



Do Something!

Shop local, shop union

'Tis the season to go shopping, and union members are encouraged to spend some of their holiday shopping money with retailers and establishments that hire fellow union members.

Planning a holiday feast or a New Year's Eve party? Stock up on groceries at a union grocer. United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1189 has a list on its website – go to ufcw1189.org/campaigns/shop-union – or look for the "UFCW Shop" sticker in the store's entryway.

For dining or drinks, check out UNITE HERE Local 17's list of union bars and restaurants: www.uniteherelocal17.org/union-properties.

To give the gift of union-made, American-made clothing, check out Union House in Wyoming, or shop online at unionlabel.com. From shirts and hats to socks and underwear, Union House has it, and it's guaranteed to be made in the USA.

For more information about union-made products and boycotts – we're looking at you, Tony the Tiger – check out the AFL-CIO's Union Label department at unionlabel.org.

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www.stpaulunions.org

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

Essential workers call bonus holdup 'a slap in the face'

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

What do nurses, janitors, educators and other essential workers want from state lawmakers this holiday season? They spelled it out Dec. 1, during a rally and march through downtown Minneapolis.

"Quit playing politics and get the job done," Minnesota Nurses Association President Mary Turner said, standing alongside a chain of

essential workers holding large, block letters that spelled out "ESSENTIAL PAY."

In July, Minnesota lawmakers set aside \$250 million in state funds to compensate essential workers for keeping the state running during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But workers have yet to receive a penny from that fund, and it appears unlikely they will before the 2022 legislative session convenes Jan. 31.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 16)



At a rally in downtown Minneapolis, advocates call on legislators to stop playing politics with a fund created to compensate essential workers.

Union Advocate photo

Unions join Biden in Rosemount, praise \$1T infrastructure package

Union Advocate staff

Two weeks after signing a bill that delivers on his campaign pledge to rebuild the nation's infrastructure, President Joe Biden traveled to Rosemount to tout the measure and its \$6 billion investment into Minnesota's roads, bridges, public transportation and water systems.

Several local union leaders joined the president Nov. 30 at Dakota County Technical College, where Biden highlighted the importance of educating workers to take advantage of career opportunities his infrastructure bill will create, particularly for skilled tradespeople.

"In places like this, we're going to train the next generation of workers to do the jobs that my infrastructure law and our Build Back Better Act are going to put into even greater demand," Biden said. "We're going to need more qualified people."

Minnesota's unions and their apprenticeship programs will

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)



Spreading the holiday cheer

The Cement Masons and Plasterers Training Center in New Brighton takes on a festive atmosphere each December, when union apprentices install the "Concrete Christmas" display in time for Cement Masons Local 633 and Twin Cities Plasterers Local 265's holiday party. The project is an opportunity for apprentices to show off the skills they've learned, both at the training center and on the jobsite. Read more about the annual tradition on Page 14.

Union Advocate photos

Exit Interview: Bill McCarthy

McCarthy to retire as head of Minnesota AFL-CIO

Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bill McCarthy will retire in February, stepping down after more than six years in the state's top union office.

A longtime member of UNITE HERE Local 17, the hospitality workers' union, McCarthy first ran for union office 36 years ago, when he

was tending bar at Cleo's Lounge on the 50th floor of the IDS Tower in downtown Minneapolis.

"I became active in supporting my brothers and sisters in the movement," McCarthy remembered, "and they elected me as a steward."

From there, McCarthy's rise

through the labor ranks began. After taking a job as business agent, McCarthy successfully ran for president of Local 17, a title he held for 15 years before being elected president of the Minneapolis Central Labor Council in 2002. He was seated as state president in 2015.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)



McCarthy speaks at a MN AFL-CIO convention. Labor Review photo

Go Figure

11.1

Injury rate per 100 workers at Amazon's Minnesota warehouses from 2018 to 2020

5.2

Injury rate at non-Amazon warehouses

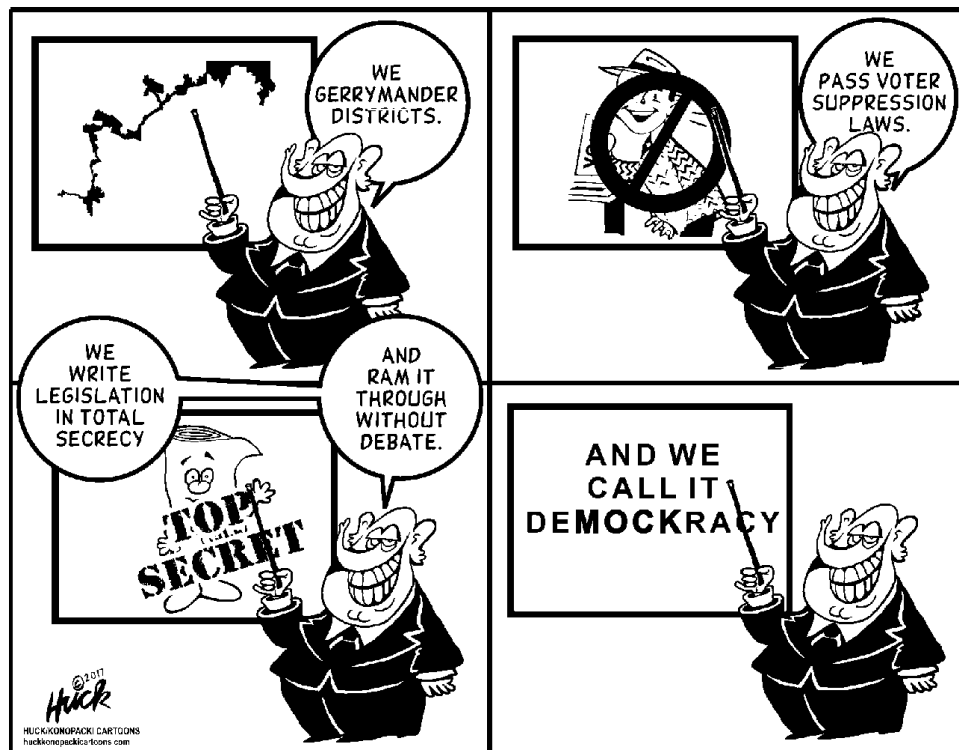
170%

Peak turnover rate at Amazon's Minnesota warehouses, nearly three times higher than the industry average

37%

Wage gap between Black and white workers at Amazon's Shakopee facility

Source: "Injuries, Dead-End Jobs and Racial Inequity in Minnesota's Amazon Operations," NELP.org.



