	15	-3.5	-1
Anderson	5	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	13	16	-1	-8
Angel	26	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	20	25	22	-1.5	5
Appleton	23	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	88	98	5	7
Armstrong	12	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	14	14	-0.5	-8
Bailey	10	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	25	14	-0.5	-8
Blake	19	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	90	75	90	0	2
Campbell	2	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	50	75	72	4.5	7
Carlyle	36	●	E	E	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	75	50	63	3	2
Chandler	15	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	13	9	-3	-6
Chase	32	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	88	99	5	7
Chopp	43	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	90	75	95	5	0
Clibborn	41	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	70	50	85	0	1
Cody	34	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	90	75	97	3.5	5
Condotta	12	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	14	-4	-6
Conway	29	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	88	99	5	10
Crouse	4	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	20	25	12	-1.5	0
Dammeier	25	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	38	22	-1	2
Darneille	27	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	90	75	93	2.5	2
DeBolt	20	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	15	0	0
Dickerson	36	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	88	96	2	5
Driscoll	6	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	60	71	65	1	7
Dunshee	44	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	75	92	2.5	7
Eddy	48	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	50	63	74	1.5	-6
Ericks	1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	90	38	89	-1	2
Ericksen	42	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	17	-1	-8
Fagen	9	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	--	10	0	0
Finn	35	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	50	50	50	0	0
Flannigan	27	E	E	E	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	67	95	0.5	0
Goodman	45	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	90	88	89	3	2
Green	28	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	88	97	5	10
Haigh	35	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	80	50	92	1	2
Haler	8	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	28	-2.5	-1
Hasegawa	11	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100	100	4.5	10
Herrera	18	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	29	19	1	0
Hinkle	13	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	14	13	-1	-6
Hope	44	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	25	17	0	0
Hudgins	11	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	75	97	4.5	7
Hunt	22	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	88	97	5	2
Hunter	48	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	80	29	78	1	2
Hurst	31	●	E	E	○	○	E	○	○	○	○	43	75	89	1	2
Jacks	49	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	90	88	89	1.5	2
Johnson	14	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	11	-1.5	0
Kagi	32	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	80	75	92	2	5
Kelley	28	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	50	38	66	0.5	0
Kenney	46	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	88	98	5	10
Kessler	24	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	70	50	81	1	2
Kirby	29	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	88	98	0	5
Klippert	8	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	11	-0.5	-8
Kretz	7	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	E	0	25	13	-1	0
Kristiansen	39	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	11	-0.5	-8
Lias	21	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	90	88	93	4.5	4
Linville	42	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	80	63	73	-2.5	2
Maxwell	41	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	80	75	78	1.5	0
McCoy	38	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	75	94	3	7
McCune	2	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	25	25	0	0
Miloscia	30	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	80	100	92	2	7
Moeller	49	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	90	75	95	5	10
Morrell	25	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	80	75	94	3.5	5
Morris	40	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	70	38	80	0	0
Nealey	16	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	--	0	-0.5	0
Nelson	34	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	90	88	93	5	10
O'Brien	1	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	60	13	83	0.5	0
Orcutt	18	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	15	-0.5	-8
Ormsby	3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	88	99	5	10
Orwall	33	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	90	75	83	1.5	2
Parker	6	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	25	17	0	0
Pearson	39	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	16	-0.5	0
Pedersen	43	●	E	E	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	75	75	89	0.5	2
Pettigrew	37	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	90	75	94	2	5
Priest	30	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	40	38	41	0.5	2
Probst	17	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	60	63	61	0	2
Quall	40	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	80	38	74	0	0
Roach	31	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	25	24	-0.5	-5
Roberts	21	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	75	97	2.5	7
Rodne	5	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	19	-2	0
Rolfes	23	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	90	75	84	3	2
Ross	14	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	11	-2.5	-8
Santos	37	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	80	75	93	3	5
Schmick	9	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	11	-1.5	0
Sequist	26	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	40	63	74	3.5	1
Sells	38	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100	100	5	10
Shea	4	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	E	○	○	0	25	18	0	-3
Short	7	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	14	6	-0.5	-8
Simpson	47	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	90	100	98	5	10
Smith	10	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	25	18	-0.5	2
Springer	45	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	60	38	80	-0.5	0
Sullivan	47	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	90	88	95	5	7
Takko	19	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	70	63	85	0	0
Taylor	15	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	11	0	0
Upthegrove	33	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	88	95	3	4
Van De Wege	24	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	90	88	95	4	7
Wallace	17	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	60	38	79	-0.5	0
Walsh	16	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	13	30	0	2
Warnick	13	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	25	11	-1	0
White	46	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	88	94	5	7
Williams	22	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100	98	5	10
Wood	3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	E	●	100	88	98	3.5	5

