

# The St. Paul Union Advocate

123rd Year, No. 4, Issue 5431

For union homes in Ramsey, Dakota, Washington and Chisago counties

October 2019

## Labor Endorsed

Nov. 5 General Election

### St. Paul City Council

- Ward 2: Rebecca Noecker
- Ward 3: Chris Tolbert
- Ward 4: Mitra Jalali Nelson
- Ward 5: Amy Brendmoen
- Ward 6: Nelsie Yang
- Ward 7: Jane Prince

### St. Paul School Board:

- Chauntyll Allen, Zuki Ellis, Steve Marchese

### Ramsey County Board

- District 1 Commissioner (special election): Nicole Frethem

### White Bear Lake School Board (ISD 624):

- Margaret Newmaster, Angela Thompson, Scott Wilson

### Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School Board (ISD 196):

- Joel Albright, Sachin Issacs, Jackie Magnuson

### School Referendums -

- Vote Yes:** Burnsville-Eagan-Savage (levy), Lakeville (levy and bond), Mounds View (levy), Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan (levy), White Bear Lake (bond)



## Roofers aim to get more kids outdoors



Gavin Goenner, 11, tried his hand at clay shooting with coaching from Kinsey Robinson, international president of the United Union of Roofers, during Get Youth Outdoors Day Sept. 14. Robinson traveled to Minnesota for a weekend of outdoors activity, including Roofers Local 96's annual sporting clays shoot, which raised \$150,000 for community outreach and conservation efforts. **Read more about the outdoors events on Page 7.** Union Advocate photos

## Carpenters say prominent developer turns blind eye to abuse allegations

By Michael Moore  
*Union Advocate editor*

What might have been a routine redevelopment deal instead prompted members of the Roseville City Council last month to weigh their oversight responsibilities when it comes to developers reaping tax benefits from the northern suburb.

During a final round of public comment on an arrangement between the city and Reuter Walton Companies, two carpenters stepped forward and detailed abuses they experienced while working on the Minneapolis-based developer's construction sites.

Samuel Saucedo of Minneapolis and Eric Macias of Rochester say they are still owed thousands of dollars in unpaid wages for work they did on Reuter Walton projects over the course of more than a year.

The two men, who often worked side by side, decided about a year ago to stop accepting jobs arranged by a common "labor broker," Jose Merino. That included jobs on Reuter Walton sites.

They subsequently filed complaints with the state Department of Labor, but

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

## Despite record profits, GM 'refuses to give an inch'

### PAI Union News Service

**DETROIT** – General Motors' intransigence in negotiations – and unwillingness to restore financial hits workers took during and after the Great Recession – forced 49,200 members of the Auto Workers to strike at 11:59 pm Sept. 15.

The largest Detroit-based automaker retaliated by stripping workers of their health insurance without notice, and dumping it on the UAW strike fund.

"Taking our health care is sickening," the union said in introducing a video about Laura Prater, a hospitalized GM worker in Springhill, Tenn., who woke up the morning of Sept. 17 worrying about how she would pay the bills, rather than how she would get well after surgery.

GM "refuses to give even an inch" in negotiations, union spokesman Brian Rothenberg said, despite near-record profits for the automaker of almost \$12

billion last year and triple that over the last three years.

The GM strike is the largest private-sector strike in the U.S. in at least a year. Almost simultaneously, the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions announced more than 80,000 workers were planning a week-long strike at the California-based hospital chain.



## Go Figure

**49,200**

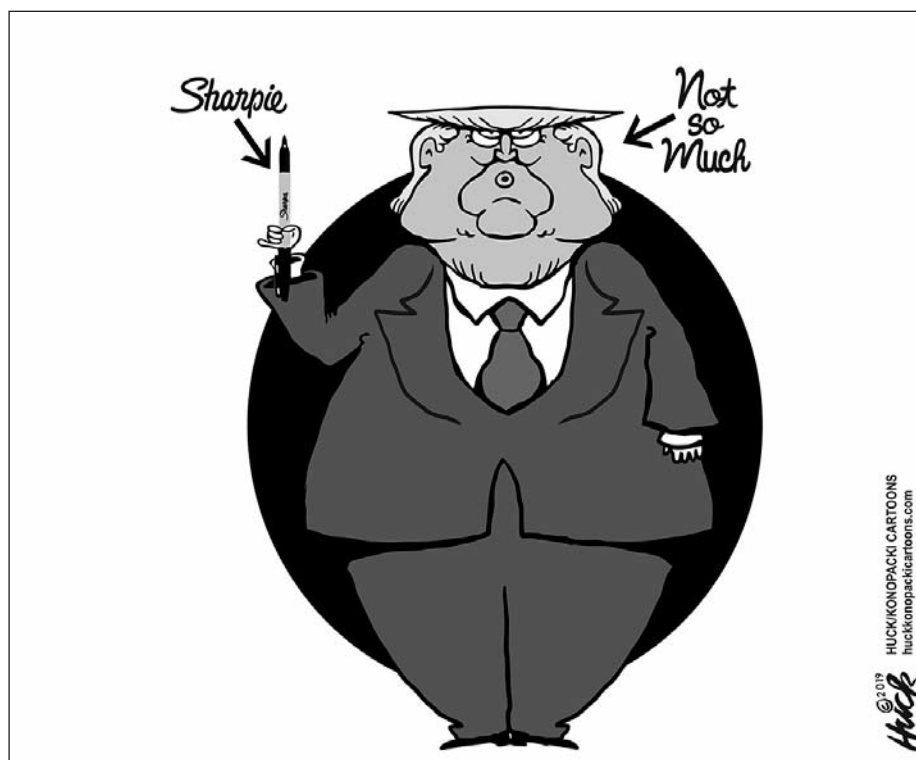
Members of the United Auto Workers employed by General Motors who went on strike nationwide Sept. 15

**\$35 billion**

GM's record-setting profits over the last 3 years. Yet GM has demanded workers pay more for their health insurance and accept wage increases below inflation

**\$22 million**

GM CEO Mary Barra's total compensation last year, or roughly 281 times the median GE employee's earnings



## Voices: Commissioner Nancy Leppink

**Standing our ground, 'leaning in' for better workplaces**

As we recognized Labor Day last month, it served as a reminder that we must stand our ground to protect the progress that has been made for workers.

But we also need to stay vigilant and "lean in" on these issues because the drivers of change – such as technology, globalization, climate, and demographics – challenge the foundations of decent work.

For all Minnesotans to share in the prosperity of our state's vibrant and diverse economy, we must ensure prosperity is built on the foundation of decent work that pays a fair wage, is safe and supports health, is inclusive and equitable, and provides needed protections, such as a fair and balanced workers' compensation system and paid family and medical leave.

We must stand our ground on the significant historical achievements of registered apprenticeship that successfully built pathways to decent jobs in the construction sector. We must also lean in to ensure registered apprenticeship is valued as a viable model today for meeting the workforce needs of the future in industries such as advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care and information technology.

We also need to stand our ground on workplace safety and health. It is crucial we double down to address the known and deadly hazards that continue to regularly injure and kill workers, such as falls, being struck by machinery, musculoskeletal disorders and exposure to chemicals. We must lean in to see whether future work has or will have a positive impact or not. It is no longer acceptable to have a "wait and see" attitude about what the safety or health impact of the future of work will be. In the data-rich world we live in, we must use that data to predict and prevent the impact the changes in work will have on worker safety and health. We need to hold accountable the future work creators and ensure they value the safety and health of workers as much as productivity and profit.