Labor Voices: Kera Peterson

Infrastructure bill shows what's possible through partnership

The long wait for federal action to repair and rebuild America's physical infrastructure is over, now that President Joe Biden has signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law. The \$1.2 trillion package of investments is cause for celebration – a truly historic accomplishment.

The measure will put thousands of union members to work rebuilding our roads and bridges, expanding our transportation system, tackling climate change, improving broadband internet access and water systems, and installing electric vehicle charging stations across the country. In Minnesota alone, we will see \$6 billion in community-building, jobs-creating investments. There's a lot of work to be done, and Minnesota's union members stand ready to do it.

I think AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler put it best: "Victories like this are why we campaigned so hard for President Biden," she said. Here in the east metro, union members and retirees gave thousands of hours volunteering to help elect President Biden and labor-endorsed congressional candidates like Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Sen. Tina Smith, Rep. Betty McCollum and Rep. Angie Craig, who played critical roles in determining what was included in the infrastructure bill – and getting it across the finish line.

Our movement recognized the stakes in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic and the outcry for racial justice in the wake of George Floyd's murder brought into focus the systemic failures all around us. Union members put in the work to send new leaders to Washington. We made sure they didn't forget us when they got there. And we are getting results.

What the Biden administration has accomplished already, in partnership with Democratic majorities in the House and Senate, is remarkable. Before signed the long-delayed bipartisan infrastructure bill, Biden signed the America Rescue Plan, delivering direct payments to all Americans, expanding the child tax credit, keeping families in their homes and staving off state- and local-government cuts.

It was an honor to attend President Biden's event Nov. 30 at Dakota County Technical College in Rosemount. In a brief conversation with the president, I was able to express my gratitude, on behalf of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation and its affiliate unions, for his leadership in passing the infrastructure bill. I also let him know union members and leaders were working hard in partnership with his administration all along the way. That came as no surprise to the president, who made it clear he

"There's a lot of work to be done, and Minnesota's union members stand ready to do it."

– Kera Peterson



understands and values the work labor has done and continues to do in support of our shared goals.

Fortunately, President Biden also understands that our work is not done. In his remarks at DCTC, the president re-emphasized the need to invest in our nation's human infrastructure. His Build Back Better Act would begin to lift some of the road blocks that keep too many Americans – women and people of color, in particular – from sharing in our economic prosperity. We know the lack of access to child care, elder care and family leave forces too many people into impossible choices between their loved ones and their careers. We know too many Americans still lack quality, affordable health care.

The Build Back Better Act would make those investments and do more, fighting climate change, improving our immigration system and creating real penalties for union-busting. And the Build Back Better Act would be fully paid for by ensuring wealthy individuals and corporations finally pay their fair share in taxes.

On the campaign trail, President Biden promised to be the most pro-union president this country has ever seen. That's a big promise, but it's also an invitation to union members. It's on us to hold the president accountable, to make sure he backs up his word with action.

So let's celebrate passage of the Biden administration's historic infrastructure bill by redoubling our efforts to push Congress to send the Build Back Better Act to the president's desk. And in the new year, let's communicate with our elected officials at all levels that, when it comes to making our economy fair for working people, America can't afford to wait.

– Kera Peterson is president of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO. The federation brings together more than 1,000 affiliate unions representing over 50,000 working people from Chisago, Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties.

Learn more about the federation and its work at www.stpaulunions.org.

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

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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.

Stand with Ramsey County employees

Members of five locals affiliated with Council 5 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees are in contract negotiations with Ramsey County, and union members are asking for the community's support.

Workers say county negotiators have demanded they accept a wage freeze and disproportionate increases to their health insurance costs.

To show they are willing to fight for dignity, respect and a fair contract, AFSCME members plan to stage informational picketing outside the County Courthouse Dec. 28, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Supporters from the public are welcome on the picket line and asked to sign a petition supporting AFSCME's contract campaign at bit.ly/3dCnh7r.

Bargaining with Ramsey County covers AFSCME locals 8, 151, 707, 1076 and 1935.

St. Paul educators start petition

Also in bargaining this winter are over 3,000 members of the St. Paul Federation of Educators, whose employer requested in November that negotiations move behind closed doors with a mediator.

It's the first round of contract talks since educators went on strike in March 2020, and the union is, once again, pushing the district to make investments that educators say would help build the schools St. Paul students deserve. But this time around, the district has over \$200 million in pandemic-relief funds in hand.

SPFE members want to win a contract that ensures mental-health support teams at every school, smaller class sizes, initiatives to hire and support educators of color, smaller caseloads for special education teachers and more bilingual education assistants.

Educators are asking parents and supporters to sign a petition in favor of their priorities at bit.ly/StPaulStudentsDeserve.

History Day project help available

The East Side Freedom Library in St. Paul will open its doors again this year to students participating in the National History Day contest, providing mentorship and resources to young scholars as they engage with this year's topic, "Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences."

The independent, nonprofit library is open for History Day help from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturdays, except Christmas and New Year's Day. Interested students must make an appointment by emailing info@eastsidefreedomlibrary.org, show proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 test within two days, and follow safety protocols upon arrival, including masking.

"The 2022 National History Day theme asks you to think about how disagreements and attempts to reach compromise have impacted people, places, ideas and events in the past," organizers said. "Are you interested in racial justice, labor activism, women's rights, the impact of LGBTQ+ movements, environmental activism and more? Come to the ESFL, where you will find rich resources ... for your research and experienced mentors eager to help you shape your project."

The ESFL is located at 1105 Greenbrier St.

Newly unionized Chisago Lakes custodians tap into community support in first contract campaign

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

If administrators in the Chisago Lakes School District thought they could push their school custodians around without anyone noticing, then the semi-truck blaring its horn outside their offices at 8 a.m. Nov. 8 was a wakeup call in more ways than one.