SENATE Vote Descriptions

- 1 ESSB 6503—Cutting \$70 million from state agency budgets through **state employee furloughs** and other steps. "Right" vote: NO. (Passed 27-17, Jan. 22)
- 2 ESSB 6130—**Repealing I-960**, allowing legislators to close tax loopholes and approve revenue with a majority vote. "Right" vote: YES. (Passed 26-22, Feb. 9.)
- 3 SSB 5046—**Musicians' collective bargaining**; places symphony musicians under PERC jurisdiction. "Right" vote: YES. (Passed 30-17, Feb. 11)
- 4 ESSB 6726—**Language access providers collective bargaining rights**. "Right" vote: YES. (Passed 29-19, Feb. 15)
- 5 E2SSB 6562—**Local tuition authority** for UW, WSU and WWU. "Right" vote: NO. (Passed 29-19, Feb. 15)
- 6 ESHB 2986—Gives transit workers a voice by **adding labor members to public transportation governing bodies**. "Right" vote: YES. (Passed 28-19, March 3)
- 7 EHB 2561—Rep. Hans Dunshee's

Giving workers a voice, a seat

Transit workers get one

HB 2986, sponsored by Rep. Geoff Simpson (D-Covington), requires the appointment of nonvoting labor members to public transportation governing bodies. Supported by the Amalgamated Transit Union, this brings the on-the-ground expertise of actual transit agency workers, the folks who see the problems and interact directly with the customers, to the local transit boards.

Unwittingly, its opponents made the case for why HB 2986 is necessary.

Geri Beardsley, the director of the State Transit Association, testified at a hearing that it was “a solution without a problem” and repeatedly referred to front-line transit workers as a “special interest.” What’s next, she asked, requiring environmentalists to be represented? A letter from Raymond Mayor Robert Junger was shared that read: “The board operates as a policy-making group dealing with the operation of a transit system. This is not union business.”

Clearly surprised and dismayed by the testimony, committee chairman Rep. Simpson said, “I would suggest that the tenor of the letter supports the reason

why this bill is absolutely necessary... We’re not talking about special interest groups, we’re talking about people who work for your organization.”

His colleagues agreed. It passed the House 63-32, the Senate 28-19 and was signed by Gov. Chris Gregoire.

But college workers don’t

Unfortunately, the employees of our state’s community and technical colleges will not be afforded the same opportunity to have a voice on their boards.

Rep. Mike Sells (D-Everett) sponsored HB 2751 requiring labor representation on college district boards. Given this recession’s renewed focus on retraining workers, having a labor representative would certainly enrich these boards and provide some balance for the business people who typically populate these panels.

Again, advocates for the status quo opposed the effort as “unnecessary.” HB 2751 passed the House 52-37, but got hung up in the Senate Higher Education Committee, where it never got a vote. But it will be back, and the WSLC will again support it.



