
Union president faces recall effort
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PORTLAND - The president of Oregon's largest union for state employees is facing a recall effort because of his claim that he is owed more than \$100,000 in back overtime pay.

The president of Local 503 of the Services Employees International Union has traditionally been seen as a management position exempt from overtime, according to those seeking to recall Joe DiNicola.

"We want to hold our leaders accountable just like the public wants public employees held accountable," said Barbara Casey, an SEIU board member backing the recall.

DiNicola, meanwhile, is seeking a court order charging that union and government resources are being used to aid the recall, which SEIU denies. He also has filed a civil rights complaint charging he has been discriminated against for making his wage claim.

His attorney, Kevin Lafky, said that under the agreement between the state and the union, DiNicola should be entitled to the same compensation - including overtime - that he received in his regular job as a corporate tax auditor for the state Department of Revenue.

Under the agreement, DiNicola continues to collect his public employee salary from the state, which is then reimbursed by the union.

DiNicola received \$83,562 in compensation from the union in 2006, according to a report by Bredhoff & Kaiser, a Washington, D.C., law firm hired by the union. The report said DiNicola did not ask for overtime until late February or March of this year. At that time, he submitted a request for 96 hours of overtime for February, which was turned down by the board.

DiNicola responded by filing a wage claim with the Department of Revenue for 2,596 hours of overtime accumulated since he became president in 2004.

Members of the Local 503 board have now adopted a rule prohibiting DiNicola from working more than 40 hours a week. Since then, recall supporters say, DiNicola has left board meetings early at least twice, announcing he had already put in his 40 hours.

"It's a slap in the face to those of us who have put in countless hours of volunteer time" on union activities, said Star Holmberg, a board member who supports the recall.