The custodians, who formed a union earlier this year, rallied with dozens of supporters on the day of their first scheduled mediation session with the district, which has shown little interest, workers said, in addressing their concerns about wages, workloads and turnover.

The rally drew support from educators and other school staff. The local labor community turned out too, most notably with the Teamsters Local 120 big rig making a few passes through the district's parking lot.

Scott Carlson, a custodian with three years of experience in Chisago Lakes, said he and fellow union members have appreciated the outpouring of encouragement in recent weeks.

"In my years with the district, I've always been treated with respect and as an equal by the teachers, parents and staff," Carlson said. "Unfortunately, that does not seem to resonate within the walls of our district office."

The bargaining unit of about 20 custodians, represented by Service Employees (SEIU) Local 284, came together quickly after organizing began in January.

Carlson said conditions had reached a tipping point, with custodians in some buildings tasked with 40 percent more area-cleaning responsibilities than industry standards recommend, according to the school district's own evaluation. And that's without taking into account extra tasks required for pandemic safety.

Custodians' wages start at just over \$14 per hour - too low to attract and retain the workers needed to do the job right, union steward Chris Marks said. About one-third of the bargaining unit already has turned over, Carlson added, since custodians organized their union last school year.

"You can go to Kwik Trip and make more money working the second shift, just cashing out," said Marks, the lead custodian at Chisago Lakes High School. "We want longevity. We need it to keep our students healthy, our buildings healthy."

But in negotiations, the district has shown more interest in keeping the newly unionized custodians under management's thumb.

In recent years, Chisago Lakes custodians' terms and conditions of employment were governed by an agreement -



Protesters outside the Chisago Lakes School District offices targeted "Slick Mic," their preferred nickname for a high-priced, union-busting attorney retained by the district in negotiations with newly unionized custodians. Union Advocate photos

but not a union contract - with the district. School administrators hand-picked two negotiators to represent custodians in drawing up the agreement.

"The human resource person representing the district told our reps what the board would or wouldn't accept, and they abided by that," Carlson said.

Now that custodians have a real seat at the table in collective bargaining, the district has responded by bringing in a high-priced, anti-union attorney, who did most of the talking in two sessions before the sides entered mediation, according to workers.

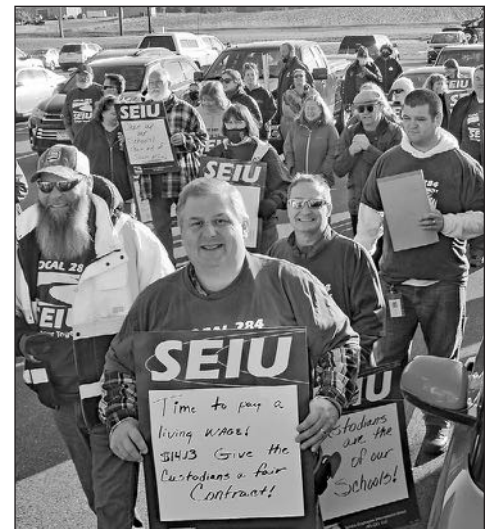
Custodians, Marks said, drafted a proposal for their first contract and presented it to the district at the first session.

"The attorney redlined the whole thing and put all the verbiage back from our previous agreement, including the pay scale," Marks said. "He handed it back and said, 'There you go, that's our offer.'"

"But they did change one thing: they took a 90-day probationary period and changed it to nine months."

That district administrators would rather pay a lawyer to run out the clock than offer community members who maintain school facilities a living wage didn't sit well with supporters at the rally Monday morning.

"They're willing to pay him \$250 an hour to do nothing," Local 284 President Kelly Gibbons said. "He's here to make his money and take it home to his family, but



Chris Marks, a union steward with SEIU Local 284 and the lead custodian at Chisago Lakes High School, leads a march from the union rally into contract negotiations.

these folks can't pay their bills."

Kera Peterson, president of the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation, which represents over 50,000 union members in Chisago, Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties, urged custodians to keep up their fight - and reminded them that union members never fight alone.

"Our labor community will be here, standing in solidarity with the custodians in Chisago Lakes Schools, for as long as it takes," she said.



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

Jan. 25, 6 p.m.

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

Dakota County Assembly

Jan. 13, 7 p.m.

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

Ramsey County Assembly

Jan. 20, 6 p.m.

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

Washington County Assembly

Jan. 26, 6 p.m.

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



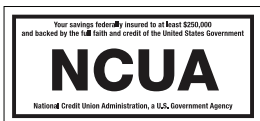
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Trades call on local governments to be more vigilant about exploitation on construction jobsites

Members of local Building Trades unions demonstrated outside a luxury apartment project in Lake Elmo Nov. 16, calling on builders – and local governments – to do more to ensure construction work is completed with integrity, high safety standards and fair worker treatment.

The action outside Continental Properties' Springs at Lake Elmo construction project drew support from Minnesota unions participating in the #NotOnMyWatch campaign, which seeks to identify abuse on construction sites and assist exploited workers.

Unions have found evidence of widespread wage theft and exploitation in the multifamily housing industry, and they say developer Continental Properties "appears to be one of the worst offenders based on the company's persistent use of subcontractors that have been dogged by allegations of misconduct."

Octavio Chung Bustamante, a marketing representative with LIUNA, the Laborers union, accused Continental Properties of taking advantage of immigrant workers by repeatedly hiring contractors that cheat and exploit them, according to evidence gathered by worker advocates.

"We need a fair construction industry for all workers," Bustamante said. "When contractors cheat and get away with it, it's bad for everyone. It makes it harder for contractors following the rules to win bids."



Unions allege Wisconsin developer Continental Properties is among the worst offenders when it comes to using contractors with a track record of exploiting their workers. Union members joining the demonstration at Continental's Springs at Lake Elmo jobsite included (L to R) Tim Olson, Operating Engineers Local 49; Paul Martin, Sheet Metal Workers Local 10; Brian Gullickson, Cement Masons Local 633; Octavio Chung Bustamante, LIUNA; Simon Monson, Heat and Frost Insulators Local 34; and Lucas Franco, LIUNA.