Another growing need is to stand our ground on

**"It is no longer acceptable to have a 'wait-and-see' attitude about safety or health impacts of future work."**

– Nancy Leppink



leave laws so workers can exercise their rights and attend to medical and family needs without risk of losing their jobs. Here also, we need to lean in because workers need to be able to take time from work without losing the income needed to support their families and themselves.

Finally, we need to stand our ground on the core principle of decent work: that a fair day's work should receive a fair day's pay.

During this past legislative session, a coalition of leaders leaned in on the growing problem of wage theft and passed Minnesota's new wage theft law that created additional protections for workers, added criminal penalties for employers that commit wage theft and leveled the playing field for employers that play by the rules and pay a fair wage.

During the next year, our agency will put together its new wage theft enforcement program. We will add and train staff members to perform strategic and targeted workplace enforcement and conduct outreach and education for employers, workers and their communities.

We need to stand our ground and lean in on these issues because the future of work should still be about dignity, respect and common decency.

– Nancy Leppink is commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. A native of Two Harbors, Leppink worked as a branch chief for the International Labour Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, before accepting a position in Gov. Tim Walz's cabinet earlier this year.

**LA Letters**

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- Fax them to 651-293-1989
- Email them to: [mmoore@stpaulunions.org](mailto:mmoore@stpaulunions.org)

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Member International Labor Communications Association.

## State Supreme Court orders Twin Cities home health company to compensate workers for unpaid OT

### Social Security: keep it working!

The Minnesota State Retiree Council and the University of Minnesota's Labor Education Service will co-host a panel discussion Oct. 13 in Blaine on the future of Social Security.

The featured guest is Nancy Altman, president of Social Security Works and the author of two books on Social Security. Altman is currently serving a six-year term on the Social Security Advisory Board, a bipartisan, independent federal advisory panel.

The event will run from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at the Teamsters Local 120 hall, 9422 Ulysses St. NE. It will also stream live on LES's Facebook page for those unable to attend in person.

### Party for progress at CTUL gala

Twin Cities worker center CTUL will celebrate its victories and raise funds for future campaigns at an annual gala Oct. 24 in Minneapolis, featuring art, food, music and solidarity.

CTUL members and organizers have played vital roles in campaigns to raise the minimum wage and secure earned sick and safe time for all workers in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The organization also has helped shine a spotlight on the need for wage-theft enforcement at the state and local levels.

"Currently, we are in the midst of a campaign to fight for a safe and dignified working environment for construction workers in the Twin Cities, and have already organized with workers to recover \$250,000 in stolen wages in the construction industry alone," CTUL's Veronica Mendez Moore said in an email to supporters. "We invite you to attend the gala and invest in this vital work!"

Learn more and secure tickets to the gala at [ctul.net](http://ctul.net).

### 'Another World is Possible' exhibit opens

An exhibition of art by Twin Cities Ricardo Levins Morales, a longtime champion of labor and progressive movements, will run Oct. 5 through Nov. 22 at CTUL's Minneapolis offices, located at 3715 Chicago Ave.

The worker center will hold an opening-night party to celebrate the exhibition, entitled "Another World is Possible," from 5 to 8 p.m. Oct. 5.

Levins Morales is a member of the Minnesota Newspaper and Communications Guild, CWA. Learn more about his work online at [www.rlmartstudio.com](http://www.rlmartstudio.com).

Working people won big at the Minnesota Supreme Court last month.

In a decision issued Sept. 18, justices sided with the state Department of Labor, upholding an order requiring Twin Cities-based Baywood Home Care to fork over about \$550,000 in unpaid overtime wages to its employees. The private home health company will pay an equal amount in damages as well.

Labor Commissioner Nancy Leppink applauded the ruling.

"All Minnesotans deserve to be paid every dollar they are owed for the work they perform," she said. "But too many workers are not being paid their full wages. With this decision, these employees are now one step closer to being correctly compensated for their work and for the harm they experienced."

The case began in 2014, when the labor department received a complaint alleging Baywood was not paying overtime in accordance with state law. Minnesota's Fair Labor Standards Act

requires employers to pay overtime wages – a time-and-a-half rate, at minimum – any time an employee's workweek exceeds 48 hours.

Baywood's home health workers, whose shifts lasted 24 hours at a time, were paid a daily rate, which did not change even when they worked more than 48 hours in a week.

The Supreme Court upheld the DLI's finding that daily rates are no substitute for overtime pay. Once an employee exceeds 48 hours in a week, that worker is entitled to time and a half, the court ruled, "regardless of how the employee was compensated prior to working 48 hours."

"The ruling makes clear that employer schemes – old and new – that are used to deny workers the wages they are legally owed will not withstand the scrutiny of the department and of the Minnesota Supreme Court," Leppink said.

Notably, Baywood workers were not eligible for overtime pay until 2015.

### Letters

#### Getting personal is key to union growth

Reflecting back upon my career, where I've been fortunate to have been a union member through most of it, I think back to the days when I was a rank-and-file union member with no leadership responsibility, and how empowered I felt to carry the distinction of being a union member on my shoulders. In a time where the percentage of union members has dwindled to less than 11% of workers nationwide, belonging to a union has always seemed like a badge of honor that I have been proud to wear.

As a union member I always knew that I had representation, and throughout my years serving as a union leader I have come to realize that I have a voice in the workplace.

That's because our union provides the ability for me and my coworkers to be heard and recognized by those who otherwise have no incentive to listen.

The most important thing for a local union leader to do is to build relationships with fellow union siblings both in and outside the workplace. It is through relationship building and face time with other union members that those members will learn the value and the importance of having a collective voice and a say in their compensation and working conditions. Without engaging coworkers and fellow union members on the job it is impossible for trust to be established between the local leader and the members that leader serves. When there is no trust between a union member and union leader, the member will lose confidence in the leader and might begin to question being a committed union member in the first place.

Establishing and maintaining per-

sonal relationships is critical to not only the growth, but also the underlying health and well-being of a local union.

A local union office environment or shop can grow exponentially under the right conditions. It all begins and subsequently strengthens when leaders and activists are willing to have brave and sometimes vulnerable conversations with their coworkers. If you dutifully follow this approach, you will find your local union membership will continue to multiply over time.

There is no substitute for looking at someone face-to-face and engaging in an honest conversation. When we converse and truly listen to each other we make our workplace stronger, for it is those important, in-person conversations which turn ordinary workers into extraordinary union members.

– **Jeff Couillard**, AFSCME Local 306 vice president, Council 5 Executive Board member and St. Paul RLF delegate



## Let's get together, union members!

The **St. Paul Regional Labor Federation's** local labor assemblies bring working people and retirees together to exchange ideas and take action on issues that matter most in their communities. Assembly meetings are open to all union members who live or work in our four-county area.

#### Chisago County Assembly

Oct. 24, 4:30 p.m.  
Wyoming Public Library,  
26855 Forest Blvd.

#### Dakota County Assembly

Oct. 10, 7 p.m.  
Dakota County United Educators,  
6950 West 146th St., Apple Valley

#### Ramsey County Assembly

Oct. 28, 6 p.m.  
St. Paul Labor Center  
353 West Seventh St.

#### Washington County Assembly

Oct. 23, 6 p.m.  
United Steelworkers Local 11-418  
8839 96th St. South, Cottage Grove



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# Fresh air, free clinics, lots of smiles at union-sponsored Get Youth Outdoors Day

By Michael Moore  
Union Advocate editor

More than 40 boys and girls sampled shooting sports, fishing and archery under the guidance of local union volunteers Sunday, Sept. 15, at Get Youth Outdoors Day in Clear Lake Township.

