/ Local News / Washington AP
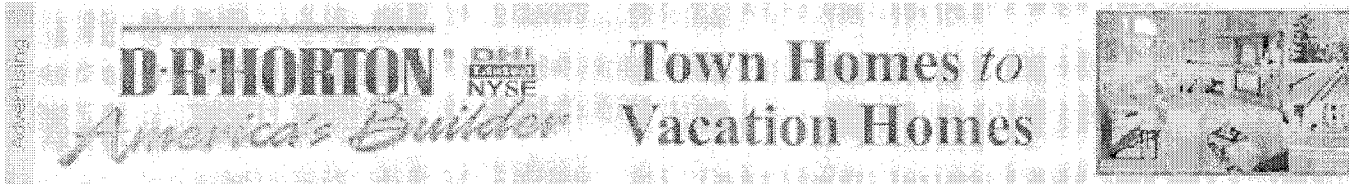
Oregon and SW Washington
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Washington state news briefs

06/07/2006

Associated Press

A group of public employees has settled a federal lawsuit against state government's largest labor union, ending a battle over how the union collected mandatory fees.

The agreement was announced Tuesday by the National Right to Work Foundation, a union critic that helped file the lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Spokane.
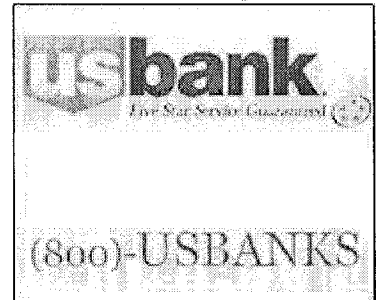
The settlement includes a $5,000 in damages and separate attorney's fees, parties in the case said. It was offered last month by the Washington Federation of State Employees, which represents about 38,000 workers.

State workers who are covered by the union's bargaining efforts are required to pay certain fees in lieu of dues if they do not want to join the union. Those fees are not supposed to pay for the union's political activities.

The lawsuit argued that the union violated workers' rights by failing to give a proper accounting of how the dues and other required union fees would be spent.

Union officials changed course shortly after the lawsuit was filed, acknowledging their paperwork was missing crucial elements.