Union Advocate photo

Advocates pledged to push local governments to dig deeper into developers – and the contractors they hire – before issuing permits for construction in their communities.

"It's time for local governments to turn their attention to this issue," Bustamante said. "Workers are getting exploited, and we need local governments to ask the questions. How can they prevent wage theft and make

sure everybody's taken care of?"

Unions like LIUNA have a responsibility to look out not only for their own members, Bustamante added, but for all workers.

"We all need to start treating people with respect, especially the ones that don't look like us. There are a lot of immigrant workers here in Minnesota, and we need to treat them with respect."

Holiday Greetings!



to our union brothers & sisters



A message from the members of Local 1005

Even in the toughest times, UFCW 1189 Members are working hard to make your holidays special!



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Please look for the union sign on the door. Our stores include Cub, Lunds & Byerlys, Oxendale's, Kowalski's, Festival, the Wedge, and Knowlan's

For a full list check ufcw1189.org/campaigns/shop-union

Seasons greetings from all of us at Education Minnesota!



www.educationminnesota.org

THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

Union members urge hospital executives to ‘step up,’ address staffing shortfalls with higher wages

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

About 8,000 health care workers have publicly offered to renegotiate their union contracts with Twin Cities hospitals in an effort to help address staffing shortfalls that, workers warn, are only getting worse.

Members of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota announced the offer Nov. 30 in a virtual press conference, during which they described the impact short staffing has had on patient care in the hospitals where they work.

Emilee Greskowiak, a nursing assistant at United Hospital in St. Paul, said understaffing impacts patient comfort, safety and hygiene. She noted that it has been nearly two years since she’s had time to help her patients shower.

Recently, Greskowiak added, she was the only aide serving a 25-patient ward, where registered nurses were understaffed, too.

“All I can do is empty trashes and let nurses know when people are drowning – having codes and rapids and struggling to survive through their traumas,” she said. “Nurses are barely getting their meds in by the end of shift, let alone proper care and hygiene that families desperately need to ... become healthy.”

Some patients don’t get a bed at all, added Cliff Adams, a nursing station tech at M-Health Fairview Riverside Masonic Children’s Hospital. He said his unit, which treats patients with cancer and blood diseases, could not fill eight of its 24 beds recently because the “caregiver-to-patient ratio wasn’t adequate to safely provide care” to more than 16 patients.

“That meant eight beds – eight kids – did not have an opportunity to be properly cared for,” Adams said.

Understaffing is not a new problem at metro hospitals. Workers pointed to several reasons their co-workers have walked away or scaled back their hours in recent years, including the additional pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic, once again surging in Minnesota.

But while workers see their bosses asking them to skip

breaks, extend their shifts and postpone paid time off, what they don’t see from management is a plan to deal with the problem.

“It’s caused tension among staff members because we don’t have enough staff to go around,” said Lolita Granados, a clinical support specialist at Children’s in Minneapolis. “We’re missing sleep, we barely have time to eat, and we are tired.



Hospital workers, clockwise from top-left, Cliff Adams, Emilee Greskowiak, Lolita Granados and Steele Miller joined a virtual press conference on staffing shortfalls.

“It is currently worse than I have ever experienced this before. We need help and support, and I would like the hospital executives who are working from home ... to step up.”

In letters to those executives, SEIU Healthcare leaders pointed to other hospitals in Minnesota that have reopened union contracts to increase wage rates and write in other incentives aimed at attracting and retaining workers, and they requested metro facilities do the same.

Twin Cities hospitals settled new, three-year contracts with SEIU members earlier this year, but wages were a sticking point in negotiations. Some 4,000 workers at United and other Allina locations were poised to strike before reaching an 11th hour agreement with the provider.

Those agreements call for wage increases ranging from 5% to 7.5% over three years. But with inflation on the rise, it’s already clear to workers like Methodist Hospital ER tech Steele Miller that hospitals need to do more.

“People are leaving these jobs for jobs that are less traumatic, less stressful, less exhausting and that pay more,” Miller said. “We are not greedy. We just need to be able to take care of ourselves while we take care of other people.”

Workers also noted that many hospitals are already paying temporary workers – so-called “travelers” – higher wages to deal with the shortage, and they called out executives like M Health Fairview CEO James Hereford, whose annual compensation has ballooned to over \$3 million. Allina CEO Penny Wheeler recently topped the \$2 million mark.

For Hereford, Wheeler and other hospital executives, Greskowiak offered some pointed advice.

“If you give us better pay and benefits, maybe you’ll keep and retain the staff that you have – and then also get more staff to help us get through this hard time,” she said. “Everyone’s traumatized and underpaid and missing their family and doesn’t want to do this anymore.

“It’s exhausting, and you’re burning out your staff left and right.”

As staffing crisis worsens, nursing home workers struggle to maintain morale, care standards

By Catherine Conlan
Duluth Labor World

“Residents are having their call lights on for 2-3 hours.”

“It’s been terrible. I cry every day. I hate it.”

“I challenge anyone to work my 14 1/2 hour shift with me.”

These reports and more from nursing home employees, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, paint a grim picture of the situation inside many facilities as they battle COVID and a staffing shortage, while trying to maintain standards of care.

“It’s continued to be exacerbated,” said Adam Evenstad, a union representative with UFCW Local 1189. “With COVID coming through, you had an already tenuous grip on staffing. Now workers are getting sick, making the problem worse.”

Evenstad said the industry estimates that there is a 23,000-worker shortage in nursing facilities.

“People are leaving faster than they’re coming in,” he said. “We’re hemorrhaging at an incredible rate, and we’re not able to handle what we’ve got now.”

That creates a perfect storm of increased workloads for those who remain, leading to burnout. And if a solution isn’t found soon, Evenstad said, nursing homes may close.

The workers – mostly women – might work up to 160 hours in a two-week pay period, Evenstad said.

“People are leaving faster than they’re coming in. We’re hemorrhaging at an incredible rate, and we’re not able to handle what we’ve got now.”