At SB 6726’s signing ceremony, Gov. Chris Gregoire shakes hands with DSHS Medicaid Interpreter Luis DeJesus. Looking on is Nellie Ivanov, the daughter of another DSHS Medicaid Interpreter. (Photo courtesy of WFSE’s Tim Welch)

Bargaining

Continued from Page 1

State Employees, AFSCME Council 28. “As independent contractors, the interpreters are powerless to do anything about this.”

Not anymore. SB 6726 passed the Senate 29-19 (see Senate Vote #4) and the House 58-40 (see House Vote #7) and was signed by Gov. Gregoire. Now, if they choose, these interpreters can form a union to try to improve their wages, benefits and working conditions. That’s good news not just for the interpreters, but also for their clients and for the continuity of effective social services in our state.

■ **Higher education employees**—HB 1560, sponsored by Rep. Steve Conway (D-Tacoma), makes important changes to protect the rights of employees engaged in multi-employer bargaining at four-year colleges. It passed largely on party lines, 64-33 in the House and 33-15 in the Senate, with most Republicans reflexively opposing anything supported by unions that has “bargaining” in the title.

Shady deal on child care

HB 1329, sponsored by Rep. Eric Pettigrew (D-Seattle), would have allowed child care center directors and workers to bargain collectively with

the state over subsidy rates and professional development.

Having passed the House 62-35 and the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee, the bill was sailing along fine until it landed in Senate Ways and Means, where it died.

At a Feb. 27 hearing, Sen. Cheryl Pflug (R-Maple Valley) reminded her fellow senators that when she and other legislators negotiated the Department of Early Learning’s role in the formation of a public-private partnership called Thrive By Five, they made an agreement “that we would not unionize child care centers.”

“Not doing this bill was the bright-line promise that we made to the Paul Allen Foundation, The Boeing Company and the McCaw family that contributed the funding for this,” Pflug said. “We might want to remember that when we make a commitment to somebody that gives us \$70 million, we might want to keep it.”

That’s right. Sen. Pflug openly reported that a deal was made to accept millions of dollars from private foundations for a public-private partnership with the stipulation that the State Legislature would not allow child care workers to form unions.

Imagine how quickly the cops would be called if a union contributed to a public-private partnership with the stipulation that a law must be passed allowing workers to unionize.



WSLC Secretary-Treasurer Al Link listens as Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown (D-Spokane) addresses the WSLC Legislative Conference on Feb. 11. (Photo courtesy of AWPPW’s Sean O’Sullivan.)

Hospital lobbyists kill ‘Safe Breaks’ bill in Senate

Understaffed hospitals are increasingly allowing very limited breaks—or no breaks at all—and that’s bad news not just for nurses and other hospital workers, it’s bad news for patient safety. The Safe Breaks bill, HB 3024 sponsored by Rep. Steve Conway (D-Tacoma), would have required that hospital workers get uninterrupted meal and rest breaks just like everyone else.

Legislators heard disturbing testimony from nurses about hospital administrators attributing trips to the rest room or to get a drink from a water fountain as break time. Years of negotiations and collective bargaining between hospital employees and management have failed to resolve the problem.

HB 3024 says health care facilities must give employees uninterrupted 30-minute meal breaks and rest breaks of at least 10 minutes for every four hours worked. Of course, this would not apply in cases of emergency. No patients will be harmed by this very reasonable legislation. In fact, sufficient meal and rest breaks are essential for patient safety—and nurse retention in this demanding profession.

Strongly supported by the Washington State

When a fatigue-related mistake at work can seriously injure or kill the people around you, our government has a responsibility to protect public safety through regulation.

But the bill was strongly opposed by the Washington State Hospital Association, which spread misinformation, including that it would end nurses’ professional judgment, was too inflexible and costly to administer, interfered with collective bargaining and led to patient abandonment. As a result, HB 3024 died without a floor vote in the Senate.

The coalition that supported this bill won’t give up and plans extensive outreach to educate hospital workers about the danger of fatigue and to dispel myths about the legislation spread by the Hospital Association.

