Building a Better Oregon!

Special thanks to the 86 members and supporters who have gathered at least 10 signatures for the Better Oregon Campaign:

Howard Adler; Erika Albaraca; Kawaiji Armitage; Shannon Baker; Mike Bauer; Maranda Bish; Andrew Boehm; Rachel Bogdanoff; Kathryn Boyea; Greg Burrill; Matthew Campeau; Santha Cassell; Ellen Clarke; Diana Collins; Patricia Cooke; Leanne Cox; Meghan Delwisch; Margie Doern; Erika Durant; Gerald Eaton; Debbie Engelstad; Shannon Fuxley; Ken Gadbow; Elena García Velasco; Jeanne Grant; Rebecca Gregor; Jessica Griffith; Rachel Hanes; Terri Harrington; Ned Hascall; Joellen Holmes; Mary Houghton; Katharine Huizinga; Irene Ikada; Glen Jacobs; Katie Johnson; Chelyn Joseph; Tom Kane; Lisa Kane; Cecelia Kauth; Althea Keith; Carolyn Kurtz; Tina Lamanna; Renee Laney; Dominic Le Fave; Emily Lethlean; Karen Lettner; Rebecca Levison; Sheridan Long; Timothy Loveless; Kathrine Mann; Kevin Marguardt; Christopher Marquardt; Maya Megowan; Jeff McNeal; Joyce Meshane; Alain Millar; Kathy Moore; Hyung Nam; Michael Nolan; Ric Oleksak; Aubrey Pagenstecher; Margarette Peoples; Nathan Pier; Carol Pinegar; Evan Price; Jeffrey Ramsey; Noelle Richey; Betsy Salter; Doug Saulter; Carl Schnoor; Christina Self; Andrea Shatz; Kelly Sorg; Nancy Sullivan; Eric Swehla; Nicole Tews; Elizabeth Thiel; Amy Sue Tilt; Candice Rae Vickers; Alice Weinstein; Casey Whisler; Huck Wilken; Kathryn Wolff; Cynthia Wood; Emily Wright.

Why Joining PAT Matters More Than Ever

Remember Wisconsin and the anti-union measures Republican Governor Scott Walker rammed through the state legislature? Last week, the attack on teachers and other public employees escalated to the Supreme Court, with the controversial case, *Friedrichs vs. the California Teachers Association*.

*Friedrichs* has significant financial and political implications for the PAT because it challenges the right of public sector unions like ours to bargain for and collect ‘fair share’ or ‘agency’ fees from non-members. The legal precedent for ‘fair share’ has been in place for nearly forty years, but everything could change if the court reverses its earlier stance.

By law, all professional educators enjoy the benefits and protections of our contract, and PAT must provide representation to both members and non-members alike. Because of the benefits non-members enjoy and our union’s obligation to represent everyone, the courts have sanctioned the practice of requiring non-members to contribute to PAT for the work we do on their behalf. In our union, we collect annual dues from both members and non-members, though fair share fee payers can request a refund for the percentage of dues not used for representation and collective bargaining. But if the court rules against the union in Friedrichs, non-members would no longer be required to contribute anything to PAT. Moreover our union would have to refund the fees we collected from non-members over the past two years.

If we do nothing, this could cost PAT hundreds of thousands of dollars in the near term and do far more damage long term as it opens the door for many more educators to skip out on paying dues and opt for a "free ride". This is why deep-pocketed corporate interests and conservative activists like the Koch brothers are backing *Friedrichs*. They’re betting it will weaken public sector unions like PAT financially, and erode unity by pitting members against non-members. **We need everyone's help to address this serious threat to our union and our profession!**

At the beginning of the year, we launched a membership drive to encourage every non-member to join PAT. If you haven't already, talk to your building organizer or building representative, review the list of non-members in your building, and then ask them to join! I’ve talked to too many educators who see money coming out of their check and don’t realize they’re not full members. We need to sign every one of them up. Second, we need you to get involved and stay active in PAT. Wisconsin shows us that unions can remain strong in the kind of ‘right-to-work’ environment *Friedrichs* will create, but only if members are active and engaged.

Remember our last bargain? Whether it was wearing blue, or sending postcards to the school board, or marching across the Burnside Bridge, most members did something -- and many of you did a lot -- to stand up for the *Schools Portland Students Deserve*.

If we’re going to avoid fallout from *Friedrichs*, we’ll need to listen to our members and keep organizing. There is plenty to do, whether pushing for 30% more funding through the Better Oregon campaign or continuing our fight for the *Schools Portland Students Deserve*.

In Solidarity,

Gwen Sullivan
Better Oregon Organizing Summit

Educators from around the state gathered in Salem on January 8th and 9th to plan the next steps for the Better Oregon campaign. PAT was represented by President Gwen Sullivan, Vice-President Suzanne Cohen, Internal Lead Organizer Mike Bauer, and Zone Leaders Greg Burrill, Rebecca Levison, Matthew Oleson, and Aubrey Pagenstecher, as well as Kathi Koenig from staff.

Six OEA members were recognized at the organizing summit for their outstanding work on the campaign, including all those who’ve collected 100 signatures or more. We’re proud to report that three of the honorees were PAT members: Greg Burrill, Tom Kane, and Ric Oleksak. As an organization, PAT was also recognized for gathering the most signatures statewide, with over 3,100 submitted by the first week of January.

While we’re proud to be leading the state in signature gathering, the Summit reinforced PAT’s sense of urgency to continue our signature-gathering push since we are only a third of the way towards our collective goal of 10,000 signatures.

Teacher for a Day

On Thursday January 7th, dozens of local leaders spent the morning in a PPS classroom, part of PAT’s annual Teacher for a Day event. Guest teachers taught lessons, led small groups, and answered questions in schools across the district, working with teachers who volunteered to open their classroom for the day. A total of 46 teachers and community leaders participated in the event this year. Guest teachers saw for themselves the excellent work going on in our classrooms, as well as the challenges we face in our work with students.

Thanks to all the teachers who opened their classrooms to State Representatives and Senators, PPS administrators, City and County Commissioners, members of the media, and others. And thanks to the PAT Legislative Committee for organizing Teacher for a Day.

After spending the morning at a school, our guest teachers and host teachers came together at PAT for a luncheon, where they debriefed the day and discussed what can be done to better support our students, our teachers, and our schools.

If you are interested in participating in this or other Legislative Committee events in the future, contact your Legislative Committee Chair Elizabeth Thiel elizabeththiel@icloud.com.

OEA Assessment Symposium: January 30th

Where are student assessments headed in Oregon? Educators from around the state will join national experts for a discussion of the state of our state’s assessments and how we can finally break with narrowly-focused high-stakes testing, and the state’s punitive approach to educator accountability. For more information or to register visit the OEA website.

Social Justice & Community Outreach Committee

In January, the Social Justice and Community Outreach (SJCO) Committee will be surveying all PAT members about the various community and civic organizations you are involved with, and to determine who we should invite to our upcoming community forums. Please watch out for the survey, and if you’d like to get involved in the Committee, contact Rachel Hanes, hanesian@gmail.com.