– Adam Evenstad,
UFCW Local 1189

Union House

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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

"16-hour shifts, not seeing their families... One person showed me their time card, and they had 230 hours in the pay period."

With these kinds of hours, it's difficult to provide the proper caregiving. "People really need to keep their eye on that," Evenstad said. "This isn't just work. It's human beings."

"Our problems with short staffing went from a once-in-awhile thing to an everyday occurrence and has just continued to worsen with time," said one report to Evenstad from a CNA. "I have spent more shifts than I care to admit angry and crying because I am doing everything I possibly can and am still unable to come even close to giving my residents the compassion, time and help that they need and deserve."

Evenstad said help is necessary.

"The system appears to be on the verge of collapse, and we need relief yesterday," he said.

One solution could include changing the state wage reimbursement on housekeeping, dietary and laundry workers and others not involved in direct care, Evenstad said. Currently, wages are depressed because of the reimbursement model; adjusting that could draw more workers.

Evenstad also said deploying the National Guard, as the state did during the beginning of the pandemic, is an option, as well as going outside Minnesota to contract a hiring agency to bring in supplemental staff. But without a special session, it will be difficult for the Minnesota Department of Health to act.

No matter what solutions might help, Evenstad said something needs to happen quickly. "Our fear is that this is a problem that will snowball and get worse, if individual facilities fail. We could simply run out of room."

UFCW Local 1189 Secretary Treasurer Abraham Wangnoo said the union has been working hard to find solutions.

"UFCW Local 1189 President Jim Gleb and the local's long-term care representatives have been engaging with the governor's office and various state representatives to communicate their member's stories and concerns as well as to brainstorm possible long and short-term solutions for the industry," he said.

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Report: Union construction sites draw fewer safety violations

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

A new analysis of Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) inspections at construction jobsites in nine midwestern states backs up what unionized tradespeople have long been saying.

Union jobsites are safer jobsites.

The report, released Nov. 30 by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute (ILEPI) and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Project for Middle Class Renewal, found that unionized construction workers were exposed to 34% fewer health and safety violations in 2019 than their nonunion counterparts.

"With our nation readying at least \$1.2 trillion in new infrastructure investments, it is vital to understand safety trends in construction because it is one of our economy's most physically demanding and dangerous occupations," study co-author Frank Manzo IV, director of the ILEPI, said. "The data makes clear that the unionized side of the construction industry is producing vastly superior outcomes."

In Minnesota, OSHA inspectors found 40% fewer violations per inspection on union worksites than they did on nonunion sites in 2019. Violations turned up, on average, 5% less frequently on union sites.

The union advantage

Local union leaders said the study points to an often-overlooked advantage of their construction model. Union members have a voice over their working conditions and, when they need to speak up about unsafe conditions, the protections of a union contract.

"When you walk on a union jobsite you know that safety is not just a buzzword or toolbox talk," said Chris Peltier, a business agent for LIUNA Local 563. "We can have confidence knowing that every contractor on site has provided all of their employees with the best resources in the industry and quality training. We know that every worker on the jobsite shares the same culture and has the same goal – that every worker returns home to their families safe and sound at the end of the day."

Adam Duininck, director of government affairs for the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters, said construction unions "make it a priority to work together with our contractors, developers and members to prevent workplace injuries and ensure members return home safely to their families at the end of each workday."

Safety is a cornerstone of union training programs, too. Unions and their signatory contractors partner to sponsor, develop and administer world-class apprenticeship programs in Minnesota and across North America.

"We start by providing new apprentices with OSHA training and continue to provide more advanced safety education throughout our member's careers," Duininck said.

A public cost of unsafe sites

In conducting their analysis, researchers examined data on more than 37,000 OSHA inspections conducted in 2019. They found that union jobsites were 19% less likely to have any health and safety violations. The number of violations per inspection was 34% lower on union jobsites.

Robert Bruno, a professor at the University of Illinois and co-author of the study, said the lax health and safety practices more prevalent on nonunion construction sites put workers at risk and increase strain on the workers' compensation system.

"Construction worksites with OSHA violations are more likely to suffer workplace injuries, which can impose billions of dollars per year in added burdens on businesses and state workers' compensation systems," Bruno said. "Employers that take preventative and proactive steps to lower the risk of injuries and illnesses experience greater levels of output on the jobsite, and ultimately save money for both themselves and taxpayers."

Attack unions, undermine safety

The difference between violation rates on union and nonunion jobsites was notably greater in Michigan (49%), Wisconsin (59%) and Indiana (64%), states where Republican lawmakers have repealed prevailing wage and passed right-to-work laws in recent years.

Prevailing-wage laws require employees working on state-funded projects to be paid wage rates comparable to those paid for similar work in the region. With a prevailing wage built into all bids, contractors bidding for public projects compete on skill, productivity and other factors – not on who can scrape together the cheapest workforce.

"A safe workplace is filled with workers and an

employer that puts safety before profits, something we rarely see on nonunion worksites," said Duininck.

The report makes clear, authors said, that measures to weaken unions and their collective bargaining power come at a potentially steep cost.

"Safety problems are not just a threat to the health of the construction workforce our nation needs right now, they impose real burdens that hurt productivity, shrink output and increase costs," Bruno said. "The data is very clear: embracing the institutions that correlate with better safety outcomes in physically demanding occupations can be a win-win-win for workers, businesses, and taxpayers alike."

Apprenticeship is key

To promote safer construction worksites across the country, the researchers suggest that policymakers seek to promote institutionalized training and high safety standards with prevailing wage laws, responsible bidder ordinances, project labor agreements and the repeal of so-called "right-to-work" laws, which have been linked to weaker apprenticeship systems in previous research.

"Registered apprenticeships aren't just attaching workers to middle-class construction careers, they are

training workers in industrywide best practices for operating heavy machinery, working with hazardous materials, and avoiding preventable accidents on the jobsite," Manzo added. "There is no doubt that this work isn't just paying off from the standpoint of reducing fatalities, but also from the standpoint of preventing the very health and safety violations cause these tragedies."

