



The St. Paul Union Advocate

125th Year, No. 6, Issue 5452

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

November-December 2021

Labor Endorsed

Nov. 2 General Election

St. Paul Mayor: Melvin Carter**St. Paul School Board:** James Farnsworth, Halla Henderson, Uriah Ward**St. Paul School Board (special election):** Clayton Howatt**White Bear Lake Mayor:** Don Mullin**School Referendums - Vote Yes:**

- Roseville Area Schools (ISD 623) operating levy
- North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Schools (ISD 622) capital projects levy
- Stillwater Area Schools (ISD 834) operating levy

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www.stpaulunions.org
Connecting union members in Ramsey, Washington, Dakota and Chisago counties.

"I don't think they've considered how these changes might push families further away."

– Peter Ratzloff, Galtier Community School science teacher

Educators frustrated by plan to uproot St. Paul students

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

Plans to close five schools in St. Paul and merge or consolidate 10 others drew a swift rebuke from union educators, who called the proposal heavy handed, shortsighted and disruptive to students and families.

Members of the St. Paul school board received the recommendations, generated through a realignment process called

Inside

- Meet the labor-endorsed candidates for St. Paul school board: **Page 5.**

Envision SPPS, from district administrators during a special meeting Oct. 11.

The board is scheduled to take action on

the proposals Nov. 16.

Officials can expect to hear plenty of public response before then, members of the St. Paul Federation of Educators said, after not doing enough to engage the community while putting together the plan.

First-grade teacher Annaka Larson said Envision SPPS working groups never convened a meeting with stakeholders at

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Maroon, gold and AFSCME green



Clerical, technical and health care workers at the University of Minnesota, members of four AFSCME locals, are locked in a tense round of contract negotiations with the school. Workers rallied with supporters on the Twin Cities campus, highlighting their key demands: pay increases, flexible work schedules and measures to address inequities. Read more on Page 13.

Union Advocate photo

After landslide union election, M Health psych staff ready to bargain for wages, safety

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

A resounding "union yes" vote, announced Sept. 28, gives 350 psychiatric associates at M Health Fairview momentum as they look to negotiate better wages, safety protections and a voice in decisions that affect their jobs.

SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, which backed the essential workers' organizing drive and will represent them in bargaining, said 98% of participating workers voted in favor of unionization. Balloting took place by mail, with votes counted Sept. 28.

Psychiatric associates have been discussing the idea of forming a union for at least 10 years, union supporters said in a virtual press conference held hours before the vote tally.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

College or construction? Study from Wisconsin backs union apprenticeships

Graduates of registered apprenticeship programs in Wisconsin's construction industry achieve near wage parity with workers who have four-year college degrees, according to a study released last month.

"From the standpoint of the earnings and diversity of graduates, the data shows that

Wisconsin's construction apprenticeship programs are essentially on par with the state's public universities," said study co-author Robert Bruno, a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "And it is clear that the investments of joint (union) programs are what is driving this parity."

Sponsored by the Midwest Economic Policy Institute and the University of Illinois' Project for Middle Class Renewal, the report, "Apprenticeship as a Career Development Alternative," analyzed and compared data to assess outcomes associated with

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Letters

- Send letters to: 353 W. 7th St., Suite 201, St. Paul, MN 55102
- Fax them to 651-293-1989
- Email them to: mmoore@stpaulunions.org

Go Figure

\$4.8 billion

Funding to repair and rebuild Minnesota roads and bridges in the bipartisan infrastructure bill

\$820 million

Funding to improve sustainable transportation options

\$100 million

Funding to connect Minnesotans with high-speed internet

\$68 million

Investment in building a network of electric-vehicle chargers



Labor Voices: Jeff Stark

Infrastructure is our bridge to a bright future

This past year, thousands of Minnesotans were out of work. Many are still struggling to find the right career path – and the motivation to keep on it. Fortunately, free career training is offered at local union apprenticeship halls, with job placement prospects, and hardworking individuals are encouraged to sign up.

The future looks bright for today's apprentices. With our infrastructure appearing poised for an overhaul and an older generation of workers beginning to retire, new opportunities are coming into view for many young Minnesotans. Their legacies will literally be written on the walls of skyscrapers.

As the business manager and secretary-treasurer of one of the largest finishing trades unions in the upper mid-west, I know firsthand how improvements to our infrastructure cause positive chain reactions. We could have safer roads and bridges, the environmental justice that comes with access to potable drinking water and a modern public transit system – and those are just a few improvements to our quality of life that may be coming down the pipeline.

When we think of infrastructure, we often think of roads and bridges. But rebuilding our infrastructure also means creating safer and more modern schools, libraries, public facilities, transit systems and rural internet, an often-overlooked aspect to ensuring an infrastructure fit for the 21st century.

Although the \$1.9 billion bonding bill, signed by Gov. Tim Walz last year, sounds like a lot to invest on paper, when all is said and done that money will just about cover the foundational stages of major projects the governor has identified as necessary. But it likely won't finish them. The governor took an important first step, but it is Minnesotans' job to hold him accountable to increase that investment.

Now, President Joe Biden and federal lawmakers are advancing a robust, \$1 trillion federal infrastructure package. The need for legitimate federal infrastructure funding has never been higher, and the president has an opportunity to prove to Minnesotans that he stands with us and is willing to help us truly "Build Back Better."

Unions are on board with a plan from any candidate

"Today's apprentices' legacies will be written on the walls of skyscrapers."

– Jeff Stark



that ensures their members and potential members work opportunities. Unfortunately, previous administrations have been full of empty promises, like a plan from former President Trump that promised big investments but, in truth, relied on state and local funding and private investments. Biden's plan doesn't make the mistake of relying on private corporations for funding.

With COVID-19 wreaking havoc and available hospital beds down to the single digits, we as taxpayers have no choice but to demand increased state and federal infrastructure funding immediately. Our rural hospitals have been in need of repair for decades, and construction industry experts are calling the last statewide bonding bill "too little, too late."

Now is Minnesota's time to take back our infrastructure. Here at IUPAT District Council 82, we know that prioritizing infrastructure, and the small, rural businesses it supports, will move us into a more equitable, profitable future. Our economy will thrive, our state will become a new model for modern American infrastructure and our children and grandchildren will have safe, strong bridges into their futures.

Good workers always finish what we start. The last bonding bill was surely a start, and federal investment may be on the way. But we still need Gov. Walz and labor-friendly lawmakers to vouch for a more robust, inclusive infrastructure bonding bill today.

– Jeff Stark is the Business Manager and Secretary-Treasurer of District Council 82 of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT). Learn more about the union and career opportunities in the finishing trades at iupat82.org.