When a fatigue-related mistake at work can seriously injure or kill the people around you, our government has a responsibility to protect public safety through regulation. That’s why there are laws requiring pilots and truck drivers to take regular breaks and meal periods. The same is needed for nurses and other health care workers.

Nurses Association; United Food and Commercial Workers Local 21; United Staff Nurses Union/UFCW 141; SEIU 1199NW; and the WSLC, the bill passed the House, 63-34, and an unfriendly striking amendment by Rep. Bruce Chandler (R-Granger) was defeated 41-56 (See House Vote #4).



www.restbreaks4safety.com

U.I. pumps \$6.5 billion into state

But efforts to strengthen this safety net fail in 2010

So this is what a jobless economic recovery looks like.

Washington's unemployment rate remains near 10%—higher in areas like Clark County where it's near 15%—and those rates ignore those who have given up looking for work or who have gone back to school. Some construction trades are reporting rates of 30% to 50%.

Thankfully, our state has one of the healthiest Unemployment Insurance Trust Funds in the country. Not only is it helping struggling families stave off bankruptcy and foreclosure, it is saving businesses and saving jobs.

In 2009, the system injected \$4 billion in benefits into our state economy. This is the best kind of economic stimulus because that money immediately gets spent, circulating in local economies. The Department of Labor says

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR

Hey, business owners! Wondering why your unemployment insurance tax bills have gone up so much in 2010?

The problem is the volatile tax system that **business groups asked for and got** in the 2003 deal to attract Boeing 787 assembly (or some of it). After this tax system was rammed through the Legislature, against labor's objections, the 2003 WSLC Legislative Report predicted, "**extreme volatility of rates is guaranteed.**" This will ensure continual pressure to further cut benefits when employers' rates spike in weak economic conditions." (Who coulda seen that coming?)

that for every \$1 of benefits, \$1.64 of purchasing power is created. So in 2009, our U.I. system created \$6.5 billion in economic activity across this state.

Last year's temporary boost in U.I. benefits expired on Jan. 1, effectively cutting weekly benefits by \$45 to \$71. So the WSLC sought to mitigate this cut by supporting some modest expansions in U.I. eligibility so its benefits could

reach more families and communities.

Rep. Steve Conway (D-Tacoma) and Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles (D-Seattle) sponsored HB 2647/SB 6526 to capture \$98 million in federal U.I. modernization funds by extending eligibility to part-time workers and HB 2553/SB 6334 to allow workers forced to leave jobs due to "unreasonable hardship" to receive benefits. These changes would

cost about \$36 million a year from a U.I. Trust Fund with \$2.5 billion and frontloaded the \$98 million in benefits now when it's desperately needed, creating \$160 million in consumer spending in every corner of the state.

But neither bill got anywhere.

That's because powerful business lobbying groups in Olympia consistently ignore the U.I. system's benefits to their members and treat it merely as a tax—one that's gone up.

Despite last year's passage of significant U.I. tax rate cuts, the amount many employers pay in taxes went up in 2010 because employers have laid off workers and our UI tax system—designed by the business community itself in 2003 (see box)—is excessively experience-rated.

So, after succeeding in killing the aforementioned labor-supported bills, business groups sought *another* tax cut in the form of HB 2920. It failed as legislators looked to maintain the U.I. Trust Fund's stability.

Some true champions of working families



Pictured at the Feb. 15 rally to "Stop the Cuts" are (from left) Democratic State Reps. Brendan Williams, Scott White, Sharon Nelson, Geoff Simpson, Maralyn Chase, Steve Conway, Tami Green and Tina Orwall.

Senate nixes leave for school activities

State and federal family leave laws allow workers to take a certain amount of unpaid leave upon the birth or adoption of a child, to care for seriously ill family members, or if a personal medical condition renders employees unable to work. What our laws in Washington don't provide for is any time to attend a child's educational activities, such as parent-teacher conferences, which tend to be scheduled during work days.