Matt Johnson, a senior instructor at the Laborers' Training Center in Lino Lakes, said workers who make the jump from non-union firms to his union apprenticeship program often tell him they wish they would have had his safety training when they worked non-union.

"I love being able to pass on the knowledge that I have learned over the course of my years working and help others prevent mistakes that I myself have made," said Johnson, who worked in the field as a construction laborer for nearly 18 years before going to work as an instructor.

"Unfortunately there's a misconception for a lot of owners that safety training costs more money than it is worth," Johnson added. "I see it differently. Work injuries not only cause bodily harm, they also cost money, and we can help prevent that with good training."

A taste of construction for tomorrow's workforce



Over 1,400 high schoolers from the Twin Cities metro area sampled work on the construction jobsite last month, trying out everything from driving a virtual-reality bulldozer to swinging good, old-fashioned hammer at nails. It was part of Construct Tomorrow's first in-person career fair in the area since 2019, held at Boy Scouts Basecamp near Ft. Snelling Dec. 2 and 3. Construct Tomorrow's mission is to create awareness of career opportunities in the building and construction trades by offering hands-on experiences for students. Representatives from several union apprenticeship programs hosted booths at the event – operating engineers, electricians, roofers, laborers and painters and more. Pictured clockwise from the top are Hangatu Haso (L), Leyla Warra and Leon Porter (R) laying bricks at the Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local 1 booth; Ironworkers Local 512's Scott Johnson handing out tools; and representatives of the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters. Learn more about Construct Tomorrow and future events at www.constructtomorrow.org.

Union Advocate photos

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

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Ehler Moo joins a union rally outside the Aramark laundry facility in Minneapolis.

Union Advocate photo

Strike vote nets Minneapolis laundry workers a better deal

After voting 97-1 to authorize a strike, laundry workers at Aramark's northeast Minneapolis facility accepted an improved offer from their employer, roughly doubling the wage increase included in the contract.

The laundry workers, members of CMRJB Workers United, had planned a rally Nov. 3 to alert the company they were ready to strike if negotiations over a new contract did not progress before Friday, when the previous agreement expires.

Instead, workers found themselves voting on a new offer, one that included annual wage increases of 75 cents – up from around 35 cents in previous offers, according to a representative of the union.

That's a 5% raise for workers like Ehler Moo, who makes \$15 per hour loading and offloading trucks at the facility, a job he has had for over five years. Moo, who lives in St. Paul, said he and other workers needed to see more money in their next contract to keep up with the rising cost of living.

"I live with my parents, and I have to take care of my parents," Moo said. "I pay the electricity bill, other bills. We need more money."

Aramark is a Fortune 500 food and facilities-service company that reported over \$14 billion in revenues in 2018. Workers at its northeast Minneapolis site clean linens, towels and clothing for facilities in the area.

Starting pay at the laundry is between

\$14 and \$15, workers said.

Rita Yee, who sorts towels and uniforms after they are laundered, said she still makes an hourly wage of \$15 after nearly 14 years with the company. Some workers with more than 25 years of service make around \$17 per hour, she added.

The work is hard, Yee said as she pointed to her back, which hurts as a result of lifting 50-pound hangers throughout the workday. She said she approached management about a raise after being moved into the position from a less taxing one, but her request was denied.

She soon found a way to get that raise, after all.

"Gas, groceries, everything is going up," the St. Louis Park resident said. "Everyone is sticking together because we want more money."

CMRJB Workers United, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), represents thousands of workers across the Midwest in laundries, hotels, hospitals, distribution centers, food service, apparel, textile factories, light manufacturing and other industries.

"You absolutely deserve a fair union contract," Phillip Cryan, executive vice president of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, told Aramark workers. "You deserve raises, and you deserve respect."

– Michael Moore, Union Advocate editor

Minnesota's Erickson wins Teamsters international vice president election

Tom Erickson, president and principal officer of Minnesota-based Teamsters Local 120, has been elected to serve as Central Region vice president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Voting among the Teamsters' 1.4 million union members nationwide wrapped up in November. Erickson and other elected officers will begin their five-year terms in office in March 2022.

Erickson is the first Minnesota Teamster in over a decade to be elected to a leadership position at the international level, giving local union members a seat and voice at the table in the union's Washington, D.C. office.

The election marks a significant turning point for the union. Erickson ran as

part of a reform-minded slate of candidates led by President-elect Sean O'Brien and Secretary-Treasurer-elect Fred Zuckerman.

The slate has pledged "to rebuild the Teamsters as a militant, fighting Union from bottom to top," with an eye toward negotiations with UPS on a nationwide contract covering roughly 250,000 union members in the near future. That contract expires in 2023.



Tom Erickson

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Organizing Report

MN Historical Society, hospital workers latest to unionize – and more could be coming

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

Twin Cities workers are part of a wave of union activism sweeping the nation and making headlines in 2021, from striking Kellogg's and John Deere workers in the Midwest to newly organized Starbucks baristas in New York.

Closer to home, nearly 300 employees of the Minnesota Historical Society voted to organize a union in election results announced in November, while Twin Cities hospitals have seen a string of successful union drives this fall and early winter, winning representation for more than 500 frontline workers.

More organizing victories could come before year's end.

The National Labor Relations Board was scheduled to tally the votes of Headway Emotional Health Services workers Dec. 10, after therapists, case managers, administrative staff and other employees at facilities in Brooklyn Center, Minnetonka and Richfield petitioned their bosses

for a union.

And workers at Half Price Books stores in Coon Rapids, Roseville and St. Paul were scheduled to receive results of their union elections Dec. 16. Staff members at the St. Louis Park store were to begin voting later in the month.

Julie Bleyhl, executive director of AFSCME Council 5, which supported the Historical Society campaign, said workers are looking to form unions "to demand stronger, safer and more resilient workplaces all across Minnesota and our country."

Half Price Books stores voting on unions

In other words, workers are taking matters into their own hands, looking to bargain higher wages, better benefits and sustainable workloads rather than waiting for management to deliver out of the goodness of their hearts.

That's the case at Half Price Books, where 24-year veteran bookseller Aaron Kerr said the pandemic brought into focus both how little regard the company has for workers' concerns and how unsustainable their jobs have become.