Editor's Note: "Voices" is a forum for opinions from across the labor movement. It appears regularly in The Advocate. We encourage readers to respond to our columnists' opinions. To write a letter to the editor, see the upper-right-hand corner of this page. To inquire about contributing to "Voices," call 651-222-3787, extension 112. This column does not reflect the position of the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation or its assemblies.

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Erica Dalager Reed, Liaison



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St. Paul educators push back against district's plan to realign schools

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Wellstone Elementary, where she teaches in the Spanish dual immersion program. Staff were stunned to find out the school was among those slated to be closed.

"The idea that you would make a decision about the bilingual program without consulting teachers, without consulting families? It's incredibly frustrating. We worked so hard to build that program," Larson said.

Seeking the 'correct alignment'

If the school board approves the Envision SPPS recommendations, Wellstone and four other elementary schools – Highwood Hills, Jackson, John A. Johnson and Obama – would close before the start of next school year. Obama would reopen as a magnet school after a remodeling project.

LEAP High School would also close next fall, and 10 other schools, mostly elementary, would merge or consolidate programming. Most of the impacted schools share a low "utilization rate," meaning their enrollments fall well below their building capacities, compared to other schools in the district.

Administrators justified the upheaval as necessary to ensure students have access to specialists and enrichment opportunities, which smaller schools can't always afford. Jackie Turner, SPPS's chief of operations, pitched the plan to board members as a step toward right-sizing the district's programming with its

declining enrollment – a key factor in state and federal funding formulas.

"We need to make sure we have correct alignment," Turner said.

Where's the plan to grow?

Birth rates are declining in St. Paul. So, too, is the district's "capture rate," or the share of school-age children residing in the district who enroll in SPPS schools. In the 2012-13 school year, SPPS drew 67% of eligible students. It has since fallen closer to 60%.

But educators worry that uprooting hundreds of students – and drastically changing the learning environments of hundreds more – will prompt more families to consider open enrollment in another district or a charter school, draining more funds from SPPS and, ultimately, leading to another realignment down the road.

"I don't think they've considered how these changes might push families further away," said Peter Ratzloff, a science teacher at Galtier Community School, where students will relocate to Hamline Elementary as part of a merger.

Educators, Ratzloff said, want a plan to bring students back to SPPS, while it seems administrators "are just looking to make the numbers work."

A step away from equity

The proposed realignment also raised equity concerns. SPFE President Leah VanDassor said Envision SPPS would leave programming in the city's predominantly white neighborhoods mostly

intact, while the East Side and West Side neighborhoods would see big disruptions.

"These buildings that are closing are the buildings that have, specifically, not been funded over the years, and now they're being closed," she said. "Chronic underfunding has brought us to where we are, and so has lack of foresight about how charter schools would impact our district."

Those concerns have been echoed by labor-endorsed candidates for school board this fall: James Farnsworth, Halla Henderson, Clayton Howatt and Uriah Ward.

"If we accept this an equity issue, consolidating is a step away from that goal," said Ward, a financial aid counselor at Augsburg University, during a candidate forum sponsored by SPFE this fall.

"There's nothing equitable about shuffling students and closing schools," added Henderson, a policy director at the MN Alliance with Youth. "When we're taking resources away from our communities, all we're doing is continuing to disenfranchise and defund communities that desperately need those resources."

Farnsworth, a graduate of the district who works as director of the Highland Business Association, criticized the district for failing to work in partnership with staff and families on Envision SPPS.

"Families deserve upmost transparency," he said. "The biggest thing that's missing is any sort of real engagement structure in this."

Howatt, a PTO president who works in construction, said the district needs a plan to increase enrollment, and it must include dealing with charter schools directly. He supports pushing a moratorium on new charters while experts study their impact.

"While SPPS is looking at closing elementary schools, two more charter schools are slated to open next year and another two or three the year after," Howatt said. "This system of taking a limited amount of resources – our students, our tax dollars – and spreading it thinner and thinner, it makes no common sense."

'Mad and fired up'

Still, it's likely decisions about Envision SPPS proposals will be made before new board members take office.

Educators and families, meanwhile, were already planning to push back at virtual public information sessions, scheduled by the district Oct. 26 and Nov. 8 from 6 to 7:30 p.m., and at listening sessions at the district office, 360 Colborne Ave., from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Oct. 28 and Nov. 11.

After the initial shock of learning Wellstone could close, Larson said, staff members' mood soon changed to "extremely mad and fired up."

"There was a meeting for families that I listened into, and families were confused and angry as well," she added. "Wellstone is such a welcoming place. We have a very diverse student body and a diverse group of educators. I don't understand why the district would want to mess that up."

Support labor-endorsed candidates.

VOTE NOV. 2

LiUNA!



Feel the Power

Construction and General
Laborers' Union
Local 563

SPFE

*Vote on or
before
Tuesday,
November 2,
and support
our endorsed
candidates!*

Saint Paul Board of Education:

**JAMES FARNSWORTH,
HALLA HENDERSON, URIAH WARD**

Saint Paul Board of Education (special election):

CLAYTON HOWATT

FOUR ENDORSED FOR ST. PAUL SCHOOL BOARD

Farnsworth, Henderson, Ward seeking four-year terms; Howatt running in special election to fill vacancy

James Farnsworth



• **Best teacher he's ever had:** Ms. Rise, Highland Park Senior High.
 "My human geography teacher in 10th grade, Ms. Rise had an incredible way to ignite curiosity and exploration within her students, whether that was from one of our countless engaging guest speakers or having the chance to be immersed in enriching field-work experiences outside the classroom. She knows how to mentor and lift up students from all backgrounds, and I'm lucky to have stayed in contact today where I still learn from her!"

• **On what it means to be labor endorsed:**
 "Having the support and endorsement of labor means a lot to me. As a SPPS graduate who had the privilege of being mentored and influenced by some phenomenal educators and staff, as well as the son of two longtime public school teachers who were both union stewards and active members in their buildings, the support of labor is a personal thing for me."

I'm a strong believer in needing to make investments in people who are the backbone of large institutions, so having the support and trust of labor is something I take very seriously. I look forward to having the chance to co-govern with labor and be a relentless advocate for our shared values and priorities."

• **Website:** jamesforspps.com

Halla Henderson



• **Best teacher she's ever had:** Ms. Cathy Clemons in fourth and fifth grade.

"Being in her class was the first time I had an educator of color and someone who looked like me. It meant that I could see myself in her and having that experience at such a formative age was crucial..."

"Ms. Clemon's class was grounding and healing after years of feeling lost in the education system."

• **On what it means to be labor endorsed:**
 "Earning the endorsement of workers was important to me, as the work we do on the school board is dependent on strong unions and continued investment in our workers. For me, earning labor endorsements is an opportunity to demonstrate my commitment to co-governance and building strong, stable relationships with our workers."

