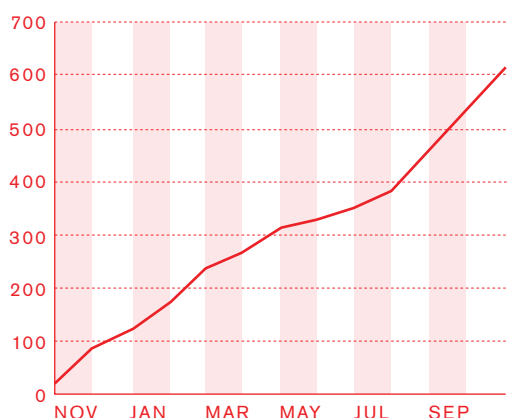


2017 in Review

Portland DSA Goes BOOM!



What a year it's been! As a new generation warms to the word socialism¹ and interest in DSA grows nationally, the Portland chapter has exploded, growing from 15 members to over 600 in just twelve months. And our members have been very busy, making waves and receiving media coverage locally,² nationally,³ and globally.⁴ With so much to do to create the kind of world we believe in, it's easy to forget how much work we've already done. So as this holiday season begins, we thought it would be nice to look back at the past year's activities and accomplishments throughout the chapter.

Lobbying and Electoral Activism

Our external organizing kicked off when the state legislature convened in February for the spring session, which ended in July. Members of our legislative working group were highly active throughout, agitating for higher

taxes on corporations and increased funding for schools and other public services as well as advocating for the working class in other policy areas, including renter protections (HB 2004), criminal justice reform (HB 3078), and campaign finance (HB 2578). In addition to organizing calls from chapter members to their state representatives on numerous occasions, DSA led seven well-attended trips to Salem to lobby the legislature in person, in many cases side-by-side with our allies at larger rallies. A number of our members also attended their representatives' town hall meetings, and nine took part in a March training session to learn effective techniques for activism in that setting. At the federal level, members repeatedly pressured Senator Wyden on his failure to support Medicare-for-All and his shocking sponsorship of a bill that would criminalize support for the BDS movement.

1. Magness, Josh. "Millennials Aren't Satisfied With Capitalism — and Might Prefer a Socialist Country, Studies Find." *The Sacramento Bee* 4 Nov. 2017. <http://bit.ly/2zeIDmb>

2. Mesh, Aaron. "Portland Now Has 600 Dues-Paying Democratic Socialists" *Willamette Week* 2 Nov. 2017. <http://bit.ly/2BFL1Cx>

3. Hansen, Kristena. "Lawmakers Advance \$8.2B Education Bill Amid Union Rally" *The Washington Times* 6 Jun. 2017. <http://bit.ly/2k0o71y>

4. McGreal, Chris. "'The S-word': How Young Americans Fell in Love With Socialism" *The Guardian* 2 Sep. 2017. <http://bit.ly/2vzZIUU>



In municipal politics, Portland DSA wrote an open letter to Mayor Wheeler asking him to condemn the racist Patriot Prayer rally and submitted a series of comments on his selection of a new police chief. Our members also attended multiple city council meetings to demand greater community oversight of the police. When DSA member Jon Grant ran for Seattle City Council, our chapter joined his campaign, knocking about 175 doors and making approximately 400 phone calls on his behalf. Although Grant was not elected, his campaign did unprecedented work raising the profile of Seattle's houseless population, and our participation solidified ties with the Seattle chapter.

Fighting Fascism

This year has seen an ugly rash of white supremacist terrorist attacks, and our members have taken action in response. After noted local neo-Nazi Jeremy Christian fatally stabbed two bystanders who attempted to protect two girls he was threatening on a MAX train, Portland DSA and a coalition of other groups organized the Portland Stands United Against Hate rally. Members also attended a vigil honoring the victims and several workshops on bystander intervention in the month following the attack. And after Heather Heyer was killed in a truck ramming attack while protesting the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Portland DSA co-hosted a panel discussion titled "No More Charlottesville! How Can Socialists Fight the Right?" In September, DSA, SA, and ISO marched together as a unified socialist contingent in a second United Against Hate rally. In other anti-racist work this year, our members showed up in solidarity with Milenio and Voz at a rally to save DACA and to protest Jeff Sessions' September visit to Portland.