Among the attendees were four siblings from Princeton: 9-year-old Jack Kohl, 12-year-old Laura, 13-year-old Timothy and 15-year-old James. It wasn't long after they arrived at his archery station that Bryce Mastin, a volunteer instructor, sniffed out the sibling rivalry.

"You can all hit the target," Mastin said, lining up the young archers to shoot at a stuffed buck. "Now we're going to find out who can put meat in the freezer."

Before long, other children had wandered over, looking to get in on the family's friendly competition. Some of their arrows whizzed past the deer. Others pierced its back and side.

But it was the second-oldest Kohl, Timothy, who hit the "kill zone," site of the deer's vital organs. Mastin howled with delight as Timothy collected grudging high-fives from his brothers and sisters.

It was the kind of scene Mark Conroy, business manager of Roofers Local 96, saw play out over and over at the event, which has been offered free to area children for the last eight years, thanks, in part, to proceeds from Local 96's sporting clays shoot, held the day before.

"I walked around there during the youth event, and every single kid had a big old grin on their face," Conroy said. "It is always a fun event, and it just keeps getting better every year."

Both the sporting clays shoot and the youth event were held at Wild Marsh Sporting Clays, and facilitated in partnership with the Union Sportsmen's Alliance. The USA is a nationwide nonprofit that builds union solidarity by bringing together members who enjoy hunting, fishing and the outdoors.

"It bridges a lot of gaps," Scott Vance, USA's executive director said. "We do a lot of events to connect unions together through conservation and passing that outdoors heritage along to the next generation."

To make that work possible, local unions sponsor fundraising banquets and events around the country. Roofers Local 96's sporting clays shoot, which drew 226 shooters Sept. 14, raised a record \$150,000 in its ninth year.

The success of Local 96's shooting competition – and of Get Youth Outdoors Day – speaks to the support of the Roofers' international union, local building trades unions and their vendors, Conroy said.



Eric Bakken, an event coordinator with the Union Sportsmen's Alliance and native of Blaine, taught 9-year-old Elsie Franklin of Oak Grove how to cast a fishing line during Get Youth Outdoors Day in Clear Lake last month. Participants cycled through four training stations during the event: clay shooting, fishing, riflery and archery. Gig Ritenour, a member of the Roofers union, was among the volunteers at the riflery range. Bryce Mastin, recently retired from the U.S. Army, offered a tip to 12-year-old Laura Kohl of Princeton at the archery station.

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local 1 and the Central Minnesota building trades council co-sponsored the youth event, along with the National Shooting Sports Foundation. The law firm of Reinhart, Boerner, Van Deuren covered the cost of renting the facility for Saturday's competition, and the Roofers' international sponsored any youth shooter between 11 and 17 who wished to compete.

Kinsey Robinson, the Roofers' international president, attended both the competition and the youth event. Robinson has long been a vocal proponent of USA, and he noted that about 70 percent of union tradespeople nationwide count outdoors sports among their hobbies.

"We want to support them, and we want to ensure access to the outdoors for their sons and daughters," Robinson said.

"Events like this around the coun-

try bring together different crafts, different unions," he added. "And just like in collective bargaining or political issues, we're speaking with one voice. Except here we're speaking with one voice to say we support conservation."

Before Get Youth Outdoors Day wrapped up, participants watched a dog-training exhibition, enjoyed a catered lunch and received a bag stuffed with birdcalls, outdoors literature and other freebies.

"These tools that they learned today, we hope it's something they carry with them," USA conservation coordinator Cody Campbell said. "For most of these kids, this is an opportunity they wouldn't get on a normal basis."

At least one youngster was hooked. By the time his name was pulled during a drawing for door prizes after lunch, he was already back on the trap range, busting clays.



## The Basics: Union Sportsmen's Alliance

- **What:** A union-operated, union-dedicated, nonprofit focused on wildlife conservation, youth education and access to quality places to hunt, fish and shoot.
- **Who:** More than six million active and retired AFL-CIO union members, both men and women.
- **Online:** Learn about the USA, its work and the benefits of membership at [unionsportsmen.org](http://unionsportsmen.org).

"Events like this are about teaching kids that there's more to life than video games, there's more to life than concrete," Vance said. "We love doing events like this. We see it as the culmination of our mission."

Union Advocate photos

### Labor Day at the Minnesota State Fair



Carrying the Plasterers' banner were Local 265 President Pat Estes (R) and Troy Lowry, a trustee.



Martha Johnson, a retired AFSCME member active in the State Retiree Council, walked the parade route.



Jamie McNamara, business manager of IBEW Local 110, pulled a wagon carrying future union members.



Dressed in their trademark red, members of the Minnesota Nurses Association made up a large contingent in the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation's parade unit on Labor Day.

## Getting together on *our* day

It's become the biggest, highest-profile celebration of Labor Day in Minnesota, and 2019 was no exception. Some 250 union members marched behind the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation's banner in the Minnesota State Fair's daily parade through the grounds on Labor Day this year. The marching unit featured patriotic floats, a union band, the Twin Cities Labor Chorus – and more strollers than anyone could count. Many union members carried signs urging fellow workers to join a union for better pay, benefits and a voice on the job. "It's amazing to see how this event has grown over the last 10 years," Federation President Bobby Kasper said. "It's great to see so many union members taking pride in who we are, the work we do and the power we have to make our country strong."

– Union Advocate photos



A float carried union musicians and Matthew Parris, an organizer with the MNA dressed as Uncle Sam, through the fairgrounds.

**“He said he’s going to kill me and kill my wife and my daughter, just because I want to get paid the money he owes me.”**

– Eric Macias, describing a phone call from a labor broker who recruited him to work on Reuter Walton developments



Samuel Saucedo (L) and Eric Macias (R) attended the Sept. 16 Roseville City Council meeting with their union rep, Jorge Duran, to share their experience working on construction sites managed by Reuter Walton. Despite the workers’ testimony, the developer won a redevelopment contract from the city worth \$750,000 in tax-increment financing.

Union Advocate photo

## Carpenters union shines spotlight on abuses in shady world of ‘labor brokers’

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

dropped them, Saucedo and Macias told council members Sept. 16, after receiving hostile phone calls from Merino.

In an interview before the public hearing, Macias remembered answering the phone call while his wife, who had recently given birth, looked on.

“You don’t know me. I’ve got money. I’ve got people. Somebody will find you,” Macias remembered hearing. “He said he’s going to kill me and kill my wife and my daughter, just because I want to get paid the money he owes me.”

After the call, Macias’ wife began hiding whenever anybody came to the door. Even when it was Eric.

### A shell game with wages

At the public hearing, a representative of Reuter Walton denied any involvement in the allegations made by Macias and Saucedo. The developer has only two minor labor violations on its record, which resulted in fines totaling \$1,000, he said.

The developer also claimed to have cut ties with a carpentry subcontractor that, workers say, did business with Jose Merino, Caliper Building Systems.

But Jorge Duran, a representative for the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters, said a muddled network of contractors, subcontractors and brokers breeds worker exploitation on large construction projects. And it won’t change unless developers are ultimately held accountable.

“Reuter Walton, they claim they don’t know what’s going on, but what does that really tell you?” Duran said. “That’s why the City of Roseville needs to keep an eye on who this developer hires.”

