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Seattle OKs \$15 minimum wage



Combined Services

The Seattle City Council approved a \$15 minimum wage June 2, making it the place where the minimum wage will be the highest in the nation.

Only minutes after the vote, however, there were reports that national franchises were planning to sue over what they say is mistreatment of large businesses.

The increase will be implemented in stages, taking full effect in seven years.

An organization called 15 Now has been collecting signatures for an amendment to the city charter that would phase the increase in more quickly - in three instead of seven years. After the council vote yesterday spokespersons for the group said no final decision has been made on whether to go ahead with the ballot measure.

Newly-elected socialist council member Kshama Sawant reportedly said after the vote: "We did this, the workers did this."

Seattle's mayor Ed Murray told the press that the vote was a "bold step" in the direction of ending "30 years of systematic dismantling of the middle class."

Fast food workers at the council meeting reportedly cried after the vote.

The Seattle Times quoted Brittany Phelps, who makes \$9.50 an hour at a Seattle McDonald's

and who had brought her 5-year-old daughter to witness the historic vote: "I am really happy, this means a lot," she said, brushing tears from her eyes.

Workers at the council meeting reportedly shouted "Shame!" when the council voted down several amendments introduced by Sawant.

Sawant tried to eliminate the provision that creates a training wage for teens and a provision that allows tips and health benefits to be counted

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as part of the wage for up to 11 years.

After they voted down her amendments Sawant reportedly denounced her colleagues as corporate representatives posing as the progressive alternative to Republicans.

The state AFL-CIO hailed the victory.

The increase will be implemented in stages, taking full effect in seven years.

“The passage of the phased-in \$15 minimum wage in Seattle was a first strike against income inequality,” said Jeff Johnson, president of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO. “Finally workers get a small share of the prosperity that they create. This is a very proud moment for the labor movement.” He added: “I want to extend our thanks to all the unions and community partners that worked so hard on this organizing effort as well as Mayor Ed Murray and the City Council, but in particular, I want to thank David Freiboth, executive secretary-treasurer of the Martin Luther King Central Labor Council, UFCW 21, SEIU 775 and SEIU 1199NW for their leadership. Hopefully this will raise the level of debate around the country.”

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka released the following statement:

“Today’s vote in Seattle will go down in history as a milestone in the struggle to raise wages and ensure fair pay for all workers. It is proof that when working people organize and make their voices heard, we all benefit.

“While Republicans in Congress fail to act, Seattle, along with other cities and states around the country, is ensuring that workers receive a fair day’s pay for a hard day’s work. We have already seen progress in states from Hawaii to Minnesota, and we will continue to fight to provide every worker with a good living wage and an opportunity to achieve the American Dream.”

In just a year since fast-food workers in Seattle walked out on strike and sparked a movement for a \$15 minimum wage, they have advanced their principle goal into law.

“Fast food workers have been paving the way for a better future for low wage workers across the city,” said Crystal Thompson, a Domino’s worker who has been a leader with Working Washington in the fast food movement. “Now many workers will have the chance to raise themselves out of poverty because of the \$15 minimum wage.”

“When I see \$15,” Thompson added, “I’ll be able to afford my own place in a safe neighborhood where my kids can ride their bikes, and I’ll finally be able to go back to school.”

Get on board with the new labor movement

By PW Editorial

Social change, and especially deep-going social change in a progressive, left and socialist direction doesn’t just “happen.” It requires, first of all, real, active, and politically far-seeing social movements on the ground.

And the labor movement -- energized, growing, membership-driven, and class and democratic minded -- is an essential cornerstone of those social movements. Labor in particular and the multi-racial, female-male, young and old, native born and immigrant, gay and straight, abled and disabled, working class in general are change agents. When organized, united, and equipped with a class and democratic vision, the working class and its organized sector possess transformative power -- that is, the capacity, especially when allied to other social movements, to radically and democratically realign politics, economics, culture, and popular thinking.

Of course, labor isn’t anywhere close to being a transformative actor at this moment. In

fact, union membership is at its lowest level since World War II. Unions are on the defensive. The internal and external barriers to reconstituting a vibrant and growing labor movement are formidable, and the left in labor, while growing, is still small in numbers. Now if this were the entire story, it would be a “bummer.” But it isn’t. The story is still unfolding and it includes a significant grouping of labor leaders and activists (some who are not yet, but hoping to be soon, union members) whose aim is to break out of this defensive shell, reshape labor’s understanding of itself and its role in society, organize and welcome millions of new members into the family, and turn the tables on the corporate class and especially its right-wing supporters in the corridors of political power. Of particular importance to this process is the organization of the vast pool of low-wage workers in big-box, fast-food, retail and service industries.

The organization of this massive grouping of the working class is a big deal. The challenge for everyone is to get on board the train.

The organization of low wage workers is a big deal.

Working Families Party backs Cuomo

By David Mirtz

In spite of deep anger and skepticism about New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's sincerity, the Working Families Party has endorsed his re-election bid and he will now appear on both the Democratic and WFP ballot lines in this fall's elections. In an 11th-hour deal Cuomo publicly pledged to support pushing for a Democratic takeover of the state Senate and a number of progressive policy initiatives that until now had been blocked by a leadership coalition of a handful of "renegade" Democrats and a Republican minority.