"I see the work that the board does as both the management and oversight of the district as well as acting as a bridge for our city, school communities and workers in our buildings. The only way to effectively communicate and represent the needs of our community is through transparency and trust, and endorsements are the one way of beginning to build that."

• **Website:** hallaforpps.com

Uriah Ward



• **Union background:** Member of the Augsburg Staff Union, Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 12.

• **Best teachers he's ever had:** Stephanie Noles, J.H. Rose High School.

"I had her for history during a difficult time in my life. She allowed me to explore subjects creatively and stoked my interest in social studies."

"She cared a lot about her students, and her class meant a lot to me. I know that it's one of the reasons I became a social studies teacher."

• **On what it means to be labor endorsed:**
 "The labor endorsement is deeply important to me. I initiated and was one of the leaders of the successful campaign to unionize my workplace. I currently serve on our bargaining team and we're working hard to develop a contract that meets the needs of our members."

I know how important it is to lead with our workers, and it was important for me to run this campaign alongside the people who make our schools great. I'm excited to work in partnership with our bargaining units to build a stronger public school system."

• **Website:** uriahward.com

Clayton Howatt



• **Best teacher he's ever had:** Mrs. Burroughs, sixth grade, St. Anthony Park Elementary.

"She was one of those teachers the younger students feared because she seemed to be so strict, but as us kids aged up and got closer to sixth grade our opinions changed."

"Simply said, she was a rock. She had high expectations for all of her students and never wavered in her commitment to every single one of us. Her tough veneer quickly melted away when she saw that light bulb go off in her students' heads, and she saw they finally got whatever problem they were trying to figure out... Nothing made my day quite like having Mrs. Burroughs proud of me."

• **On what it means to be labor endorsed:**
 "As a first time candidate running for public office, I am able to see firsthand the amount of time, work, and organization that our labor unions put into ensuring that our workers are provided the wages and benefits they deserve. Just as importantly, our labor unions provide a service to our democracy by continually pushing for transparency in our democratic process and asking our elected officials the difficult questions."

"Our labor unions are made up of hardworking community members, many of whom are in our schools every single day... Without listening to and partnering with these community members, how could an elected official expect to provide successful oversight?"

• **Website:** claytonforschoolboard.com

**CONTINUE
THE FIGHT
FOR
WORKER'S
RIGHTS.
VOTE.**

November 2, 2021

At Minnesota AFL-CIO's 55th convention, unions commit to solidarity, equity

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

During a pandemic-shortened convention that gaveled to a close Sept. 21, delegates from the Minnesota AFL-CIO's affiliate unions reflected on the importance of solidarity during times of crisis, and reaffirmed their commitment to building a just, inclusive labor movement capable of fighting for all working Minnesotans.

"No matter what we look like or where we come from, we all should have the freedom to come together and negotiate," Secretary-Treasurer Brad Lehto said in opening remarks Monday.

Held virtually, the statewide federation's 55th convention featured guest speakers, resolutions and reports on local unions' organizing and political work.

During a special presentation, frontline workers discussed their experiences keeping the state running during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ryan Ellison, a grocery store worker and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1189, recalled tense interactions with customers about masks and widespread fear about coming into contact with the virus.

"None of us signed up for what we had to go through," Ellison, a shop steward, said. "This isn't something that was ever included in the job description."

In a live address to the convention Monday, Gov. Tim Walz praised essential union members for "incredible acts of selfless service to others."

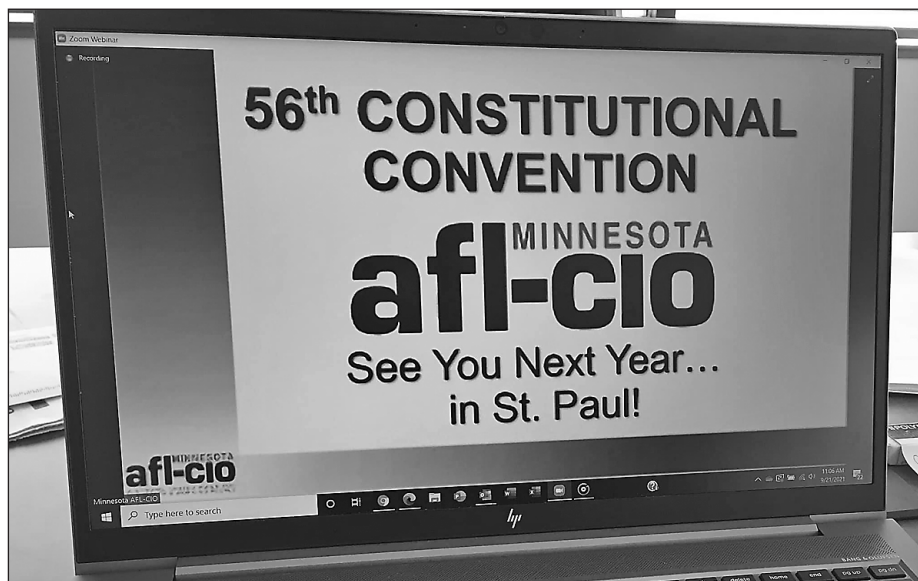
"What's been asked of you has not been asked of a generation," Walz said. "I'm incredibly proud of you and the work you've done."

Walz also credited unions for pushing employers, lawmakers and regulators to make workers' health and safety a top priority after the pandemic hit, noting that "workers who were in unions felt safer in their positions, felt better respected."

"More Minnesotans are alive today because union workers forced us to treat COVID as it should have been treated – as a life-threatening pandemic," Walz said.

Looking forward

Convention business also included a series of resolutions that advanced out



After a virtual convention this year, the state AFL-CIO plans to bring delegates together in person next year, when the convention will take place in St. Paul.

of committees and onto the convention floor, offering delegates the opportunity to shape their federation's priorities.

Resolutions ranged from opposing the corporatization of health care to supporting union members in a fight to stop AT&T from outsourcing union jobs. Another put the federation on record supporting truth in education – a response to right-wing hysteria around the teaching of "critical race theory" in schools.

Delegates also celebrated steady growth in the local labor movement's ranks. Spokespeople from new bargaining units at two charter schools, Fair State Brewing Cooperative and Augsburg University offered insights into their successful organizing drives, which took place in unprecedented times.

"We were organizing virtually," Augsburg staff member Katie Asfeld said. "We didn't have an opportunity to bump into colleagues after meetings or get together and have coffee... We developed different ways for staff to be able to show their support, and at the end of the day we saw that whether we are virtual or in person, there is power in our collective voices."

Seizing an opportunity

Recent polling suggests more workers would like to join together and

bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions.

