

Remarks  
AFL-CIO Convention  
June 6, 1988

---

What draws business to Oregon?

- It isn't the beaches . . .
- It isn't the mountains . . .
- It isn't the rivers . . .
- And it isn't Neil Goldschmidt.

What attracts business to this state, more than any other factor, is you and what you bring to the workplace: your pride, your skills, your training, and your belief in the dignity of hard work.

We owe you something for that . . . \$1400 to be exact -- that's how far we have to go just to match the national average for per capita income.

In 1978 we actually beat the national average by \$160.

Oregon must not be left behind.

Getting poorer is a legacy we refuse to pass on to our children.

None of these statistics remember our children, friends, and co-workers who had to leave Oregon because no decent job could be found.

I will not rest until your members' standard of living is back up where it belongs . . . until we have improved the quality of every individual life in this state -- every one!

I will judge my success by this standard -- not by the unemployment rate . . . not by the trade balance . . . not by the Gross State Product.

The unemployment rate doesn't count the divorced mother who has to support a family on a job that pays her less because she is a woman . . .

The trade balance doesn't count the 45-year-old mill worker who lost his job to automation and now must choose between minimum wage and welfare . . .

The Gross State Product doesn't measure hardworking parents who are unable to afford homes for their families and health care for their children.

No one believes that our economic problems can be solved by a few smart politicians and a lot of money.

But the lack of a simple solution is a reason to try harder -- not to turn our backs and deny our people the right to live in a decent house, to raise a family, to send their kids to decent schools, to work for a living wage and be secure in old age . . .

Because you and I both know that Oregon's economy is undergoing fundamental change. Our products and services have to compete on a world-wide basis.

~~If we are not competitive we will lose jobs.~~

Workers must not be sacrificed during this transition.

Human beings must not be allowed to fall through the cracks.

Wage and benefit cuts are not the way to greater competitiveness.

Neither is protectionism.

The answer lies in the fully developed skills and brain power in the hands and minds of Oregon working men and women.

And that means education, training, re-training, and apprenticing in Oregon.

In the coming decade, employers will be hiring every educated person the nation can produce.

Oregon has got to be prepared.

For people without training and skills, the final decade of the twentieth century will be an economic dark age.

Oregon's message must be one of hope and promise: That each and every one of us is needed; that we cannot afford to waste potential in our battle for economic security . . .

Friends and allies need to remember where they have been, before they can talk about where they are going.

So let us again remember who we are, where we come from, and what we believe: We believe in work for all -- work that pays decent family wages -- work that gives men and women the chance to contribute to themselves, their families, and their communities.

Doug Fraser was asked once about wages for the auto workers he represents. He said that workers should be able to afford the cars they make.

We are not moving one inch from this goal: More choice, more opportunity, more disposable income in Oregonian's pockets -- we are going after that \$1400!

**Remarks  
Minimum Wage Bill Signing  
June 27, 1989**

I suspect that many of us who work in these halls sometimes wonder if what we do here has an impact; if we are really helping those who need help the most.

Today is different. Today we can proudly say to the working men and women of this state: This law is for you. It is for the young mother who struggles alone to support her children. It is for the families out there who proudly choose work over welfare and then find themselves unable to afford even the barest housing or adequate food to sustain themselves.

---

And it is for those who want to work, but instead have fallen into a demoralizing welfare system that pays better than honest labor.

Those who worked for this legislation and those who stood up and voted for it, kept faith with Oregon's working men and women. More than that they stood up for fair play and common human decency.

By their vote, they said it is wrong for a man or woman to work full-time, year-round, and not be able to earn more than 75 percent of the poverty level.

The monthly income from a full-time minimum wage job is only \$581, before taxes and social security. Welfare provides a family of three \$640 a month.

It is wrong to earn more from welfare than from work.

There are those in Salem and in Washington, D.C., who believe a fair minimum wage is bad for business. I ask them, would they trade places with a man or woman earning the minimum wage? Would they be willing to try and feed, clothe, and house their families on \$3.35 an hour? I think not. And until you have walked a mile in those shoes, don't tell me that a living wage is bad for business.

Let's remember what John F. Kennedy said, "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

SB 335 raises the minimum wage to \$3.85 in September 1989, the first increase in eight years; and then to \$4.25 on January 1, 1990; and to \$4.75 on January 1, 1991.

