

Portland: “The government does not represent the people”

7 October 2011

In one of the largest protests in Portland in years, thousands of demonstrators converged on Water Front Park in sympathy with the Occupy Wall Street movement.

With estimates of participants ranging from 10,000 reported on *The Oregonian* to 5,000 by the Portland Police Department, demonstrators wound their way through downtown streets to Pioneer Square, which became so congested that about a thousand people were unable to enter the square.

Though most protesters were youth, large numbers of families and older workers also attended, with many expressing the same sentiment that one worker told the WSW: “This is long overdue.”

John Nestor explained, “I am here because the government doesn’t represent the people. I am self-employed and I do any work in order to survive.” Commenting on Obama’s health care reform, Nestor said: “I don’t have health care and I’m wary of anything where you are required by the government to pay for health. These corporations are part of the problem. Capitalism itself is insane. So that’s why I am here.”

The WSW spoke to a young couple with a newborn at their first protest. John, commenting on the Occupy structure, said: “I never really thought protesting ever really made a difference. If this stays through, the general assembly way should get changes.”

Eryn, a health care student, said: “I don’t think any health care reform has ever been presented that is good. Health care should be free.”

Aaron, a student at Lewis and Clark College, told the WSW, “A lot of my reason for being here is solidarity with the people being attacked by police at the Occupy Wall Street. And, I am opposed to the Citizen’s United ruling giving corporations the same standing as people.”

Stan Martin stated that, “This is long overdue. It’s thrilling. I have a master’s degree in sociology. Everything we try to do is a compromise with the system. There has been an undercurrent of discontent for a long time. It’s going to get bigger and bigger because there is so much wrong.”



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