For Saucedo and Macias, trying to get paid for their work on Reuter Walton projects was a demoralizing cycle that left them spiraling further and further into debt. Subcontractors would say they were waiting to get paid by the contractors; contractors would say they had paid the subcontractors in full.

Macias said he finally approached a Reuter Walton representative. “I said, ‘I’m at your jobsite every day, seven days a week, 12 hours a day. Why don’t you guys pay us?’” Macias remembered. “He said I don’t know. So you go to Caliper, and they say I don’t know. You go to Jose, he says I don’t know.”

Macias said he remains over \$9,000 in debt.

### Unsafe working, living conditions

Wage theft wasn’t the only abuse workers recruited by Jose Merino say they experienced. Saucedo said his two teenage sons found work with Merino, despite being minors. (They weren’t paid either.)

And safety wasn’t even an afterthought, Saucedo added, resulting in “a lot of injuries.”

Merino “never provided safety equipment for us – no glasses, harnesses, hardhats, gloves, nothing,” Saucedo said. “People used to get shot with the nail gun, and he wouldn’t pay the hospital bills.”

Workers say Merino recruits them to move to the Twin Cities – Saucedo relocated from North Dakota, Macias from California – with promises of housing for themselves and their families, in three-bedroom, two-bathroom apartments.

The apartments turned out to be real, Saucedo and Macias said, but there were more than a dozen other construction workers already living in them.

And while he didn’t always get paid by Merino, Saucedo added, Merino never failed to collect the \$300-per-week rent.

“I would work 70 hours per week, and he would pay me for 45,” Saucedo said. “And he would never pay me overtime.”

Both Saucedo and Macias regret ever moving to the Twin Cities.

“You drive with your family downtown Minneapolis, see so many big Reuter Walton signs,” Macias said. “It makes me really mad. I can’t believe they aren’t paying people.”

### Union steps up pressure

Since walking away from Merino a year ago,

Saucedo and Macias have joined the Carpenters union. Macias laughed when asked about the difference between working for Merino and working union. “It’s unbelievable,” he said.

But the two have also provided union representatives like Duran a window into the shadowy world of nonunion construction. Duran said he has talked to at least 150 other workers, many of whom are immigrants, who have experienced exploitation and wage theft at the hands of a labor broker.

“This is a very bad, infected virus in construction right now,” Duran said. “And it’s happening all across the state.”

In Roseville, council members didn’t go so far as to dump the redevelopment deal with Reuter Walton, but they did add language allowing the city to withhold and “claw back” tax financing dollars if Reuter Walton or any of its subcontractors on the project are found guilty of wage theft. And the language will be included in all future development deals.

The Carpenters union, meanwhile, plans to continue shining a light on the stories of Macias, Saucedo and other workers who allege mistreatment on Reuter Walton projects. The union also raised its concerns at a St. Paul City Council meeting in August, briefly putting a zoning change requested by Reuter Walton in jeopardy.

The union’s objective, public affairs director Richard Kolodziejski said, is to prevent future abuses by increasing public scrutiny at every level. Developers know Minnesota has a new wage-theft law on the books, and both the Attorney General’s Office and the Department of Labor have announced plans to put that new law to good use.

“The enforcement is going to come now,” Kolodziejski said. “The state is going to be holding (developers) accountable, not just the wage broker.”

“So we’re going to keep ratcheting this up and, hopefully, tighten things up in our cities.”

## WALMART GETS MESSAGE ON GUNS

Less than a month after Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), sent a blunt letter about gun safety to Walmart CEO Doug McMillon, the retailer announced Sept. 3 it would no longer sell handgun and short-barrel ammunition. Walmart also will ask customers to refrain from carrying guns into its stores, even in states where it is legal to do so.

Weingarten, whose letter pointedly reminded McMillon that many of the AFT's 1.6 million members do their back-to-school shopping at Walmart, called the announcement "a major step that wouldn't have happened without us speaking out and demanding action."

For educators, gun violence has become an occupational hazard. According to data compiled by the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security, there have been 408 shooting incidents at K-12 schools in the U.S. since 2010, killing 209 people and injuring 398 more.

The push for common-sense measures to address gun violence is far from over, Weingarten said, but she called Walmart's change of course "a huge step," adding that educators "hope Walmart continues to engage on this issue – by reconsidering its political donations and lobbying efforts, and by continuing to listen to communities that feel threatened and terrorized by guns."

"As I said in my letter to McMillon, while we wait for our lawmakers to act, all of us must do our part to help build a future with fewer guns and safer communities," she added.

"While we have issues with Walmart's labor and education practices, let's applaud it for dramatically stepping back from gun sales and using its political clout to lobby for commonsense gun violence reform. Now it's time to focus on Congress and remind them of their responsibility to keep our communities safe."

## MINIMUM WAGE TO REACH \$10

Minnesota's minimum-wage rates will be adjusted for inflation beginning Jan. 1, 2020, to \$10 an hour for large employers, the Minnesota Department of Labor has announced. Other state minimum wages will reach \$8.15 an hour.

"This increase is a positive step for workers, yet more work needs to be done to ensure workers earn a living wage to support their families," state Labor Commissioner Nancy Leppink said. "Minnesota families of three or more will remain at or below the poverty level even though an adult family member is working full time at the minimum wage, forcing many families to seek assistance to make up the living-wage gap."

The current large-employer minimum wage, \$9.86, will increase by 14 cents to \$10. Other state minimum wages, including the small-employer, youth and training wages, as well as the summer work travel exchange visitor program wage, which are all currently \$8.04, will increase by 11 cents to \$8.15.

In 2020, an estimated 206,000 jobs will pay the \$10 or \$8.15 state minimum-wage rates. These rates will not apply to work performed in the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, which have their own minimum-wage ordinances.

## CENTURYLINK, CWA REACH DEAL

The CWA CenturyLink bargaining team reached an early agreement in August with the company on a three-year contract extension for over 8,000 CWA-represented Legacy Qwest workers in 13 states, including Minnesota.

The proposed agreement provides wage increases of 3% in the first year, then 2.5% in the second and third years. It preserves job security provisions and pension benefits and reduces health care costs for workers and retirees.

"We are very pleased with the extension that our bargaining team has negotiated during early bargaining," said CWA District 7 Vice President Brenda Roberts. "We were prepared to walk away and come back next spring if we couldn't achieve our goals. Thanks to our skilled negotiators and the unity among our members we were able to keep our job security provisions intact and provide affordable health care and improved wages through this agreement."

## NOT QUITE BEYOND PARODY

President Trump has appointed Eugene Scalia, a lawyer who's spent his career attacking legal protections for working people, to lead the federal agency charged with protecting workers' rights. It's a move so ridiculous, it's almost beyond parody.

But not quite. The nation's largest labor federation, the AFL-CIO, last month unveiled a new website, EugeneScalia.com, to tout the nominee's qualifications for the job. The site includes a mock résumé, listing Scalia's many accomplishments as a union-busting lawyer and bureaucrat.

"After spending a lifetime attacking the rights and dignity of working people, Scalia is ready for another chance to ruthlessly advance corporate interests," the



Activists, including members of several local unions, demonstrated outside an Amazon-owned Whole Foods' store in Minneapolis last month, calling out the tech giant's track record of providing software to ICE.

submitted photo

## RALLY AGAINST AMAZON, ICE

Dozens of workers from multiple unions protested outside the Amazon-owned Whole Foods in downtown Minneapolis Sept. 10, demanding Amazon drop contracts with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and data-mining corporation Palantir.