A Gallup survey of U.S. public opinion of labor unions, released annually around Labor Day, this year recorded the highest favorability rating – 68%, since 1965. Support is relatively bipartisan, and a whopping 77% of young people view unions favorably.

"As long as I can remember, our opponents have been saying, 'Unions will die, unions are obsolete,'" Lehto said. "Don't you believe it."

Passing the PRO Act into federal law, he added, would give unions a greater opportunity to capitalize on their surging popularity. The measure, which has passed the House, would hold corporations accountable for union-busting, strengthen workers' rights to form and join unions and repeal right-to-work laws.

Minnesota's senators assured delegates they are working to advance the bill to President Biden's desk. Sen. Tina Smith said the PRO Act is necessary to undo the "concerted campaign" by big corporations "to undermine organizing rights."

Sen. Amy Klobuchar added, "I believe in my heart that when unions are strong, our economy is strong, and when our economy is strong, our country is strong."

At the Capitol

Frontline workers to state legislators: All 'heroes' deserve pandemic payments

Lawmakers pitched divergent plans last month for distributing \$250 million set aside in the state budget to compensate frontline workers who have kept Minnesota running during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A coalition of unions, which represent thousands of frontline workers, publicly backed a DFL proposal that would make more workers eligible for payments than a restrictive proposal offered by Republicans.

DFL Rep. Cedrick Frazier, a member of the working group tasked with making a unanimous proposal for distributing the funds, said the GOP proposal disrespects the service of child care, retail, transit and other workers, who would be ineligible for payments.

"The GOP assessment of which workers are not worthy is wrong, upsetting and insulting to all frontline workers that have risked their health and the health of their families to do the work that allowed us to continue to stay safe and have access to day-to-day necessities that we sometimes take for granted," Frazier said.

In a pointed letter to Republican members of the working group, Jim Gleb, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1189, described the risks and pressures food production and retail workers faced on the job – and the importance of their work to families statewide.

Grocery employees worked "with customers who might be sick, customers who were confrontational about the mask mandate and customers who were angry about product shortages," Gleb wrote. Meat and food processing workers showed up "even when the virus swept through" their shops.

"Without the retail grocery workers, Minnesotans wouldn't have been able to buy food. Without food processing and meat packing workers, there wouldn't have been food to buy," Gleb wrote. "These heroes deserve the recognition of our elected officials from both sides of the aisle and their share of the monies set aside for essential workers."

Payments overdue

The budget compromise reached between Gov. Tim Walz and the Legislature over the summer created the \$250 million fund, and it gave members of a bipartisan working group, which began meeting in July, a Labor Day deadline for delivering a plan for disbursing payments.

Lawmakers on the work group missed that deadline, citing failure to

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)



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

Nov. 23, 6 p.m.

To register for the Zoom meeting, email cnocerini@stpaulunions.org

Dakota County Assembly

Nov. 11 & Dec. 9, 7 p.m.

To register for the Zoom meeting, email cnocerini@stpaulunions.org

Ramsey County Assembly

Nov. 16, 6 p.m.

To register for the Zoom meeting, email jkitto@stpaulunions.org

Washington County Assembly

Nov. 24 & Dec. 22, 6 p.m.

To register for the Zoom meeting, email jkitto@stpaulunions.org



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

reach a unanimous agreement.

A month after the blown deadline, Republicans and DFLers on the working group held separate press conferences to outline their proposals.

Republicans' plan would give \$1,200 payments to long-term care workers, nurses, first responders, corrections officers and hospice providers.

"This money was supposed to go to long-term caregivers and those essential workers that had sustained increased risk to COVID-19 exposure," GOP Sen. Karin Housley said during a Capitol press conference Sept. 30. "We heard some very heart wrenching stories. So many Minnesotans stepped up during the pandemic... A few groups really, really stood out to us."

A week later DFLers, joined by members of several local unions, responded with a press conference of their own, outlining a proposal that would make an estimated 667,000 workers eligible for payments of \$375.

Eligible workers would include those covered by the GOP plan, as well as manufacturing, transit, janitorial, retail, food production, child care and public service workers who clocked at least 120 hours in Minnesota during the state's peacetime emergency, without the ability to work from home and in close proximity to other people.

DFLers also called on the Legislature to allocate additional money to the fund.

"We will have billions of dollars for a supplemental budget in the next legislative session, and to say that we should start excluding workers from essential worker pay because we can't afford to go above \$250 million to recognize those people is ridiculous," Rep. Ryan Winkler said. "We have the money, what we lack is the will to do it."

Leave no one behind

Unions like UFCW 1189, which represents workers

"Minnesota nurses were able to do their jobs only because the food-service workers were there, the janitors were there, the child care workers were there so that we could go to work."

– Mary C. Turner,

Minnesota Nurses Association president

in long-term care facilities, and the Minnesota Nurses Association, made clear that they would not be lured into accepting a deal that compensates some, but not all frontline workers for their service during the pandemic.

Mary Turner, president of the Minnesota Nurses Association and an intensive-care nurse at North Memorial hospital, said her union won't accept any proposal that leaves out other essential workers.

"Minnesota nurses were able to do their jobs only because the food-service workers were there, the janitors who cleaned our buildings and our hospitals were there, the child care workers were there so that we could go to work," Turner said.

"I tell you, as a nurse, we don't leave anyone behind."

In his letter to Republican lawmakers, UFCW Local 1189's Gleb added: "My sisters and brothers who are nurses, EMTs, firefighters and other first responders should not go unrecognized either. But do not forget everyone has to eat."

– Amie Stager of www.workdayminnesota.org contributed to this report.



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Visit rejuvenation.mnwcare.com





Kerry Adelman, a member of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota from Lakeville, demonstrates the work she does on a daily basis to care for her son, Keegan, during a "walk-a-day" event with Rep. Angie Craig.

Unions, congressional reps push Build Back Better investments as fair path out of pandemic

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

Minnesota unions and allies in Congress have been teaming up this fall to highlight the benefits that two Build Back Better bills would deliver to working people across the state.

Negotiations over the cornerstones of President Joe Biden's Build Back Better agenda – a \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill and a larger budget reconciliation measure – continued as this edition of The Advocate went to press.

Together, the proposals would represent one of the greatest investments in working people in American

history, and they would be paid for without raising taxes on Americans making under \$400,000.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said the nation's largest labor federation "is putting everything we have" into getting the Build Back Better agenda across the finish line.

"Every working person and every family in every state would benefit in some way," Shuler added. "Child care tax credits, the first ever federal paid family and medical leave benefit, a long-overdue path to citizenship, infrastructure investments and apprenticeship programs, American-made industries, American supply chains made with good, union jobs – that's the Biden-Harris vision for America's future."

Phillips, Blue Green Alliance tout transit

The bipartisan infrastructure bill would invest \$4.5 billion in Minnesota roads and \$302 million in the state's bridges.