As of today, no other state that I know of has contemplated raising their minimum wage to \$4.75. Come 1991 I suspect we won't be alone. But if we are, it will be a statement that in Oregon those with the will to work deserve the respect and dignity that comes with a fair wage.

**Remarks  
AFL-CIO Convention  
September 18, 1989**

...I think that when the Almighty looks at Oregon these days, compared with the way things were a few short years ago, He probably wouldn't recognize this state either.

You remember what it was like.

The rest of the country called it "Reaganomics." In Oregon, we called it "Reaga-mortis."

Remember the headlines? Like this one from the Salem Statesman-Journal: "Layoffs mirror effect of recession in area."

Or how about, "Citizen Suffering: Oregon Lawmakers Shaken by Stories of Desperate Families Left Without Help."

~~And then there's my personal favorite: "Bush visits Portland, says recession is over."~~  
The year? 1982!

Now let me read to you a few more recent headlines from around the state:

"Baker County jobless rate lowest in a decade"

"Klamath County is looking good"

"Redmond is on a roll,' according to city, (and) business leaders'"

"Lots going on, growing at the Port of Morrow"

"Alcan to build \$20 million plant," in Roseburg

And finally, in last Friday's Statesman-Journal: "Oregon unemployment drops below U.S. rate." We're at 5.1% -- the lowest since 1972 when comparable figures were first compiled.

I have found that in politics a short memory can sometimes be a good thing. But I also think that friends need to sit down every so often and remember what they've done together, and what they mean to each other.

Together, we turned Oregon around, and I think we're moving in the right direction, don't you?

...Statistics are fine, but they only tell part of the story of the Oregon Comeback. Let me put a human face on those numbers.

A year and a half ago, Dick Georgian was earning \$4.00 an hour and his wife was ill and unemployed. They had no health insurance and her medical bills were so big they couldn't afford a home -- they lived in their car. The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union was aware of Dick's situation and when the Pendleton Woolen Mills plant in Milwaukie began hiring, they sent Dick to apply for a job. He was hired and has been working there for the past sixteen months as a garment cutter; he makes nearly \$9.00 an hour with fringe benefits that cover him and his family. He and his wife now have an apartment; she is well and they have a new baby.

During the campaign, when Nita Brueggeman and Tom Brumm and I greeted workers at that Pendleton plant where Dick now works, there were only 140 ACTWU members. Today, that plant employs over 230.

Keith Edwards is a journeyman electrician and a member of Electrical Workers Local 48. From 1983 to 1985, he never averaged more than a few months work each year at his trade. Like so many thousands of Oregonians he had to leave his home and his family behind to find work. In 1987, he came back to Oregon and has been working steady ever since -- first at the Fujitsu plant in Gresham and now on the Arco oil module project on Swan Island. He earns \$19.80 per hour plus over \$5 per hour in fringe benefits.

I'm not going to tell you that the Comeback has reached every community and every citizen in Oregon, or that we don't face some very real problems in the future.

One of those problems is here and now.

You all know that the men and women of the wood products industry, by the sweat of their brows, helped pull this state out of the recession.

And now they are caught in the middle of a struggle that has already meant lost jobs and income for many of them.

I believe that we can have jobs and a healthy environment. In fact, we can't have one without the other.

Oregon needs a strong wood products industry; and the wood products industry needs stable, predictable supplies of timber. That is what we are fighting for -- in our forest planning process and in the halls of Congress.

Yes, Oregon does face many problems and challenges in the future. But my friends, we have ALL earned the right to be optimistic about that future.

...Labor takes second place to no one in my administration.

No one has to tell this Governor why Oregon is back -- it's YOUR work ethic, YOUR skills, YOUR education that brought us here.

Oregon is back because YOU are quality.

All of our opportunities -- all of our hopes for the future -- circle around working families and their creativity, productivity, and security.

It's all laid out in a strategic plan for the future, called "Oregon Shines." Some of you worked on it; you will all be hearing more about it in the future.

It calls for Oregon to build a workforce that is measurably the best in the United States by the year 2000, and second to none in the world by 2010.

We will do it through sustained investment in human resources; in education and training and re-training.

It is our moon shot; it will set us apart from the rest; it will test our abilities and our talents to the limit.

But do you want to know the real difference between the Oregon of a few short years go and the Oregon of today? WE KNOW WE CAN DO IT.

We know we can BE better and DO better than we ever thought possible.

And with your help and your support we can reach our shared vision of the American Dream -- in Oregon, for all our citizens.