During a short program outside the store, speakers from local group Immigrant Worker Solidarity shared the harm being caused by the nation's current immigration policies, made worse by Amazon's technology.

"As a union that includes members from many backgrounds, we know that the current system of tearing families apart is terrible and needs to be fixed. The fact that Amazon is not only supporting this system but making profits off the misery of so many families is wrong," said Sheigh Freeberg, secretary-treasurer of UNITE-HERE Local 17. "It is time for Amazon to cut ties with ICE and Palantir."

Amazon hosts a variety of data on their servers used in the identification, targeting and deportation of immigrants. They've also sold their facial recognition software to law enforcement and the government.

Joining the protest were educators who have recently begun the new school year and seen firsthand the damage caused when immigrant families are separated.

"We see students every day who are traumatized by our inhumane immigration system," said Jill Jacobson, a member of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers. "We should be nurturing and supporting every single child. But right now because of our federal government and corporations like Amazon, families are being torn apart."

This protest coincided with others around the country. Protestors said they were inspired by Amazon tech workers who have repeatedly called on Amazon to cut ties with ICE.

Unions co-sponsoring the demonstration included UNITE-HERE Local 17, SEIU Local 284, the St. Paul Federation of Educators, AFSCME Local 3800 and SEIU Healthcare Minnesota.

AFL-CIO said in a press release announcing the site's launch. "His specialties include eroding labor rights, unraveling consumer protections, endangering Americans' retirement security and blaming workers for their own deaths."

One Highlight of the résumé is Scalia's work in defense of SeaWorld after the violent death of one of its orca trainers, which the nominee argued SeaWorld had no responsibility to prevent. He also took a turn defending Steve Wynn after the casino mogul was accused of stealing workers' tips. And Scalia tirelessly sued the government to unravel consumer protections put in place after the Great Recession.

The Senate was scheduled to begin Scalia's confirmation process late last month.



## United Way, St. Paul Pipefitters will team up on volunteer event

A stable home is the foundation that enables families to thrive. That's why Greater Twin Cities United Way and St. Paul Pipefitters Local 455 will co-host a volunteer event Nov. 14 to assemble 600 "welcome home kits" with essential household items for families making the transition from homelessness to stable housing.

The event will take place at Local 455's training center, at 1301 L'Orient St., from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. To register for a volunteer shift, go to [www.gtcuw.org](http://www.gtcuw.org).

## Oktoberfest to raise funds for members in need

Don't miss your chance to celebrate fall, raise money for a good cause and win the Wall of Beer!

The St. Paul Regional Labor Federation's 8th annual Oktoberfest fundraiser, presented by the RLF's Labor Community Action Committee, will follow the federation's monthly meeting at 6 p.m. Oct. 9, at the St. Paul Labor Center, 353 West 7th Street.

Oktoberfest will feature German food and beer, available for a small donation, as well as bake sale items and a drawing for the Wall of Beer. All proceeds from the event will support the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's Emergency Fund, which provides assistance to union families in need.

Donate a 12-pack to help build the wall, and you will receive one chance to win the drawing. Additional chances will be available at the fundraiser for a \$10 donation. The drawing will take place at 8 p.m., and ticket-holders must be present to win. To donate a 12-pack, drop it off at the RLF's offices at 353 West 7th Street, Suite 201.


For more information, call 651-222-3787, x117.

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(signed) Michael Moore, editor




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# FARE FOR ALL

*Food that makes cents*

**Save 40 percent on groceries!**

The St. Paul Regional Labor Federation is pleased to encourage union members and their families to participate in Fare For All Express. Stretch your budget by picking up a package of fresh fruits, vegetables and frozen meats at the sites below each month. Fare For All is open to anyone who eats! There are no questions asked, no forms to fill out. And the more people who take advantage of the program, the better the discounts get – and the more neighborhoods it can serve.

**Give it a try!**

**East Metro Locations – October 2019**

- Burnsville: Diamondhead Ctr. Oct. 23, 3 to 5 p.m.
- Cottage Grove: All Saints Oct. 3, 4 to 6 p.m.
- Eagan: Easter Lutheran Church by the Lake Oct. 8, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
- Forest Lake: VFW Oct. 23, 4 to 6 p.m.
- Maplewood: Redeeming Love Oct. 7, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
- North Branch: Trinity Luth. Oct. 9, 2 to 4 p.m.
- Northfield: St. Dominic Oct. 10, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
- Oakdale: Grace of God Luth. Oct. 21, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
- Roseville: Real Life Church Oct. 15, 3 to 5 p.m.
- St. Paul: Hallie Q. Brown Ctr. Oct. 17, 4 to 6 p.m.
- St. Paul: Hazel Park UCC Oct. 2, 4 to 6 p.m.
- St. Paul: West 7th Community Ctr. Oct. 4, 10 a.m. to noon
- South St. Paul: Central Square Oct. 22, 4 to 6 p.m.
- Stillwater: Community Thread Oct. 15, 4 to 6 p.m.
- White Bear Lake: Community of Grace Lutheran Oct. 11, 2 to 4 p.m.

**Questions? Please go to [www.fareforall.org](http://www.fareforall.org) or call 763-450-3880.**



# Minutes of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation

## AUGUST 14, 2019

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation met in regular session on the above date and was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance by President Kasper at 6 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beedle B, Beedle G, Beissel, DeRoy, Dreyer, Engeldorf, Fabor, Gibbons, Guertin, Haugen, Kasper, Madden, Maki-Green, Markham-Kocurek, McNamara, Meyer, Robles, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Seath, Slattey, St. Aoro, Terry, VanDassor, Varco and Weed. Excused were Mullin. Absent were Gorman, Hoppe, Luneburg, McCarthy, and Monsour.

## GUESTS

• Chris Preiner, Director Labor Relations, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, spoke to the Executive Board and the delegation. He requested feedback from the Executive Board regarding Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota in the Public Sector.

• Jane Prince, Saint Paul City Council Ward 7, thanked the RLF and delegates for all their support. The RLF is a wonderful partner and I like working with labor.

## CREDENTIALS

Credentials were received from Carpenters Local 322 and Saint Paul Federation of Educators Local 28. President Kasper administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates present.

## MINUTES

• **M/S/C TO APPROVE MINUTES OF JUNE 12, 2019 AS PUBLISHED IN THE UNION ADVOCATE NEWSPAPER AFTER THE SECRETARY NOTES THERE ARE NO ADDITIONS OR CHANGES CALLED FOR.**

## COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES AUGUST 14, 2019

COPE met in regular session on the above date and was called to order by President Kasper at 5 p.m. Board members in attendance were Angrimson, Beedle B, Beedle G, Beissel, DeRoy, Dreyer, Edwards, Engeldorf, Fabor, Gibbons, Guertin, Haugen, Hoerth, Kasper, Madden, Maki-Green, Markham-Kocurek, Mayer, McNamara, Meyer, Robles, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Seath, Slattey, St. Aoro, Terry, VanDassor, Varco, Weed and Wise. Excused were: Lohmann and Mullin. Absent were: Froemke, Gorman, Hoppe, Krey, Luneburg, McCarthy, Monsour and Qualy.