"For years prior, we were really kind of just putting up with it, just accepting this as the way things are," said Kerr, who works in the Roseville store. "And we would see so much turnover. People were saying, 'I love this job, but I can't afford to work here.'"

"We all love our customers. We love being booksellers, and we want to continue being booksellers. We look forward to negotiating with Half Price Books to make our stores a great place to work and a great place for customers to come into."

The four Half Price Books elections cover about 60 workers, who would join United Food and Commercial Workers locals 1189 and 663. Workers said they hope 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 St. Paul store, said management 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."

Half Price books calls itself the nation's largest family-owned retailer for new and used books, and successful

organizing drives in Minnesota could give the UFCW a toe-hold in the chain of over 120 stores.

Over 500 hospital workers join SEIU

Hospital workers, meanwhile, are looking to join SEIU Healthcare Minnesota as they confront multiple crises at once: short staffing, dangerous working conditions and the relentless COVID-19 pandemic.

Katey Sierra is among a newly organized bargaining unit of senior mental health coordinators at Allina Health's Abbott Northwestern Hospital. She and others voted 99% to 1% in favor of joining SEIU Healthcare Minnesota in October.

"I voted 'yes' because I've been denied raises, denied sick time, denied benefits, and I believe strongly in workers' rights and having our voice heard," Sierra said. "The fact that we've been called heroes but not treated that way by Allina has been a big thing we've had to recognize."

In the weeks following Abbott Northwestern workers' election, senior mental health coordinators at United and Mercy hospitals also voted to join SEIU Healthcare, as did behavioral assistants at M Health Fairview. And 350 psychiatric associates at M Health Fairview unionized earlier this year, too.

"Since the pandemic started, so many of us have started to realize how much we are worth and that we have been taken advantage of for far too long," Abbott Northwestern worker Kate LeMay said. "I'm so happy we won this vote today so we can have a unified voice in making sure we all can be safe at work."

Mental health nonprofit workers seek voice

Headway workers' organizing drive has support from Local 12 of the Office and Professional Employees (OPEIU). Andrew Vanden Broeke, a day treatment therapist at the mental health nonprofit, said union supporters filed for NLRB election after collecting signatures of support from a majority of the 143 staff members – and after their request for voluntary recognition from management was denied.

Vanden Broeke said workers want better wages and benefits, but also more power over decisions that impact how they do their jobs.

"The No. 1 thing that comes up when we're having conversations with our co-workers is the lack of value we feel our employer places in us," he said. "They make decisions and don't tell us until the decisions are final and on their way down, and we just have to deal with it."

After 25 years, Waldron steps down from Union Bank & Trust board

After holding at least one elected office for the last 35 years, former Minnesota AFL-CIO President Ray Waldron has stepped down as chair of the Union Bank and Trust Board of Directors and entered full retirement.

Waldron, who served on the UBT board for 25 years, attended his final meeting Nov. 21. He was the just third person to serve as board chair in the history of the bank, founded by local Building Trades unions 45 years ago.

Waldron has been succeeded by Terry Nelson, former business manager of IUPAT District Council 82. Nelson, who currently serves IUPAT at the international level, previously served as vice chair, a title now held by Russell Scherber, business manager of Pipefitters Local 539.

"It's a jewel of a bank, and the best thing about it is I'm leaving it in good hands, with Terry and Russ," Waldron said. "When you leave your job, you want to leave it in better hands, and there's no competition with those two guys."

Waldron, a retired member of Roofers Local 96, served as president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO from 2001 to 2009. He also held seats on several boards and committees, including the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council, the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission, Delta Dental of Minnesota, the AFL-CIO Investment Trust and others.

Jeff Schrempp, UBT president and CEO, said Waldron's steady hand and experience will be missed, as will his deep network of relationships in the labor community and beyond. But Waldron's service has positioned the bank for success well into the future, Schrempp added.

"Union Bank is owned by 30 different unions, so having Ray on our board, with all of his connections to our clients and stakeholders, has been very instrumental," he said. "We've had a legacy of growing profitability and paying dividends to all our shareholders, which benefits all the members of these unions."

Waldron's retirement is not the only leadership change at UBT. After nearly 50 years in the banking industry,



Outgoing Board Chair Ray Waldron receives a plaque from incoming Chair Terry Nelson (L) and CEO Jeff Schrempp.


Schrempp is stepping down as UBT president, to be replaced by Ruth Peterson, current executive vice president and head of banking. Schrempp will remain CEO for one more year before turning that position over to Peterson, too.

"It's a tremendous opportunity for Ruth to be in charge of the bank and the trust, and it's very well deserved," Schrempp said.

Other executives who have been promoted at UBT include Nate Kariniemi, the new head of commercial banking; Miles White, the new head of institutional trust; and Kevin Trunquist, the new chief operating officer for the bank and the trust.

Nelson and Schrempp, who Waldron called "the best president the bank has ever had," presented the outgoing board chair with a plaque at his final meeting.

"People always asked me, 'What do you know about banking?'" Waldron said. "I don't know anything about banking, but I can see and hear BS very clearly. As labor leaders, we all can. So that's what prompted me to be involved in the bank."



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Concrete Christmas display showcases union apprentices' skills

It already looked a lot like Christmas at the Cement Masons and Plasterers Training Center in New Brighton, where apprentices from three local unions have decked out the shop floor with a seasonal display of their skilled crafts during the first week of December.

The annual "Concrete Christmas" display will stay up through Dec. 7, when Cement Masons Local 633 and Twin Cities Plasterers Local 265 host their December union meetings and a holiday celebration.

Journey-level members look forward to viewing the apprentices' work each year, Apprenticeship Coordinator Brian Farmer said. The project showcases "all the skill sets they see in the field," he said, "with a little different spin on it."

The centerpiece of the holiday display is a large fireplace and chimney. Its structural and lathing work was done by apprentices from Minnesota State Interior Systems Local 68, an affiliate of the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters. Plasterers Local 265 apprentices crafted the fireplace's exterior, including a Venetian finish.

The rest of the display is decorative cement and concrete, fashioned by the 100-plus active apprentices of Local 633.