It would also draw \$820 million in federal funds for public transportation – a provision U.S. Rep. Dean Phillips hailed during an event, organized by unions and environmental groups in the Blue Green Alliance, at a future Metro Transit Orange Line stop in Bloomington recently.

Scheduled to open this year, the bus rapid transit (BRT) route will connect suburban communities along the I-35W corridor with downtown Minneapolis. BRT offers passengers an experience similar to light-rail travel – dedicated lanes to avoid delays, ticket machines to prevent boarding lines – but at a much lower public cost.

Phillips, who represents Minnesota's 3rd Congressional District, hailed the bipartisan infrastructure bill as an opportunity to expand BRT networks across the metro, connecting more Minnesotans with economic opportunities.

"Transit investments build stronger futures for everyone, especially our children, families, workers and small businesses," he said. "The Orange Line should be joined in the near future by other BRT lines that will serve to connect us all."

The Orange Line and other BRT lines to come won't just connect people with work, but will also put people to work, while decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, BGA Midwest Field Director Bree Halverson said.

"Building back better is America's path toward a clean, thriving and equitable future," she said. "We need a recovery for America, by America, making the products we need to repair our nation's infrastructure and rebuild American manufacturing in the United States, and more projects like the Orange Line will do that."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)



Photo: Laborers volunteer at a literature drop to support State Rep. Zack Stephenson in 2020.

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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

Craig fights for home care funding

Reconciliation, meanwhile, would pick up where the infrastructure bill leaves off, tackling clean energy projects and investing in so-called “human infrastructure” to help working families thrive, like paid family leave, free community college, enhanced child tax credits and access to affordable child care and home-based health care.

During a break from committee work on the measure, U.S. Rep. Angie Craig recently joined members of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota to put a spotlight on the historic home care proposal. The 2nd District representative joined the union’s “walk-a-day” event, which gives lawmakers a glimpse at life as a home care worker.

Meeting with Craig over Zoom, Kerry Adelman, an SEIU member from Lakeville, demonstrated the work she does on a daily basis to care for her son, Keegan, who suffered severe, traumatic injuries during a motorcycle accident six years ago.

Since his discharge from the VA Medical Center, Keegan, his wife and three children have been living with Adelman, her husband and her adult daughter. Adelman said she quit her job to provide care for Keegan and for her mother, who suffers from cognitive decline.

“It did cost us my retirement benefits, but we’re OK,” Adelman told Craig. “What about all the people who came to this work without financial resources? And what about my grandkids? Can I really ask them to work their whole life for \$15 an hour without benefits?”

Craig pledged to keep fighting to include funding in the reconciliation bill for home care jobs with good pay and a pathway for workers to form unions – a critical step, she said, toward stabilizing and professionalizing an industry marked by high rates of turnover.

“It’s long past time that we invest in America’s seniors and the folks who care for those seniors, and folks



U.S. Rep. Dean Phillips of Minnesota’s 3rd Congressional District speaks at a press conference near a future Orange Line bus-rapid-transit stop in Bloomington. The Blue Green Alliance, a labor-environmental partnership, organized the event to highlight transportation investments included in the bipartisan infrastructure bill.

Union Advocate photo

who suffer life’s tough challenges, like Keegan,” Craig said. “When you think about the physical demands, the technical skills required, we’ve got to elevate and raise this profession.”

The reconciliation proposal also includes stricter penalties on employers who break labor laws to stave off union organizing. It’s language taken from organized labor’s top legislative priority, the PRO Act.

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Labor News in Review

STAFF MARCH ON HALF PRICE BOOKS

Workers at Half Price Books stores in St. Paul and Roseville marched on their bosses Oct. 14, serving notice that they have formed a union and are demanding recognition from the employer. Afterward, several workers traveled to other Half Price Books locations in the metro area, encouraging workers there to join the union campaign.

The organizing effort is supported by Local 1189 of the United Food and Commercial Workers and its sister local, Minneapolis-based UFCW Local 663.

Half Price Books workers said they are joining together to bargain higher wages – currently they earn \$12.50 per hour – and gain more say over working conditions that have worsened since stores reopened after pandemic shutdowns. Laura Peña, who works in the

Highland Park store, said Half Price Books has cut staffing in half, leaving employees to do double the work.

“We take in a lot of books all day, and at first, when there was lower staffing, there was a restriction on how many (books) people could bring in to sell,” Peña said. “Then corporate kept ramping things up, telling us to take in more and more, but it’s not like we had any more staff to back the ramping up.”

Workers also hope to amend a new, post-pandemic policy that makes all new hires probationary for 90 days, keeping them ineligible for benefits.

Perhaps by coincidence, the district manager was in the Highland Park store when workers there marched on their boss, according to Peña. “We were nervous, but I was glad we all had each other’s backs,” she said.

CAPITAL CITY WORKERS OK STRIKE

Members of three unions representing more than 250 City of St. Paul workers voted to authorize a strike Oct. 5 after rejecting a two-year contract proposal from management. The workers are members of Laborers Local 363, Operating Engineers Local 49 and Teamsters Local 120, and they bargain jointly as part of the Tri-Council.

After the vote, union leaders filed notice of their intent to strike. Representatives of the unions and the city were scheduled to resume bargaining Oct. 18, one day before a mandatory, 10-day cooling off period would expire, legally allowing workers to strike. A strike could impact water service, parks, street repair and plowing.

Union leaders said workers are holding out for a better wage package from the city, which has offered no raise in the first year of the agreement and a 1.25% raise in the second. One-time bonus money is also included in the city’s proposal, but union members say that isn’t enough, given the additional risks they faced at work during the pandemic.

“These people who provide city services to our great city of St. Paul, they deserve the respect of a good contract,” said Paul Slattery of Teamsters Local 120. “A wage offer of 0%? That’s not fair, and it’s not sustainable when inflation is going up.”

ORGANIZING AT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Minnesota Historical Society employees may vote soon on whether to form a union after filing a petition for a representation election with the National Labor Relations Board Sept. 20. According to the filing, the bargaining unit could bring together as many as 295 workers at the St. Paul-based nonprofit organization.

The organizing drive has support from AFSCME Council 5. Learn more about the campaign on the new union’s Instagram page: @mnhsunion.

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*A message from the
members of Local 1005*

Janitors take advantage of new benefit in union contract: English classes

Twin Cities janitors are taking advantage of a new benefit in their union contract that provides paid training courses in English language skills.

Local 26 of the Service Employees International Union hosted a celebration Saturday, Oct. 3, in north-east Minneapolis honoring the first 15 members to graduate from the pilot program, which janitors took to win in contract negotiations last year.