Items to come before this board included:

- The Ramsey County Labor Assembly requested consideration of granting Labor Endorsement to the following Saint Paul City Council candidate and Saint Paul School Board candidates:
  - Nelsie Yang, Saint Paul City Council Ward 6
  - Chauntyll Allen, Saint Paul School Board
  - Zuki Ellis, Saint Paul School Board
  - Steve Marchese, Saint Paul School Board
- Colleen Nocerini, Political Organizer, updated the committee on the Listening Session that was held for Senate District 56. We are in the



Jane Prince spoke to RLF delegates at the August meeting.

planning process for the 2020 door knocks, which we hope to have completed by December 2019.

• **PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Kasper updated the committee on all the recent union events he has been attending on behalf of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation. He also reminded everyone that he is continually assessing future affiliations. He also encouraged union members to attend Angie Craig's fundraiser that is being held on Sept. 5, 2019.

• **M/S/C TO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO NELSIE YANG, SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL WARD 6; CHAUNTYLL ALLEN, SAINT PAUL SCHOOL BOARD; ZUKI ELLIS, SAINT PAUL SCHOOL BOARD; AND STEVE MARCHESE, SAINT PAUL SCHOOL BOARD.**

• **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO SENATE DISTRICT 56 FOURTH ANNUAL SUMMER WINE AND CHEESE EVENT THAT WAS HELD ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2019.**

• **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$250 CONTRIBUTION TO THE DFL HOUSE CAUCUS THIRD ANNUAL CHARBONEAU OPEN BEING HELD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2019.**

• **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$800 CONTRIBUTION TO KARLA BIGHAM SENATE DISTRICT 54 CAMPAIGN.**

• **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO JULIE BLAHA, MINNESOTA STATE AUDITOR**

• **THANK YOU NOTES:** Received from Amy Brendmoen, Saint Paul City Council, for the RLF's \$200 contribution, and Meggie Wittorf, Executive Director, Women Winning, for the RLF's \$1,000 contribution.

There being no further business to come before this committee, the meeting adjourned.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES AUGUST 14, 2019

The Executive Board met upon conclusion of COPE with those same members present who are duly elected to this board.

Items to come before this board included:

- **PRESIDENT'S REPORT.** President Kasper reported on:
  - Reassignment of job duties in the absence of staff recent resignation.
  - The St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center (LSRC), the RLF's non-profit arm, is funded by the Greater Twin Cities United Way. The

RLF continues to hold fundraisers to support LSRC.

- I have been attending union events to represent the Saint Paul RLF.

- We are in the process of scheduling a Building Committee meeting for the month of September.

- All office contracts for current employees and future employees have been completed and approved.

• **ORGANIZING/CAMPAIGN UPDATES:** AFSCME and SEIU updated everyone on their organizing activities. IAWAW Delta Ramp Cargo Workers Organizing Campaign MSP door knocking event is being held August 12 - 16, 2019. We will be starting at 9:00 a.m. on Monday ending at 3:00 p.m. on Friday. Please volunteer.

• **REQUESTS:**  
- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO TAKE OUT A HALF PAGE AD AT A COST OF \$500 IN THE 2020 JEWISH SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO SPONSOR AN IBEW LOCAL 110 MEMBER RACE CAR.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$350 CONTRIBUTION TO THE USA'S NINTH ANNUAL ROOFER TWIN CITIES SPORTING CLAYS SHOOT ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2019.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$825 CONTRIBUTION TO THE SEVENTH ANNUAL WORKING PARTNERSHIPS GOLF TOURNAMENT ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2019.**

• **THANK YOU NOTES:** Received from the Sheet Metal Workers Local 10 for the RLF's contribution to their golf tournament, the John Massetti Memorial Charity Golf Tournament for the RLF's \$250 contribution, and the Minnesota Nurses Association for supporting their June 2019 informational picket lines and the Mancini's gift cards in celebration of Nurses week.

There being no further business to come before this board, the meeting adjourned.

## REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Secretary-Treasurer Engeldorf reported on the financial status of the Federation as of July 2019. The report was accepted as read.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Kasper encouraged union members to volunteer for the Delta Organizing Campaign Event from August 12 - 16, 2019. Kasper sent a letter to 3M in opposition of their decision to reduce and/or eliminate retiree life insurance benefits. The Saint Paul Federation of Educators voted to move into Public Insurance pool. They notified the district on March 15, 2019. Minnesota State AFL-CIO Retiree Council will be holding a conference in 2019 rather than an annual convention as in years past. They will hold their first annual conference and election of board members and officers on September 25 at the Sheet Metal Workers hall in Maplewood. They still plan on holding conventions, but only in even number years.

## STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS

• AFL-CIO Community Services staff thanked all the volunteers who came to United Way's Day of Action

at the Xcel Energy Center to participate in assembling 40,000 backpacks for students.

• We are gearing up for the Labor Day Parade at the Minnesota State Fair on Monday, September 2, 2019. If you are interested, please contact Lynne Larkin Wright or Colleen Nocerini.

## REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

• Michael Madden reported on behalf of the Chisago County Labor Assembly. They will be inviting a representative from the MN Save our VA Committee to their Monday, September 9, 2019 meeting at the North Branch Public Library to speak about the lack of serious contract negotiations by the VA.

## NEW BUSINESS

• President Kasper called for a floor vote on the COPE committee's recommendations for labor endorsement.

**M/S/C FOR TO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENTS TO: NELSIE YANG, SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL WARD 6; CHAUNTYLL ALLEN, SAINT PAUL SCHOOL BOARD; ZUKI ELLIS, SAINT PAUL SCHOOL BOARD; AND STEVE MARCHESE, SAINT PAUL SCHOOL BOARD.**

## GOOD AND WELFARE

• Carpenters Local 322 reported that Ramsey County Commissioner District 1 is currently vacant, and there will be a special election. We

## Endorsement notice

The RLF may consider local endorsements during its October meetings, including endorsements for the Cottage Grove City Council special election and suburban school board races

need to support Nicole Joy Frethem for Ramsey County Commissioner District 1.

**M/S/C FOR THE SAINT PAUL REGIONAL LABOR FEDERATION TO SCREEN CANDIDATES AND RECOMMEND AN ENDORSEMENT FOR RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1.**

There being no further business to come before this delegation the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by,  
**BERNADINE ENGELDORF**  
Secretary-Treasurer

\*\*\*\*\*

## SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation met in regular session on the above date and was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance by President Kasper at 6 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beedle B, Beedle G, Beissel, DeRoy, Dreyer,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

## Supporting our 2nd District rep



St. Paul Regional Labor Federation officers and staff attended a Mancini's fundraiser for U.S. Rep. Angie Craig, whose 2nd Congressional District includes Dakota County and part of Washington County. The RLF endorsed Craig's successful campaign for office in 2018. Pictured L to R are RLF Secretary-Treasurer Bernadine Engeldorf, a member of the Minnesota Nurses Association; RLF Executive Vice President Perry Schmidt, Branch 28 Letter Carriers; Rep. Angie Craig; RLF Political Director Kera Peterson, Machinists Local 459; RLF President Bobby Kasper, LIUNA Local 563; and Tom Edwards, a retired Postal Worker and member of the RLF's Committee on Political Education.

submitted photo

**(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)**

Engeldorf, Faber, Gibbons, Guertin, Haugen, Kasper, Madden, Maki-Green, Markham-Kocurek, McNamara, Meyer, Mullin, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Seath, St. Aoro, Terry, VanDassor, and Varco. Excused were Luneburg and Robles. Absent were Gibbons, Gorman, Hoppe, McCarthy, Monsour and Slattery.

**GUESTS**

Charles Cushing, IATSE Local 745 introduced himself to the Executive Board and the Delegation. They currently have 100 members and are continuing to grow. They have expressed interest in affiliating with the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation.