HB 2444, sponsored by Rep. Brendan Williams (D-Olympia), would have provided up to four hours of unpaid leave during any 12-month period to participate in a child's educational activities. The time off would have to be mutually agreed upon by the employer and employee, and the employer would have to be given sufficient notice. North Carolina has this law. Illinois provides 8 hours a year. D.C. provides 24 hours per year. California provides 8 hours per month.

Opposed by business lobbying groups, the bill passed the House, 54-40, largely along party lines. Rep. Tom Campbell (R-Roy) sided with Democrats in voting "yes," while Rep. Fred Finn (D-Belfair), Dawn Morrell (D-Puyallup), Larry Seaquist (D-Gig Harbor), and Deb Wallace (D-Vancouver), sided with Republicans in voting "no."

HB 2444 passed the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee but got hung up in Senate Rules and the Democratic leadership never brought it to a floor vote.

Bill sponsorships: The "votes" that didn't happen

Many good, bad and ugly bills never get a committee or floor vote. But take a look at the legislators who co-sponsored a few of those bills to see who supports working families and who opposes their interests (prime sponsors are listed first and Democrats are listed in **bold**):

The GOOD

HB 1340—Modifying collective bargaining laws to authorize the boards of community and technical colleges to provide additional compensation to academic employees. Sponsors: Reps. **Conway, Sells, Kenney, Sullivan, Hunt, Haigh, Appleton, Hasegawa, Pettigrew, Quall, Rolfes, Seaquist, Chase, Simpson, Campbell, Nelson, Hudgins, Ormsby, McCoy, Van De Wege, Moeller, Santos.**

HB 1992—Applies prevailing wage requirements to public-private partnerships, construction projects that involve tax incentives, or public loans or lands. Sponsors: Reps. **Conway, Simpson, Wood, Moeller, Williams, Liias, Sullivan, Chase.**

HB 2513/SB 6252—Prohibits an insurer from considering a consumer's credit history, education, or income in determining personal insurance rates, premiums, or

eligibility for coverage. Sponsors: Reps. **Nelson, Kirby, Chase, Kenney, Morrell, Hasegawa, Ormsby, Darnelle, Moeller.** Sens. **Kohl-Welles, Kline, Gordon.**

HB 2647/SB 6526—Unemployment insurance for part-time workers (see story above). Sponsors: Reps. **Conway, Moeller, Williams, Green, White, Appleton, Simpson, Kenney, Hudgins, Morrell, Hunt, Ormsby, Haigh, Roberts.** Sens. **Kohl-Welles, Franklin, Regala, Keiser, McDermott, Kline.**

HB 2553/SB 6334—Allowing workers forced to leave jobs due to "unreasonable hardship" to receive benefits (see story above). Sponsors: Reps. **Conway, Green, White, Appleton, Simpson, Ormsby, Moeller, Roberts.** Sens. **Kohl-Welles, Keiser, Kline, McDermott, Franklin.**

SB 6701—Homeowners' Bill of Rights (see story on Page 8). Sponsors: Sens. **Kline, Kohl-Welles, Jacobsen, Keiser, Gordon, Tom, Fraser, McAuliffe.**

HJM 4017—A resolution urging Congress to enact AgJOBS, the federal Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits and Security Act. AgJOBS would provide a legal, stable labor supply and help ensure that farmworkers are treated fairly, including offering undocumented workers an "earned legalization" pathway to permanent status.