The course spanned several months, with workers taking hourlong classes, four days a week – all on paid time.

Brahim Kone, secretary-treasurer of Local 26, said securing funds for the training program is part of the union's effort to grow "respect and recognition" for janitors and their work.

"The funding we won for these classes is an example of a step towards not just getting better pay and benefits, but also supporting a workforce that's too often left out and left behind," Kone said.

It didn't come easily, though. After a 24-hour strike in February 2020, janitors with Local 26 nearly began an open-ended strike in March before reaching an agreement that included funding for training opportunities for union members, among other gains.

Kone thanked the cleaning companies who helped fund the program – and the union members who pushed to include it in their contract.

"We are incredibly proud of the thousands of janitors who went on strike to win this program and to the 15 who graduated in this first class today," he said. "We look forward to many more classes, covering various skills, that will follow this groundbreaking class."

John A. Nesse, a representative of local cleaning companies, said the pilot training program is proof "the union and management can work together to support the people who work hard every day and are



Members of SEIU Local 26 celebrate completion of a first-of-its-kind language class, won by the union in bargaining.

looking for ways to build their skills to move forward in their careers."

Teachers, family members and fellow union members cheered as the 15 graduates accepted certificates recognizing their achievement.

Graduates said the language skills they gained have increased their confidence not just at the workplace, but throughout their daily lives, better preparing them to navigate events like parent-teacher conferences and doctor visits.

"To build my English skills on work time, which helps me both on my job and also in my day-to-day life, is something that is so amazing," said Alma Bonilla, a graduate who works downtown Minneapolis. "We all learned so much and grew together by taking these classes."

Elia Starkweather, who participated in negotiations that led to the contract gains, said the graduation ceremony represented the "fruit of many afternoons and many hours of negotiations" and was a "small



Nadia Smith (R), who helped create the program, hugs Aracely Vargas, a graduate. submitted photos

example of what we can do when we are united."

"This will continue to grow because the goal isn't to just be confined to English," she added. "It is a first step."

Labor federation blood drive planned Nov. 30

Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood. It could be a cancer patient, an accident victim or a premature baby. Blood cannot be manufactured; it can only come from generous donors who take time out of their daily lives to give blood.

The St. Paul Regional Labor Federation's nonprofit, the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center (LSRC), will hold its annual blood drive Tuesday, Nov. 30, from 2 to 7 p.m.

The American Red Cross blood mobile will be parked outside the federation's offices at the St. Paul Labor Center, 353 W. 7th St.

COVID-19 protocols, including a mask requirement for all donors, volunteers and staff, will be in place.

Schedule an appointment to donate blood online at www.redcrossblood.org using sponsor code SPRLF, or call LSRC Community Services liaison Erica Dalager Reed at 651-222-3787 ext. 120.



ORGANIZER

This is an entry level organizer position based in Minneapolis-St. Paul. The primary focus of the position is to initiate and conduct new organizing campaigns; to develop workplace leaders within the local union; and to increase union visibility and assist with direct action campaigns in key workplaces as directed by local union staff.

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With postmaster in town, workers speak out against plan to slow delivery

By Steve Share

Minneapolis Labor Review editor

A recent visit to Minneapolis by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy and the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors prompted local postal workers to speak out against new policies which will result in slower mail delivery and harm the public.

"We feel a passion and dedication for the mail," said Peggy Whitney, vice president of the American Postal Workers Union's Minneapolis area local.

Whitney spoke to reporters outside the main Post Office in downtown Minneapolis Oct. 4, joined by about 30 APWU members who briefly marched in an informational picket line.

At issue: the Postal Service's move to implement new service delivery standards Oct. 1, which will result in a slowdown of mail delivery nationwide, but particularly in rural areas.

The new service delivery standard for first class mail, for example, increased from three to five days, an increase of one to two days from the previous standard. The new service delivery standards also will impact packages and periodical mail. (The newspaper you are reading is mailed via periodical mail.)

The slowdown in delivery standards comes at the same time as an increase in postage rates.

Charging more and providing worse service runs contrary to most business



Peggy Whitney, vice president of the Minneapolis area APWU, speaks during an action outside the Minneapolis post office. Labor Review photo

practices, Whitney observed.

And, she added, "the financial rationale is miniscule compared to the potential damage to customers."

Indeed, according the Postal Regulatory Commission, an independent federal agency which monitors the USPS, "the Postal Service's estimates of how much it will save as a result of implementing the proposed changes may be inflated," and "the proposed changes would not substantially affect the Postal Service's overall financial condition."

While urban areas with mail process-

ing facilities may not feel the impact of the new standards as much, "rural communities do not have mail processing facilities," Whitney noted.

"We're really worried about the [delivery of] prescription medicines," she said. "So many prescriptions are delivered by mail."

A Sept. 17 statement from the USPS announcing the new standards advised:

"For mail or correspondence that requires a deadline, the Postal Service encourages consumers to plan ahead and send their mail early. You likely

wouldn't wait to mail your mom a Mother's Day card the day before or on Mother's Day, so mail your letters and greeting cards with the Postal Service early so the Postal Service can ensure it reaches its final destination on-time."

The USPS rushed to implement the new service delivery standards - part of a sweeping, 10-year plan changing Postal Service operations - without inviting a full review by the Postal Regulatory Commission.

As a result, a group of 20 state attorneys general submitted a formal complaint Oct. 7 asking the Postal Regulatory Commission to insist on undertaking a full review of the plan.

The group, which includes Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, wrote: "The Plan will transform virtually every aspect of the Postal Service... rework how the Postal Service transports mail and other products; overhaul its processing and logistics network; enact slower service standards for First-Class Mail and Periodicals and First-Class Packages..."

"This plan is being enacted without any meaningful oversight and review, and the Postal Regulatory Commission, states, experts, and the public deserve to have their voices heard," said Josh Shapiro, Pennsylvania's attorney general and a leader of the coalition of 20 attorneys general who submitted the complaint.

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AFSCME members united for 'substantive change' in contract talks with U of M

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

The maroon and gold that typically adorns the University of Minnesota's campuses have been spiked with AFSCME green this fall, as frontline workers make a public push for higher wages and other demands in contract talks with the school.

Clerical, technical and health care workers, members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, have been in bargaining with the university since May. Their previous, two-year contracts expired June 30.

But the slow pace of negotiations prompted the unions to stage rallies on the Twin Cities and Duluth campuses Sept. 22. Two weeks later, AFSCME members marched on a Board of Regents meeting.

Union members pledged to keep the heat on the university until its words of support for frontline workers translate into real gains at the bargaining table.

"The U is interested in image," Local 3800 President Cherrene Horazuk said during a rally on the steps of Coffman Memorial Union. "U of M AFSCME is interested in substantive change. That's why we're here today."