**CREDENTIALS**

Credentials were received from APWU St. Paul, Carpenters Local 322, Construction and General Laborers Local 563 and OPEIU Local 12. President Kasper administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates present.

**MINUTES**

**M/S/C TO APPROVE MINUTES OF JULY 10, 2019, AS PUBLISHED IN THE UNION ADVOCATE NEWSPAPER AFTER THE SECRETARY NOTES THERE ARE NO ADDITIONS OR CHANGES CALLED FOR.**

**COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES SEPTEMBER 11, 2019**

COPE met in regular session on the above date and was called to order by President Kasper at 5 p.m. Board members in attendance were Angrimson, Beedle B, Beedle G, Beissel, DeRoy, Dreyer, Edwards, Engeldorf, Faber, Froemke Gibbons, Guertin, Haugen, Hoerth, Kasper, Madden, Maki-Green, Markham-Kocurek, Mayer, McNamara, Meyer, Mullin, Qualy, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Seath, St. Aoro, Terry, VanDassor, Varco and Wise. Excused were Luneburg and Robles. Absent were Gibbons, Gorman, Hoppe, Krey, Lohmann, McCarthy, Monsour and Slattery.

Items to come before this board included:

- The RLF COPE Board members screened and requested consideration of granting Labor Endorsement to the Mounds View School Operating Levy.

- The following request for Labor Endorsement recommendations from the DAKOTA COUNTY LABOR ASSEMBLY:

- Burnsville-Eagan-Savage ISD 191 Operating Levy Referendum
- Lakeville ISD 194 Levy and Bond Referendum
- Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan ISD 196 Operating Levy Referendum
- Joel Albright, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan ISD 196 School Board
- Sachin Isaacs, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan ISD 196 School Board
- Jackie Magnuson, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan ISD 196 School Board

- The Executive Board recommends bringing forth a recommendation to the delegate body requesting permission be given to the Executive Board to endorse a fourth candidate in the Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan ISD 196 School Board after the Dakota County United Educators (DCUE) have screened and endorsed.
- The following request for Labor

Endorsement recommendations from the RAMSEY COUNTY LABOR ASSEMBLY:

- White Bear Lake Schools Bond Referendum
- Nicole Frethem, Special Election Ramsey County Commissioner District 1
- Margaret Newmaster, White Bear Lake School Board
- Angela Thompson, White Bear Lake School Board
- Scott Wilson, White Bear Lake School Board

- Kera Peterson, Political Director, and Colleen Nocerini, Political Organizer, updated the committee on: The screening for ISD 200 – No Action was taken; upcoming screenings for Mounds View School Board, South Washington and Cottage Grove City Council; and the Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition addressing proposed changes to NAFTA. The revised NAFTA signed by Donald Trump in 2018 would lock in high U.S. medicine prices, while drug prices are already too high. NAFTA 2.0 guarantees pharmaceutical corporations special monopoly protections so they can block competition from generics and charge more in all three NAFTA nations. Join the replace NAFTA campaign at replacenafta.org.

- PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Kasper updated the committee on the Angie Craig Fundraiser, CD2 Fall Classic being held on Sept. 22, 2019, Oktoberfest being held at next month's RLF meeting, the successful Labor Day Parade, the RLF's involvement in the St. Paul City Council and School Board races.

- **M/S/C TO RECOMMEND GRANTING LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO MOUNDS VIEW SCHOOL OPERATING LEVY; ISD 191 OPERATING LEVY REFERENDUM; LAKEVILLE ISD 194 LEVY AND BOND REFERENDUM; ISD 196 OPERATING LEVY REFERENDUM; JOEL ALBRIGHT, ISD 196 SCHOOL BOARD; SACHIN ISAACS, ISD 196 SCHOOL BOARD; JACKIE MAGNUSON, ISD 196 SCHOOL BOARD; WHITE BEAR LAKE SCHOOLS BOND REFERENDUM; NICOLE FRETHERM, RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1; MARGARET NEWMASER, WHITE BEAR LAKE SCHOOL BOARD; ANGELA THOMPSON, WHITE BEAR LAKE SCHOOL BOARD; AND SCOTT WILSON, WHITE BEAR LAKE SCHOOL BOARD.**

- **M/S/C TO BRING FORTH A RECOMMENDATION TO THE DELEGATE BODY REQUESTING PERMISSION BE GIVEN TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD TO ENDORSE A FOURTH CANDIDATE FOR ROSEMOUNT-APPLE VALLEY-EAGAN ISD 196 SCHOOL BOARD AFTER THE DCUE HAVE SCREENED AND ENDORSED.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO SENATOR MATT LITTLE SENATE DISTRICT 58.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$2,000 CONTRIBUTION TO THE MINNESOTA DFL PARTY.**

- THANK YOU NOTE received from Dave Pinto, State Representative District 64B for the RLF's \$200 contribution.

There being no further business to come before this committee the meeting adjourned.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES SEPTEMBER 11, 2019**

The Executive Board met upon conclusion of COPE with those same members present who are duly elected to this board.

Items to come before this board included:

- President Kasper reported on the following:
  - St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's Jean Jones School supply initiative raised \$724.60 to purchase school supplies that were delivered to the Title One Program in St. Paul for homeless students.
  - 2019 Labor Day Parade at the Minnesota State Fair: Thank you to all the volunteers.
  - New Brookwood Labor College classes started on Sept. 9. They meet weekly until Nov. 22 at the East Side Freedom Library in St. Paul. To register go to [newbrookwood.org/apply](http://newbrookwood.org/apply).

- ORGANIZING/CAMPAIGN UPDATES:
  - Support the SPFE bargaining team. Their session is open to the public and we need support. Join us on Thursday, September 12 and Thursday, September 23 at SPFE, 23 Empire Drive from 4:30 – 8 p.m.
  - The MAC is currently considering a \$15 minimum wage ordinance that could prevent tipped workers and union workers from getting the raise. Join us on Sept. 23 at the Minneapolis Airport Marriott located at 2020 American Boulevard East in Bloomington at 4:30 p.m. for the public hearing.

- REQUESTS:

- **M/S/C TO SEND A "THANK YOU" LETTER TO THE POLICE FOR THEIR WORK AT THE MINNESOTA STATE FAIR 2019 LABOR DAY PARADE.**
- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE STATE FAIR MURAL.**
- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$300 CONTRIBUTION TO THE GREATER MINNESOTA WORKER CENTER'S FOURTH ANNUAL FUNDRAISING GALA BEING HELD ON SEPT. 14, 2019.**
- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO THE URBAN LEAGUE'S UNITY BALL BEING HELD ON OCT. 24, 2019.**
- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO RENEW THEIR ANNUAL AFFILIATION TO THE MINNESOTA FAIR TRADE COALITION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,000.**
- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO PURCHASE FOUR TICKETS TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN 30TH ANNUAL TWIN CITIES DINNER BEING HELD ON OCT. 12, 2019.**
- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$1,000 CONTRIBUTION TO THE ATU LOCAL 1005 BLACK CAUCUS.**

- THANK YOU NOTE received from the Minnesota LECET for the RLF's contribution to the Safety Driven Golf Classic.

There being no further business to come before this committee, the meeting adjourned.