Sponsors: Reps. **Chandler, Conway, Cox, Warnick, Bailey, Kenney, Johnson, and Ross.**

The BAD

Privatization of Washington's public nonprofit workers' compensation system. HB 2879 sponsors: Reps. **Ericksen, Ross, Rodne, Johnson, Klippert, Haler, Bailey, Roach, Nealey, Warnick, Angel, Short, Schmick, Pearson.** HB 3149 sponsors: Reps. **Chandler, Crouse, Ericksen, Bailey, Herrera, Haler, Kretz, Smith, Kristiansen, Nealey, Taylor, Hinkle, McCune, Schmick, Johnson, Ross, Pearson, Angel, Warnick, Short.**

HB 3020—Privatizing/eliminating the State Printer. Sponsors: Reps. **Linville and Wallace.**

The UGLY

SB 6534—Lowering our state minimum wage when inflation drops. Colorado recently became the first state ever to lower its minimum wage because, unlike all other states with indexed rates, its law didn't prohibit such cuts. Sponsors: Sens. **Holmquist, King, Stevens, Swecker, Delvin, Hewitt, Schoesler.**

War declared on workers' comp

This year, business lobbying groups set out to manufacture a mandate to "reform" Washington's public nonprofit workers' compensation system. Their rallying cry was a 7.6% average rate increase in 2010 and a mountain of misinformation and misleading statistics about the size and duration of injured workers' claims.

Among the things they failed to mention:

- Independent national studies rank Washington as having one of the lowest employer costs for workers' compensation in the country—the 5th lowest of any state, according to the definitive state-by-state analysis.
- This year's increase, raising about \$117 million, would not have been necessary had the state not granted a 6-month "rate holiday" in 2007—when employers paid NOTHING for the medical portion of their insurance—at a cost to the system of about \$315 million.
- State Fund employers' rates have risen a total of less than 8% in the five years preceding 2010.

But in Olympia, where legislators of both parties are extremely responsive to business groups' concerns,

the criticism of our state's system found a receptive audience. Several business-backed bills were introduced that would have been extremely harmful for injured workers had they passed. Among the worst were:

Compromise-and-release—HB 2950 sponsored by Rep. Jeff Morris (D-Anacortes) and SB 6638 sponsored by Rep. Janéa Holmquist (R-Moses Lake). Dubbed "starve-and-settle" by advocates for injured workers, this would allow employers to be absolved of all current and future claims against them in exchange for a lump-sum payment to an injured worker. In states that allow this, employers routinely appeal claims and drag out the process so financial pressures mount for injured workers' families who have lost their source of income. After this lengthy claims-and-appeal process, a lump-sum settlement becomes difficult to resist for desperate families, even if it won't cover their future medical costs, which are difficult to anticipate.

Privatization—Rep. Doug Ericksen (R-Ferndale) sponsored HB 2879 to privatize Washington's work-

ers' compensation system by allowing private insurance companies to sell industrial insurance coverage. This would essentially hand over our public nonprofit system to the likes of AIG, the largest workers' comp insurer in the nation, which would lead to denied claims for injured workers, more economic hardship for people suffering permanent disabilities, and higher costs for employers. (Most states that allow this have significantly higher tax rates than Washington.)

Thanks to strong opposition from Rep. Steve Conway (D-Tacoma), Chairman of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, these bills failed.

The right-wing Building Industry Association of Washington has teamed up with the insurance industry to file a privatization initiative, I-1082. The only people who will benefit from it are insurance companies and the BIAW, which has slipped in language permanently enabling them to siphon millions from the system to fund their political activities. This will be a major battle if it qualifies for this fall's ballot.

Homeowners Bill of Rights killed

For the fourth straight year, the Washington State Labor Council supported the Homeowners Bill of Rights, Sen. Adam Kline's (D-Seattle) SB 6701, allowing consumers to recover repair costs in court if their homes are damaged by negligent construction.

And for the fourth straight year, the Building Industry Association of Washington prevented a vote on the bill. It previously passed the Senate only to be quashed by House Democratic leaders. This year, Sen. Steve Hobbs (D-Lake Stevens), who previously voted for the bill, flip-flopped and decided to oppose it in this election year. Unfortunately, with no Republicans willing to buck their BIAW benefactors, Hobbs was the key to the 25 votes needed for passage, so it was never brought to the floor.

Supporters may force a vote with an Initiative to the Legislature. Stay tuned.

