2016 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES: DETAILED INFORMATION

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

INCLUSIONARY ZONING (LC 241). Repeal the statewide prohibition on inclusionary zoning, restoring authority to local jurisdictions to consider mixed-income and affordable housing set-asides in new residential developments.

Everyone should have access to good schools, transportation options, and housing they can afford. Cities and counties in Oregon currently lack local authority to fully address the housing needs of their communities. Today, too many Oregonians struggle to find reasonably priced housing in safe, healthy neighborhoods. Inclusionary zoning (IZ) is a basic planning tool used throughout the country since 1974 to ensure that new developments offer workforce housing options for people at all income levels.

In 1999, the Oregon Legislature passed a bill banning IZ. Texas is the only other state that prohibits this tool. By lifting the ban on inclusionary zoning, cities and counties across the state will have the ability to use this effective tool to develop local solutions to address local problems. Lifting the ban on inclusionary zoning will:

- Alleviate displacement, concentrated poverty, and racial segregation
- Free limited public resources for families most in need
- Promote community health, prosperity, and social equity

STOP WAGE THEFT. Provides low-wage, immigrant and contingent workers with tools to recover wages owed to them:

a) requires employers to provide employees their wage-and-hour records, such as paystubs or other documentation;

b) gives BOLI the ability to require employers with a record of wage violations to post a bond or a similar letter of credit to ensure future payment of wages;

c) on public contracts, contractors must pay the prevailing wage rate to their employees – intentional violations would be punishable under criminal felony charges; and

Wage theft, the act of not paying workers for all or part of the work they perform, is hitting low-wage and vulnerable families the hardest and has reached epidemic proportions in Oregon. This bill will ensure low-wage, immigrant, and contingent workers will have more tools to protect and defend themselves against wage theft and that their hard earned paycheck goes to where it should: to them and their families.

The bill is being introduced by the Oregon Coalition to Stop Wage Theft, led by the Northwest Workers’ Justice Project (NWJP). The Coalition is composed of 38 faith, labor, and small-business organizations and it seeks to put a stop to wage theft in Oregon by utilizing a multipronged approach that involves worker leadership development, grassroots efforts, education and training, and policy advocacy. Our vulnerable communities face complex, interrelated problems: unemployment, poverty, affordable housing shortages, wealth and income disparities, and health disparities, high rates of incarceration, racial profiling, police brutality and many others. At the most basic level, immigrant and low-wage workers deserve to be paid for the work they do, and wage theft continues to be regarded as a rare occurrence while, in fact, it is widespread, prevalent, tolerated, and terrifyingly effective as a profit-maximizing tool.
HEALTH EQUITY

BASIC HEALTH PLAN. BHP is a waiver under the Affordable Care Act to deliver more comprehensive health coverage to the consumer at a lower cost.

A BHP for Oregon could reach many Oregonians who are currently uninsured, an estimated 383,000. This disproportionately include low-income, rural families, LGBTQ individuals, and communities of color such as Pacific Islanders that face federal Medicaid exclusion. BHP would offer more affordable coverage than marketplace plans to low-income Oregonians who make too much to qualify for the Oregon Health Plan. It would also increase coverage and reduce disparities among the groups mentioned above who are more at risk of being uninsured. APANO is a lead partner for BHP, along with over 20 health, labor, and community groups; it is also a priority issue of OHEA, the Oregon Health Equity Alliance.

Though successful lobbying in the 2015 Legislative Session, we were able to convene a diverse stakeholders group to review the potential impact of BHP in Oregon. Findings and recommendations are being delivered in Fall 2015; for the 2016 short session, we are drafting up language to direct Oregon Health Authority to create a blueprint for BHP implementation based on the stakeholder committee.

COFA PREMIUM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. A premium assistance program would cover and protect the health of income-eligible Oregon COFA residents with modest (Silver level) insurance coverage with zero premiums and out-of-pocket expenses, the equivalent to OHP.

We are advocating for the state to establish a temporary state premium assistance program for 1,000 COFA adults who would otherwise qualify for OHP (Medicaid). Although this is a temporary solution, we are also advocating for a longer-term solution including the Basic Health Plan (covering COFA and additional low-income Oregonians) and federal restoration of Medicaid funds for COFA.