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Secretary-Treasurer Engeldorf reported on the financial status of the Federation as of August 2019. The report was accepted as read.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Kasper reported on: IATSE Local 745; St. Paul Federation of Educators have open bargaining and all are invited to sit and observe; there is still enrollment available for the New Brookwood Labor College. Please encourage any union members to attend. You are invited to attend the Minnesota AFL-CIO State Retiree Biannual Conference on Sept. 25,

**School supplies for St. Paul kids**



Delegates to the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation donated over \$700 this year to the Jean Jones Initiative, an annual fundraising drive that provides school supplies for students in the St. Paul Public Schools. Funds were used to purchase pens, folders, notebooks, dictionaries, rulers, glue sticks, crayons, scissors, pencils, pencil sharpeners, erasers, markers and a scientific calculator. Staff in the district's Title I office, pictured above, accepted the supplies during the second week of the new school year. The Regional Labor Federation's Labor Community Services Action Committee, which coordinates the Jean Jones Initiative, thanks everyone who donated this year.

submitted photo

2019, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. "2020 – Eyes on the Election."

**STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS**

- Kera Peterson, Political Director, reported that they have completed candidate screenings. Look for opportunities to phone bank and door knock. Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition addressing the renegotiated NAFTA.
- Lynne Larkin-Wright, AFL-CIO Community Services liaison, thanked all the volunteers who helped with our marching unit in the Labor Day Parade at the Minnesota State Fair Monday, Sept. 2, 2019. Our Annual Labor-Red Cross Blood Drive will be on Tuesday, Dec. 3 here at the Labor Center from 2 to 7 p.m.

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

- Theresa St. Aoro reported on behalf of the Ramsey County Labor Assembly. They met on Aug. 26, 2019, and conducted a screening for the open seat for Ramsey County Commissioner District 1. The Assembly unanimously recommended the endorsement of Nicole Frethem to the Executive Board. They also met on Sept. 10 to screen White Bear Lake School Board candidates. They recommended endorsement of Margaret Newmaster, Angela Thompson and Scott Wilson. In addition, they recommended support for the White Bear Lake Schools Bond Referendum. Our next meeting will be on Sept. 23. We will also be having a screening on Oct. 1 for the Mounds

View School Board candidates.

**NEW BUSINESS**

President Kasper called for a floor vote on the COPE committee's recommendations to grant labor endorsement.

**M/S/C TO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENTS TO MOUNDS VIEW SCHOOL OPERATING LEVY; ISD 191 OPERATING LEVY REFERENDUM; LAKEVILLE ISD 194 LEVY AND BOND REFERENDUM; ISD 196 OPERATING LEVY REFERENDUM; JOEL ALBRIGHT, ISD 196 SCHOOL BOARD; SACHIN ISAACS, ISD 196 SCHOOL BOARD; JACKIE MAGNUSON, ISD 196 SCHOOL BOARD; WHITE BEAR LAKE SCHOOLS BOND REFERENDUM; NICOLE FRETHERM, RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1; MARGARET NEWMASER, WHITE BEAR LAKE SCHOOL BOARD; ANGELA THOMPSON, WHITE BEAR LAKE SCHOOL BOARD; SCOTT WILSON, WHITE BEAR LAKE SCHOOL BOARD.**

**M/S/C TO GIVE PERMISSION FROM THE DELEGATE BODY TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD TO ENDORSE A FOURTH CANDIDATE FOR ROSEMOUNT-APPLE VALLEY-EAGAN ISD 196 SCHOOL BOARD AFTER THE DCUE HAVE SCREENED AND ENDORSED.**

There being no further business to come before this delegation the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by,  
**BERNADINE ENGELDORF**  
Secretary-Treasurer

## Exit Interview: Erin Murphy

**Gathering Minnesotans' stories to break the health care stalemate**

Whether it was at the bedside, in her union or on the floor of the Minnesota House, health care has been a focal point of Erin Murphy's career. That won't change as the 2018 gubernatorial candidate enters the next phase of her professional life.

Last month, Murphy launched a new health care advocacy organization: "Our Stories. Our Health." Setting up the new venture was a "labor of love" for Murphy, who previously worked as executive director of the Minnesota Nurses Association and rose through the DFL ranks to become House Majority Leader.

Now, Murphy hopes to harness the power of people's stories to shift the narrative on health care. She explained how in an interview with *The Advocate*, which has been edited for length and clarity.

**UA:** What role do you hope Our Stories Our Health will play in the health care conversation?

**EM:** I have been hearing people's stories about health care and its failings for many years, and I carry those stories with me. I think if we're going to move beyond the point of stalemate that we're at right now and move toward the wholesale change we need to make, the catalyst will be Minnesotans' stories.

Our friends and our neighbors, the people who we love, the people in our community are struggling with a system that routinely puts profit before care, profit before people, and we are all paying a price for that with our health – and sometimes with our lives. It's time to change that.

**UA:** Where did this idea come from?

**EM:** The idea really came to me this spring (at the Capitol), watching a fight in health care that, while we protected the provider tax, didn't yield a lot more. I kept thinking about the issue of insulin and watching Nicole Smith-Holt and her group (#InsulinForAll)

push and almost succeed because of the powerful story of Alec Smith. (A type-1 diabetic, Smith died in 2017 after rationing his insulin to save money.) When we humanize an issue, when we center people again, it propels success. We need to do that in health care.

**UA:** People might look at Minnesota, which is doing better with insurance coverage and outcomes than other states, and think we're doing OK.

**EM:** We're not going to look so much at how many people are covered, but instead dig more deeply into the experiences of people to show the systemic failures.

**UA:** When it comes to making change, what power is there in people's stories?

**EM:** In my experience, it has been human stories that have changed and made room for progress. I saw that happen ... when this state undertook the question of marriage equality. When we moved to a conversation about the human concern, we made real progress and won that campaign.

I think we can get lost in discussions about laws and systems and bureaucracies... When we stay in that space, we stay stuck. But when we start talking about the impact on Minnesotans, I think we make space for wholesale change.

**UA:** Is there an particular story you carried with you as an elected official?

**EM:** I didn't ever imagine running for office, but I did after I took care of my mom at the end of her life. She had great insurance, but when my mom had a very serious cancer and was going through treatment, the insurance companies tried to deny some of the care she needed. While I knew, as a nurse, that was an experience people had, seeing it happen in a crucial point in my mother's life really made me angry. And it

made me run for office.

I couldn't tell that story at the beginning of my campaign because it was too hard to talk about it. But as I started to tell it, what I got back from people was their own, similar stories, told with a lot of honesty, some rawness and emotion. It showed me that all over the state people are having those same experiences. The system is failing us, and we need to change it.

**UA:** Health care has been so central to your career, you know better than anyone how frustrating the politics can be. What gives you hope we can move beyond stalemate?

**EM:** Because Minnesotans have shown me repeatedly that we actually care about each other, and that care and concern for one another is the foundation for change. If we're stalemated by partisanship or ideology, then the way to break that down is to remind the people who have the power to make decisions that Minnesotans' lives and well being are at stake.

Just look how much progress has been made, not only on the question of access to insulin, but on the cost of pharmaceutical drugs by telling the story of Alec Smith, who should not have lost his life because he couldn't afford insulin. That is proof we can move hard-hearted people by reminding them that this is a human experience, and we have to look out for each other.

**UA:** How can people get involved?

**EM:** Go to [www.ourstoriesourhealth.org](http://www.ourstoriesourhealth.org), share your story there. Go to our social media and use the hashtag #HealthStoriesMN to join the conversation. And know that behind the gathering of stories, we're going to be organizing across the state and bringing these stories to bear on our public consciousness.



Erin Murphy



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