Demanding pay and respect

Wage raises and "essential pay" are among AFSCME locals' top demands in bargaining.

All workers deserve wages that keep up with the rising cost of living, the unions say, and workers who kept the university running during the pandemic deserve "tangible appreciation for risking our lives," said Deb Pavlica, the president of Local 3260 and a nurse at Boynton Health Services.

"The Board of Regents all stayed home safer. President Gable, management, leadership all stayed home safer," Pavlica said. "But they sent us to the frontline for an extra \$16 a day for less than three months..."

"We want raises and compensation that acknowledge our sacrifices."

Beyond higher pay, workers are pushing for contract language that would keep in place remote and flexible



AFSCME locals rally outside Coffman Memorial Union on the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus, calling on U of M administrators to address their demands for fair wages, premium pay for essential workers, flexible work schedules and action to make the school a more equitable and just place to work and study.

Union Advocate photo

work schedules introduced at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their demands also include a formal process for appealing management decisions related to remote work.

Diane Blumenfeld, a clerical worker in the university's dentistry program, said all workers should have the right to "meaningful flexibility" in their work schedule. "During the last year and a half, we have proven that we do not need to be physically in the office to do our jobs well," she said.

Other AFSCME members at the Sept. 22 rally demanded a more robust Regents Scholarship program for U of M employees. Sarah Vast, a transgender, nonbinary worker, described having to "walk three buildings away to use a restroom that is safe and comfortable," and called on the university to do more to

make its workplaces "safe, healthy and just for workers of all identities, needs and abilities."

Lei Simmons, a clerical worker at Masonic Cancer Research Center and member of Local 3800, demanded the contract reflect a commitment to racial and social justice that goes beyond "diversity training" and begins the work of addressing and eliminating bias.

"The University of Minnesota has a history of turning that blind eye. We have a history of managers rationalizing and justifying behaviors that demean people," Simmons said. "Each person that is at the university as a student and as a worker has the right to be respected."

Support and solidarity

University students and non-AFSCME staff joined the rally in support of the workers' contract campaign.

Members of other unions – including the Communications Workers (CWA), Service Employees (SEIU) and Education Minnesota – also showed their solidarity at the rally.

"We support the workers here fighting for what's right," CWA Local 7250 President Kieran Knutson said. "No business as usual until there's justice for the workers."

Greg Namacher, president of SEIU Local 26, noted that U of M AFSCME members supported janitors when they went on strike in February 2020.

"It is critical that we stand with each other when we're fighting for what's right, especially in this moment," he said. "It is also critical that we stand together to push the university to be an engine of economic and racial justice – and not an impediment to it."



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	(signed) Michael Moore, editor		

Union drive brings together 350 M Health psych staff

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Eric Immler, who works in M Health Fairview's adult inpatient units, said his excitement was "hard to put into words."

"Having a seat at the table, feeling respected is going to allow me to better focus on my patients and collaborate with my co-workers – and [retain] good employees," Immler said. "We hope Fairview comes into negotiations after we certify our union realizing how serious we are and in good faith."

Like many workers forming unions recently, M Health Fairview employees said the COVID-19 outbreak gave their campaign a sense of urgency. Senior psychiatric associate Andrea Rivas described working in small, confined areas with patients who sometimes refused to wear masks, and uncertainty over access to personal protective equipment.

But Rivas and her colleagues also pointed to increasingly dangerous working conditions in their field. Health care workers account for the majority of all nonfatal workplace injuries in the U.S., and injury rates are highest among workers in psychiatric and substance-abuse facilities.

Rivas is still dealing with the effects of a concussion she suffered nearly eight months ago, when she was "punched repeatedly" after rushing to the aid of a co-worker who was being assaulted. Erin McCormick, who works at M Health Fairview's intensive treatment center for children, said people in her line of work are "in constant fight-or-flight mode" and burn out quickly as a result.

"During my time, I've been head butted and spent the night in the ER," McCormick said. "While I was pregnant, I also got punched by a patient. Luckily, I turned at the last second and the patient punched my

arm, but I was constantly worried about my baby's health."

To reduce violent incidents, workers said, they will bargain hard for contract language that requires safe staffing levels and puts preventative protocols in place, both before and after violent incidents.

The fledgling unit also hopes their first contract not only will raise wages, but ensure equitable pay. During their organizing drive, McCormick said, psychiatric associates discovered a pay gap between men and women.

"Having an open conversation about pay and a contract where everything is formalized will help to address these issues," she said.

SEIU Healthcare Minnesota already represents nearly 2,000 workers in the M Health Fairview system. Psychiatric associates will build their own contract, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota said, that addresses the professional needs of the "most patient-facing staff in the mental and behavioral health field."

Rivas said she believes giving psychiatric associates a seat at the table will be good not just for workers, but patients too.

"We interact closely with patients during their entire inpatient treatment," she said. "Despite our close contact, we are left out of important meetings, and our opinions aren't asked about patient concerns. This not only feels disrespectful, but it also means we are missing out on important information that could affect our clients."

"Mental health is so important, but our society doesn't seem to value it or the work done to help support those in crisis," McCormick added. "We're joining together in our union to help show that our patients and this work is important."

Labor mourns Lola Langford, first woman to lead St. Paul Trades and Labor

Lola Langford, the first woman elected president of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly, died Sept. 19 in Hudson, Wis. She was 85.

(Langford changed her last name from Reed after marrying John Langford in her retirement.)

After taking a job with the Postal Service and joining the American Postal Workers Union, Langford

became the first woman elected president of her local union. She was elected president of the Trades and Labor Assembly in November 1992.

The Assembly would later merge with other councils to become the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation.

Honored by Gov. Arne Carlson as one of the 20 most outstanding women in Minnesota, Langford

served on the Executive Board of the United Way, as an Arbitration Advocate for the APWU and on the Board of Directors of the St. Paul Postal Employees Credit Union.

She later moved to Washington, D.C., where she became a business agent for the American Federation of Government Employees, before settling in Hudson.



Title I program staff at St. Paul Public Schools accept school supplies donated by local unions. submitted photo

Labor federation's Jean Jones Initiative nets over \$1,000 for school supplies

Local unions raised \$1,096 this fall to purchase school supplies for students in the St. Paul Public Schools' Title I program.

The Jean Jones Initiative's annual school-supply drive saw donations increase by over \$400 compared to last year. The money was used to purchase pens, composition notebooks, combination locks, folders, glue sticks, crayons, scissors, pencils, pencil holders for lockers, colored pencils, pencil sharpeners, three-ring binders, backpacks and washable markers.

Named after a former St. Paul teacher and union leader, the Jean Jones Initiative is coordinated by the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's AFL-CIO Community Services Program. The programs are part of the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation's nonprofit arm.