In Oregon, Pacific Islanders from Compact of Free Association (COFA) states* legally live, work, pay taxes and study in Oregon yet face a lifetime ban from Medicaid. In 1996, Congress stripped protection from COFA residents when it overhauled welfare. Since the 1940s, the US has located military bases on the islands and have used it’s strategic location during WWII and to conduct nuclear testing. People of COFA nations are permitted to reside in the U.S. in exchange for continued US military occupation. These populations endure a range of health issues due to US involvement and military activities on their islands. Oregon has the 3rd largest population of COFA in the U.S. (about 3,000).

We can improve the health of this community by covering all COFA residents in the Oregon Health Plan. APANO and partners from the COFA communities such as CANN (COFA Alliance National Network) are leading this effort.

*COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION (COFA) The countries of Republic of Palau (ROP), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) have a unique immigration relationship with the United States. These independent nations have allowed the U.S. Military to occupy their land and sea territory in exchange for security and long term restitution for health and environmental damages. For over 60 years, the U.S. has performed atomic nuclear testing and ballistic missile exercises, displacing families and damaging the economy. The US Congress entered into Compacts with the FSM, RMI and ROP in 1986 and 1994 respectively, with the option for renewal in 2023. The U.S. has secured continued use of many military ranges until 2066. Each Compact provides for the health, housing and security of COFA citizens who remain in their home countries and provides the right for COFA citizens to live and work in the United States. However, when immigrating to the United States, COFA face enormous challenges. Despite the assurances of the compact, once in the U.S. COFA are excluded from many essential low-income, federal services such as higher-education loans, Medicaid, TANF and SNAP programs.
**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

**CULLY PARK.** Let Us Build Cully Park! (LUBCP!), a response to the Cully Neighborhood’s long-standing need for healthy open spaces, recreational facilities, youth education, cultural expression, and for community engagement in planning a better neighborhood future.

Portland’s largest neighborhood, Cully faces clear disparities: 26% of Cully residents live in poverty; 51% of Cully residents are people of color; 24% of residents live within ¼ mile of a park (compared to a regional average/RA of 49%); 5% of residents live within ¼ mile of habitat (RA: 64%). In Cully-serving schools, almost 9 in 10 students qualify for free/reduced lunch. These children lack places to play and experience nature, key to health, well-being and academic achievement. By developing Cully Park, Verde transforms a 25-acre brownfield into a public park, a new community asset that provides opportunities for healthy eating and active living, educates youth, creates jobs and sets a template for community development of environmental infrastructure.

In 2012, Portland City Council approved a public-private partnership between Portland Parks and Verde. The resulting City-Verde Agreement authorizes Verde to fundraise for, design and construct a phased plan for Park improvements, known as Cully Park Phase 1. Since 2012, Verde has raised over $5.8M toward Cully Park’s $8.5M budget.

In 2015, Verde implemented a significant construction program at Cully Park: Extending (raising the elevation of) the landfill gas wellheads to finished grade; Mass grading the full site with roughly 70,000 yds$^3$ of clean fill imported in 2014; Completing turf removal, hydroseeding and native plant installation on the North Slope; Building NE 72nd greenstreet; and Beginning construction of the Intertribal Gathering Garden. With timely completion of our fundraising goals, Verde can complete construction of Cully Park in 2016. Remaining items include: Nature Play Area; Fitness Center; Trails; Overlooks; Picnic Areas; Off-Leash Dog Area; Youth Soccer Field; Parking Lot.

**HEALTHY CLIMATE BILL (LC 48).** The Healthy Climate Bill could help Oregon meets its statutory climate pollution reduction goals, hold major polluters accountable for their contribution to global warming, and reap the benefits of the transition to clean energy for our state.

This bill includes a cap and invest model to help meet reduction goals, with potential to link to other West Coast carbon markets. Climate change is urgent, and inaction is not an option. Climate change also has a disproportionate impact on Oregon’s rural and urban low-income people and people of color, communities that already suffer from clear economic, health and environmental disparities.

Poorly designed climate solutions can increase costs for low-income households because these communities already spend a higher percentage of their income on transportation and energy, and have fewer resources to invest in climate mitigation measures. Furthermore, low-income people and people of color are underrepresented in climate decision-making, even though they are on the front lines of climate change.

If this bill and other climate policies are designed poorly/inequitably, it could lead to exacerbated and deepened inequities. We must protect historically underserved communities locally and globally; reinvest revenues in ways that reduce disparities and create benefits and opportunities for historically underserved communities; and require inclusive, transparent and accountable policy development and implementation. (Prevent harm, Create benefit, and provide an inclusive process.)