BUILDING TRADES BRIEFS



BIAW ♥s illegal contractors

SB 6575, sponsored by Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, was an effort to address a joint task force's recommendations on the underground economy. Business and labor came together to back this bill addressing the problem of legitimate registered contractors being undermined by illegal under-the-table contractors.

The bill passed the Senate 34-11 and was improved in Rep. Steve Conway's House Commerce and Labor Committee with tougher penalties for illegal contractors. But that change was stripped out by legislators who, acting on behalf of the BIAW, said the penalties were too harsh. Among the changes in Rep. Judy Clibborn's (D-Mercer Island) amendment (see House Vote #8) was to allow unregistered contractors to avoid stiff fines and penalties by taking a class.

After the weakened bill passed both houses, Gov. Gregoire vetoed it.

Electrical training improved

HB 2546 increases the number of classroom hours required to renew an electrical trainee certificate. Strongly supported by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, it passed the House 58-37, passed the Senate 27-20, and was signed into law by Gov. Chris Gregoire.

Jobs

Continued from Page 1

This investment will create desperately needed jobs and energy cost savings for the state over the long term.

HB 2561 passed the House 54-39 in the special session and, after being scaled back from its original investment of \$850 million, it passed the Senate 28-18 (see Senate Vote #7).

■ **Convention Center Expansion**—SB 6889, sponsored by Sen. Joe McDermott (D-West Seattle), creates the public facilities district needed to finance expansion of the State Convention and Trade Center. This will give Seattle the capability to host large, revenue-generating conventions it currently can't. This project will create 3,000 construction jobs and thousands of permanent jobs at the expanded facility. The entire cost is funded through existing hotel/motel taxes.

With some strong support from Rep. Ross Hunter (D-Medina), it passed on a bipartisan vote during the special session—91-6 in the House and 39-2 in the Senate.

■ **Low-Income Housing Program**—Rep. Tina Orwall's (D-Normandy Park) HB 2753 creates \$1 billion of housing for the working poor within

JOB KILLERS

Pundits in our state often tout the positive economic ripple effects of Boeing, Microsoft and other private-sector employers that create good family-wage jobs around the state.

But what about the State of Washington? Its employees eat, shop and recreate just like Boeing workers, creating more "multiplier effect" jobs in their communities.

Budget-balancing legislators whose first inclination is to hack away thousands of public jobs—and cut state employees' wages and benefits—should be more mindful that not only are they harming crucial services, they are cutting private-sector jobs and prolonging the recession.

proximity of transit for easy access to employment. This housing will create thousands of prevailing-wage construction jobs and housing equity for low-income workers. It passed the Senate 29-11 and the House 71-22.

■ **Server Farms**—Sen. Margarita Prentice's (D-Renton) SB 6789 provides a temporary tax exemption for companies building server farms in the state's rural counties. It passed the Senate 39-4 and the House 91-2.

■ **Supplemental Capital Budget**—Lawmakers approved a supplemental capital construction budget that will create an estimated 13,000 jobs. It includes a \$100 million "mini-Jobs Act" investment in energy efficiency work on public school buildings (\$400 million in total projects after including local and federal matching dollars); \$30 million for affordable housing; \$50 million for stormwater retrofitting; \$41 million to clean up toxic sites in Puget Sound; and more. This governor-requested budget, HB 2836 sponsored by Rep. Hans Dunshee (D-Snohomish), passed the House 61-36 and the Senate 33-13.

WHAT DIDN'T PASS were HB 3181/SB 6851, sponsored by Rep. Timm Ormsby (D-Spokane) and Sen. Ed Murray (D-Seattle). The **Working for Clean Water** bills would have increased the hazardous substances tax to fund stormwater pollution cleanup. Concerns raised by the oil refineries and members of the United Steelworkers union stymied this legislation.

The WSLC supports efforts in the interim to address USW concerns about protecting jobs, while also supporting the creation of thousands of desperately needed construction jobs protecting the Puget Sound and our lakes and rivers from pollutants.