Organizers wished to thank the unions, members and other supporters whose donations made the supply drive a success.

Study from Wisconsin reveals career-building potential of union apprenticeships

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Wisconsin's construction training programs, which represent nearly two-thirds of all apprentices in the state.

Researchers not only compared construction apprenticeship programs to colleges and universities, but also assessed key differences between union-affiliated and nonunion-affiliated apprenticeship programs in construction.

Construction apprenticeship programs are financed in one of two ways. In joint labor-management programs, unions collectively bargain cents-per-hour contributions from contractors. In employer-only programs, single employers or trade associations make contributions voluntarily – and may choose to forgo these investments in an effort to win project bids.

The study found joint apprenticeship programs comprise 95% of all investment in the state's construction workforce, produce 81% of its skilled trade apprentices and enroll an even higher share of apprentices who are women (85%), Black (89%), Hispanic (86%) and military veterans (85%).

The study also found that the share of apprentices in joint construction programs who were Black or Hispanic in 2018 (9.1%) was equal to their share of enrollment in the University of Wisconsin system. Notably, this diversity metric was 40% lower (5.5%) in employer-only non-union programs.

Similarly, while researchers found that average wages of workers who had completed registered apprenticeships in construction were virtually equal to other workers with bachelor's degrees, they noted that graduates of joint (union) programs earn an average of \$34 per hour. That's more than 42% higher than the average wage for graduates of nonunion programs.

"The data shows that broad stigmas often associated with vocational training and sweeping generalizations that suggest all construction training pathways yield similar economic outcomes are simply not grounded in fact," study co-author Frank Manzo IV said.

"The construction industry's joint labor-management apprenticeship model offers a best-in-class pathway into the mid-



Apprenticeship programs, like Pipefitters Local 455's in St. Paul, rival college degrees, according to a new study.

file photo

\$35

Average wage of Wisconsin workers with undergraduate degrees from the UW system

\$34

Average wage of Wisconsin construction workers who complete union apprenticeships

\$24

Average wage of non-union construction workers in Wisconsin

Source: Midwest EPI

dle class, while leaving its participants free of burdensome student loan debt."

The study also highlights one way registered construction apprenticeship programs provide a more robust training curriculum than Wisconsin's two-year and four-year public college systems.

On average, construction apprentices complete more than 7,200 hours of training. That's 41% more than a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin system and 183% more than an associate degree from the state's technical colleges.

With Congress poised to fund historic investments in the nation's infrastruc-

ture, the study's findings reaffirm construction apprenticeship as a uniquely viable alternative to college. Researchers suggested several policy measures to expand access to the union apprenticeships, including expanded pre-apprenticeship programs at public schools, linking apprenticeship with growing sectors of construction such as clean energy projects and restoring the state's prevailing wage law, which promotes funding for apprenticeship programs by union and non-union contractors alike.

They also pointed to initiatives that would encourage women to enroll in

construction apprenticeships, like by improving access to child care.

"The construction industry's registered apprenticeship system helps people earn while they learn in-demand skills, and offers access to family-sustaining careers that can rival peers with bachelor's degrees," Bruno said. "However, the data suggests that more can and should be done to expand these pathways, particularly among historically disadvantaged and underrepresented groups in Wisconsin."

Read the full report online at www.midwestepi.org.

**Make a difference.
Vote LABOR Nov. 2nd.**



*A message of solidarity
from the members of
Machinists Local Lodge 459.*



**Support
labor-endorsed
candidates!**

*A message from the
International Union of
Elevator Constructors
Local 9*

www.local9.com

Labor holiday drive seeks donations

No family should go without food on the table. That goes double during the holidays.

The Labor of Love fundraising drive will help get food to families in need throughout the east metro this holiday season. Contributions from unions and their members will be accepted through mid-November.

All donations are used to purchase gift cards from union grocery stores. Local agencies distribute the gift cards to area families in December.

Participating agencies include Catholic Charities in St. Paul, Jewish Community Center and Second Harvest Heartland. The St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's Emergency Fund, which assists union members facing financial hardship, distributes 30 percent of proceeds from Labor of Love.

To contribute, mail a check payable to Labor Studies and Resource Center to LSRC; Labor of Love; Attn: Laura; 353 West 7th St., Suite 201; Saint Paul, MN 55102.

Labor of Love is co-sponsored by Greater Twin Cities United Way, the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation, the LSRC and the AFL-CIO Community Services program.

Head of St. Paul Building Trades runs for White Bear Lake mayor

Labor Endorsed

After eight years on the White Bear Lake school board, Don Mullin is running for mayor of the northeast suburb.

"I live in a great community that has been good to my family," Mullin said. "White Bear Lake is a special place to live and work and build a community together, and it's a great place to raise kids."

Mullin and his wife of 22 years, Kellie, have raised three children in White Bear Lake, and all three have gone through the White Bear Lake Area Schools. Now that their youngest is a senior in high school, Mullin said, he's had more time to consider new ways to serve the community.

"I was looking for new challenges, and I wasn't done serving my community," he said. "I felt like I still had more service in me."

Among Mullin's accomplishments on the ISD 624 school board is an expansion of career pathway offerings, including pathways in the construction trades.

When Mullin took office eight years ago, the district offered one career pathway program. Today, White Bear Lake students have access to 11.

It's no surprise Mullin takes a particular interest in raising awareness among students and families of the career pathways that exist in the con-

struction trades.

Mullin serves as executive secretary of the St. Paul Building and Construction Trades Council, and he is a long-time member of Local 880 of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, representing sign and display workers.

Mullin said the approach he took as a school board member won't change if he is elected mayor. That means being accessible, transparent and, above all, fiscally responsible.

The current mayor, Jo Emerson, who is not seeking re-election, "has been a responsible steward of our city's finances," Mullin said. "The biggest thing for me is continuing that approach."

"At the school district we've been fiscally responsible for the past eight years, and I want to do the same as mayor."

Mullin also believes his work to expand career pathways at the school district can carry over to City Hall. He noted that many local businesses are struggling to hire workers.

"I see some opportunities to create career pathways not only with local businesses, but also with the city," Mullin said.

Although Mullin is no stranger to many voters in White Bear Lake, he plans to knock as many doors as pos-



Don Mullin is the labor-endorsed candidate for mayor of White Bear Lake.

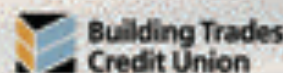
sible before Election Day, Nov. 2.

"White Bear Lake has a lot of new residents," Mullin said. "I've been out talking to voters and, I hear pretty much the same thing. Everybody wants their roads to continue to be plowed, their trash to continue to be picked up – and they love White Bear Lake."

On the web

Learn more about Mullin and his campaign online at mullinforwbl.com.

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