The endorsement was part of an agreement by a "historic coalition," a WFP press release said. The coalition consists of the Working Families Party, Cuomo, New York City Mayor Bill De Blasio, State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, Comptroller Tom DiNapoli and major New York unions, including 1199 SEIU, 32BJ SEIU, CWA District One, United Federation of Teachers, Hotel Trades Council, UAW Region 9A, UFCW Local 1500, Retail and Department Store Workers (RWDSU), Mason Tenders District Council, and the Teamsters. According to the release, the deal's legislative commitments include "a robust, statewide system of public financing of elections, funding 200 community schools, a commitment to fix the school funding formula to invest more money in high-need schools, the DREAM Act, the Women's Equality Act, decriminalization of marijuana, and raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 while indexing it to inflation and allowing localities to raise it up to 30 percent higher than the state minimum wage." In a sometimes raucous convention Saturday, the Working Families Party voted to endorse Cuomo over the alternative option, which was to run its own gubernatorial candidate. An earlier Siena poll indicated that such a candidate would, while not winning, cut into Cuomo's substantial lead over Republican candi-



date Rob Astorino and deny Cuomo the impressive margin of victory he expects as he positions himself for a possible 2016 presidential bid. In a speech urging support for the governor, progressive New York City Mayor De Blasio said, "From the beginning, the Working Families Party has been the party that has stood up for an economy that works for everyone and a democracy in which every voice is heard. Tonight, that has happened again; because of the WFP, an unprecedented coalition is now committed to making a progressive vision for New York a reality." While New York is a "blue" state, progressive policy change has eluded it because of the half-century-long control of the state Senate by mostly upstate Republicans. After an unexpected win in 2012 gave the Democrats the majority, such change was again thwarted by the Independent Democratic Caucus, a small group led by Bronx Senator Jeff Klein, who set up a power-sharing arrangement with the Republican minority. Until Saturday, Cuomo had not supported returning the Senate to Democratic hands, and had even quietly supported the IDC-Republican control.

While some at the WFP convention viewed an endorsement of Cuomo as a compromise of WFP values, others saw it as an important step to moving the state in a progressive direction.

The endorsement was an agreement by a historic coalition.

Labor comes out on top in San Jose

By Henry Millstein

Election results were striking in San Jose, where working people, and city workers in particular, have faced an antagonistic city government for the past eight years.

Termed-out mayor Chuck Reed, with allies on the City Council, sought to solve the city's budget woes on the backs of city workers, putting a pension-slashing measure, Measure B, on the ballot two years ago. Faced with the threat of drastic cuts to city services, voters approved the measure by 70 percent.

The result has been an exodus of angered and demoralized police and firefighters to other cities where they can get better treatment, causing San Jose to slip from its former status as among the safest large cities in the country.

In a decisive call for a change in city leadership, 33 percent of voters cast their ballots on June 3 for County Supervisor Dave Cortese, who opposed Measure B, in a crowded field of candidates to take over as mayor of the 10th largest city in America. Council member Sam Liccardo, a Reed ally, will challenge Cortese in a November runoff, coming in 9 points behind Cortese with 25 percent of the extremely low turnout vote.

"Eight long years of failed leadership is finally coming to an end," Ben Field, Executive Officer of the South Bay Labor Council (SBLC), told a crowd of labor-backed candidates and volunteers.

¿España va ganar el título?

Por Telesur

La selección de fútbol española, vigente campeona del mundo, ya descansa en la ciudad deportiva del Atlético Paranaense, en la ciudad brasileña de Curitiba (sur) tras un largo viaje desde Washington (Estados Unidos), donde el sábado vencieron a El Salvador con marcador de dos a cero (2-0), su último juego de preparación para la Copa del Mundo.

Los jugadores españoles fueron recibidos en el aeropuerto "Afonso Pena de Curitiba" por el alcalde de la ciudad, Gustavo Fruet, y el representante del gobierno del estado de Paraná y coordinador del Mundial en Curitiba, Mario Celso Cunha.

El seleccionado ibérico se dirigió a las instalaciones del Centro de Entrenamiento do Cajú, donde también entrena el Atlético Paranaense, uno de los clubes de la ciudad de Curitiba, a 17 kilómetros del aeropuerto, donde estará alojada durante su permanencia en el torneo.

Además, está previsto que el día martes los jugadores españoles sean sometidos a reconocimientos médicos, en horas de la mañana, para luego entregarles sus acreditaciones para el Mundial.

En tanto, a las 16H00 locales (19.00 GMT) se realizará el primer entrenamiento en suelo brasileño. Asimismo, los jugadores David Silva y Raúl Albiol ofrecerán una rueda de prensa, para luego cerrar el día con una sesión de vídeo preparada por el entrenador Vicente Del Bosque, en la que empezarán a estudiar las cualidades de Holanda, su primer rival.

"La Roja" lista para medirse a El Salvador antes de partir al Mundial

La selección salvadoreña de fútbol llegó este viernes a Washington, capital estadounidense para medirse el sábado 7 de junio con el conjunto español en el último amistoso de la "La Roja" antes de viajar a Brasil para el Mundial.

El Salvador llega al partido contra España tras perder este jueves 2-1 con Costa de Marfil, en un encuentro amistoso que cerró la preparación de los africanos para el Mundial de Brasil y abrió un nuevo proceso de los centroamericanos de la mano del técnico español Albert Roca.

Por otra parte, la selección española llegó el lunes a la capital estadounidense para prepararse antes de viajar al Mundial de Brasil, donde parte como una de las favoritas tras haber ganado el anterior en Sudáfrica, y las últimas dos Eurocopas.

Los actuales Campeones del Mundo luego del encuentro con los salvadoreños, viajarán el domingo 8 de junio a Curitiba (sur de Brasil), donde quedarán concentrados a la espera de su debut ante Holanda.

"La Roja" entrenará en el Centro de Entrenamiento Alfredo Gottardi, "Cajú", ubicado en Curitiba, en el estado de Paraná. Una auténtica ciudad deportiva con ocho campos de fútbol que cumplen las normativas FIFA, un mini-estadio con capacidad para 2 mil 500 personas y las más modernas instalaciones en materia de preparación, recuperación y medicina deportiva.

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