

# The Oregonian



WEATHER: Showers;  
high 54, low 39 — Page A2

## AFL-CIO endorses AuCoin

□ The Democrat gets the labor group's early nod and potential campaign-fund windfall despite Sen. Packwood's bid to block it

By **JEFF MAPES**  
of *The Oregonian* staff

SALEM — Democratic Senate candidate Les AuCoin won an unprecedented early endorsement Friday from the Oregon AFL-CIO that could quickly pump thousands of dollars into his campaign.

The Forest Grove congressman won the backing despite a determined effort to block the endorsement by Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., who had met with several labor groups to warn he might not provide as much help to unions if he received this "kick in the teeth."

Packwood and AuCoin both made last-minute

itches to the AFL-CIO's political committee, which voted 44-3 to endorse AuCoin in both the primary and general elections during a morning meeting at a Salem restaurant. Afterward AuCoin said the labor backing would help him both in the primary against Democratic rival Harry Lonsdale and against Packwood in the general election.

Packwood, meanwhile, said that he would consider once again taking money from political action committees to help offset the money AuCoin would get from labor unions.

Packwood has not taken money from PACs since 1986 and has instead relied on individual contributions from business people and from national direct-mail appeals. However, some political observers said Packwood has had a harder time this year tapping the business community for non-PAC contributions.

Elaine Franklin, the senator's chief aide, said she "sees no reason why we should run this campaign with one hand tied behind our backs" by continuing to refuse PAC money.



SHAN GORDON  
U.S. Rep. Les AuCoin, D-Ore., hugs a supporter after winning the Oregon AFL-CIO's endorsement in the 1992 U.S. Senate race.

Please turn to  
AFL-CIO, Page A15

# AFL-CIO: Union PACs now open to candidate

■ Continued from Page One

Packwood reported having \$1.6 million in the bank last July 1 while AuCoin reported having just under \$500,000.

With the labor endorsement, AuCoin can now ask individual union PACs for the full \$10,000 they are allowed to give to congressional candidates in the primary and general election. A motion to also endorse Packwood in his primary against Republican rivals Joe Lutz and John DeZell was defeated on a voice vote.

The Oregon AFL-CIO traditionally does not make general-election endorsements until after the May primary, but AuCoin spent several months seeking an early endorsement in the hope it would give him solid backing from a major interest group as well as deliver a blow to Packwood.

"Democratic campaigns have to have strong support from working people," said AuCoin, adding it would help him meet his goal of raising \$4 million for his campaign.

Lonsdale's campaign manager, Rich McIntyre, said he didn't think the early endorsement would help AuCoin in the primary.

"The leadership of labor is not in touch with the rank and file," said McIntyre. "The Lonsdale campaign has a lot of labor supporters."

AuCoin told labor officials that they should support him because he has voted with unions on such major issues as opposing a free-trade pact with Mexico.

"I vote on the basis of what you say are hardcore issues," said AuCoin, contrasting his lifetime AFL-CIO record of 74 percent with Packwood's, which is at 47 percent.

Packwood argued that he has a good voting record with labor for a Republican and charged that AuCoin has started voting against free-trade pacts in an effort to curry support from labor.

"He changed what he stood for for the rest of his career because of a litmus test" from labor, Packwood said.

"I'm nobody's lapdog," he added. "Not Richard Nixon's, not Ronald Reagan's, not the chamber of commerce, and not yours."

AuCoin denied he has changed his votes on trade, saying that he was willing to negotiate trade pacts with countries that have good employment and environmental standards. But a free-trade pact with Mexico could hasten the exodus of factory jobs from the U.S. as employers seek lower wage costs, AuCoin said.

Several labor officials said they had been put off by what they regarded as threats from Packwood to retaliate if they gave the early endorsement to AuCoin.

Sam Rutledge, first vice president of the state AFL-CIO, said that during a recent labor meeting in Klamath Falls, Packwood warned that if the endorsement went to AuCoin, "When you come to me in the future, I may not be very receptive."

Franklin, Packwood's chief aide, said in an interview earlier this week that the senator would not change his votes.

Packwood delivered no such warnings during Friday's meeting, although he said afterward that "if you have 100 things that demand your time and you can do 20... then you're inclined to weigh what 20 you'll work on the hardest."

The only votes against the early endorsement from AuCoin came from members of the Western Council of Industrial Workers, a union representing woodworkers.

Paul Morehead, a union delegate from Joseph, said Packwood had been a stronger backer of the timber industry.