Socialist Feminism

Portland DSA celebrated a major victory on August 15th, when the groundbreaking Reproductive Health Equity Act (HB 3391) was signed into state law. The law brings Oregon into a group of ten states that have acted to ensure abortion rights will remain protected at the state level even if Roe v. Wade were someday overturned. Furthermore, it's the first of its kind to mandate coverage of birth control and abortion services at no cost to the patient, regardless of income, citizenship status, or gender identity. Activists in our feminist branch worked hard to help secure this victory, organizing a lobbying day in Salem this past February and hosting two panel discussions to help inform the public on the law's benefits and educate other activists on the strategies behind it.

Other activities organized through our feminist branch this year include a screening of *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*, a presentation on the meaning of socialist feminism at Lewis and Clark College, as well as a workshop on citizen lobbying and running for office with over 110 attendees. Portland DSA also served alongside the Portland Peace Team as head of peacekeeping for the historic Women's March this past January, which was attended by 100,000 in Portland.⁵

Unions and Labor

Activists in our labor branch were busy as well. In April, the chapter sent a large group of members to Labor Notes' Troublemakers School, a series of training sessions on labor organizing, and in October, Portland DSA hosted its own Union Organizing 101 workshop. Throughout the year, members showed up to agitate in solidarity with local telecom workers, teachers, retail employees, and food service workers at pickets and other events. Portland DSA was also active in this year's May Day events, hosting a lecture on the history of May Day and organizing a large rally and march along with other members of a local coalition.

5. "Huge Crowd at Portland Women's March Fills City Center" *The Oregonian* 21 Jan. 2017. <http://bit.ly/2AWokxd>



Healthcare as a Human Right

After the national convention in August, DSA voted to make Medicare-for-All our number one organization-wide priority, but our chapter's work to implement single-payer healthcare in Oregon goes back earlier. In April, a number of our activists lobbied for SB 1046 in Salem, and in May the chapter voted to join the Health Care for All Oregon coalition. Since then, we've worked with HCAO to develop a canvassing campaign to grow support for single-payer in advance of the potential 2020 ballot measure, building on the program pioneered by the East Bay DSA chapter. So far, we've held four successful canvassing days and knocked over 1,000 doors, largely in working-class neighborhoods, spreading awareness of DSA as we go and garnering a favorable write-up in Willamette Week.² In addition, Portland DSA hosted two town hall-style community meetings in October to help educate the public on the benefits of single-payer.

Socialist Study

Not everything DSA does to bring about socialism in America is externally-oriented activism — we also work to help our own members sharpen their analysis of history and solidify their vision for the future. To that end, throughout the year attendees at Portland DSA's reading group studied 35+ book excerpts and articles from classic thinkers including Marx, Engels, and Luxemburg, as well as modern voices such as Noam Chomsky, David Graeber, and Seth Ackerman. They discussed the readings at 17+ meetings, with one attendee reporting an “awesome” experience with “smart and well spoken” participants.



Let's Make 2018 Even Bigger

We did much more this year than we have space to highlight here. In all, Portland DSA members helped host 15+ workshops, panel discussions, lectures, and film screenings; attended 15+ rallies, vigils, and protests; lobbied the state legislature, city council, and others at 12+ events; and attended 9+ canvassing and phone-banking sessions. Want to be a bigger part of the movement next year? Here are three ways to start:

Renew

Have you renewed your membership at dsausa.org/join? Our dues keep America's largest socialist organization up and running, but no member is turned away for lack of funds.

Reach

Share this 2017 review with a friend to help them learn what we do, then bring them to an upcoming meeting.

Revolutionize

Push outside your comfort zone and fight for a better world! If you've never canvassed before, our campaign for Measure 101 and single-payer is a great place to start. Email the chapter to learn more: dsaportlandoregon@gmail.com

Here's to a good year and an even brighter future!