"It's fun," third-year apprentice Eduardo Ortiz said during a break from working on the display last week. "I get to do new stuff I never did before. And it's fun getting to meet new people and learn new techniques from them."

Farmer said the project engages apprentices in an opportunity to apply the skills they've learned in new, creative ways. It's also a chance to take ownership of a project members of their union will appreciate.

"These apprentices will be our future leadership," Farmer said. "Our contractors want leaders. A lot of boomers are retiring, and it opens up a lot of opportunities for the new generation to take charge."

The Cement Masons' registered apprenticeship program, sponsored jointly by the union and its signatory contractors, runs three years, and it combines coursework with paid employment in the field.

For James Fisher, a third-year apprentice from



Cloquet, enrollment in Local 633's apprenticeship has been a life-changing experience. Previously, he worked as a parking valet at a casino.

Before entering a pre-apprenticeship program for members of tribal nations, "I didn't know anything about concrete," Fisher said. "All I knew is you drive down the freeway, and there's a curb."



James Fisher (top-left) smooths cement for the Concrete Christmas display, an annual project for Cement Masons and Plasterers Apprenticeship Director Brian Farmer (bottom-left) and his crews. Union Advocate (L) and Labor Review (R) photos

To see how much more goes into the craft, he added, look no further than the concrete Christmas display.

"I've learned there are so many techniques you can do to change color and texture and mold it into what you want – as long as it's wet," Fisher said. "You can learn something new every day, and that's what I try to do."

– Michael Moore, Union Advocate editor

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Holiday Greetings to Our Union Families!

A message from the International Union of Elevator Constructors Local 9

www.local9.com

Biden, unions urge action to address 'human infrastructure' next

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

play a role in preparing workers to build back the nation's infrastructure, too.

Joe Fowler, president of the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council, was among the labor leaders in attendance.

"I was able to tell the President that the building and construction trades have the workers willing to go to work now, and that our affiliates are ready to train the next generation of workers that will build out the projects and build up the middle class," Fowler said.

He said the president assured him that those jobs "will grow the middle class and pay the prevailing wage."

A historic investment

The \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act amounts to the single largest injection of funds into the nation's physical infrastructure since President Dwight Eisenhower led efforts to establish the interstate highway system over 70 years ago.

The spending package includes \$4.5 billion for Minnesota roads and at least \$302 million for bridges. Transit systems will receive \$819 million, and \$68 million will go toward building electric vehicle charging stations in the state.

The measure funds broadband service, too, making at least \$100 million available to help connect the 171,000 Minnesota households that lack reliable internet.

"In the 21st century in America, no parent ever should have to sit outside a fast food restaurant to be able to hook up to the Internet so their child can do their homework online," Biden said.

Although dubbed the "bipartisan infrastructure" bill, Biden's plan did not receive a single Republican vote from Minnesota's congressional delegation. Both of the state's senators supported it, as did two House members representing the east metro, Rep. Angie Craig in the 2nd District and Rep. Betty McCollum in the 4th.

"In Minnesota, there are 661 bridges and nearly 5,000 miles of

highway in poor condition," McCollum said. "Minnesotans taking public transportation spend an extra 49.8% of their time commuting. Our state's drinking water infrastructure will require \$7.5 billion in additional funding over the next 20 years.

"The infrastructure bill delivers on all of these issues and more."

Up Next: Build Back Better

With the infrastructure bill across the finish line, Biden and congressional Democrats shifted their focus to passing its companion measure, the Build Back Better Act.

Provisions in the bill include an extension of the new child tax credit; investments in preschool, child care and home health care supports; and expanded access to affordable health care. The bill would boost funding for green jobs, higher education and affordable housing.

Supporters like AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler call the Build Back Better Act an investment in the nation's "human infrastructure."

"The Build Back Better Act will knock down the barriers that have prevented so many workers, especially women and people of color, from finding high-quality sustainable jobs," Shuler said. "Working people didn't vote for a return to normal; we voted for a better future for our country."

Spending included in the Build Back Better Act would be covered by closing tax loopholes that have allowed the wealthiest Americans and corporations to avoid paying their fair share.

The Build Back Better Act would also put teeth into U.S. labor law, incorporating elements of the labor-backed PRO Act. Unions say it would mark the greatest advancement for the right to organize since passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935.

"For the first time, employers will be hit with real financial penalties for union-busting," Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bill McCarthy said. "It's legislation that working people need right now."



Happy holidays to all union members!

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Holiday greetings to all union families!

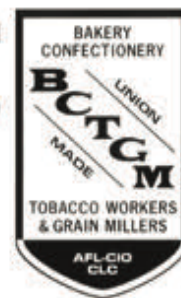
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Sponsors of the essential worker rally and march in Minneapolis Dec. 1 include Service Employees International Union Local 26, the Twin Cities worker center CTUL, the Minnesota Nurses Association and other worker groups.

Union Advocate photos

Essential workers spell out demands at rally

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

That's because legislators on a bipartisan working group failed to reach agreement on who should be eligible for payments.

Republicans refused to budge from their position that a smaller pool of workers – including health care workers, long-term-care staff and first responders – should be compensated, while DFLers insisted on including grocery clerks, cleaning workers and child care providers like Tamara Greene, who directed her comments at the rally to GOP legislators.

"Tell us your justification for excluding us from this bill," said Greene, director of All Ages & Faces Academy in St. Paul. "We want to know. We find it an insult and an absolute slap in the face."

DFLers on the committee accused Republicans of rejecting their compromise proposal, which would have cast a wider net while compensating some workers more than others.

Turner, a nurse in the North Memorial hospital intensive care unit, said the GOP wouldn't succeed in its attempt to divide essential workers.

"That's not going to fly," she said. "It never has, and it never will."

"The reason is because I have been at the bedside, along with our other nurses. People from security and cleaning and teaching and the food industry and every other industry represented here – we have been at their deathbeds. We have seen the number of essential workers that have died."

Lawmakers could supplement the fund with additional dollars, but it would require Gov. Tim Walz to call a special session, giving Republican Senators an opportunity to act on threats from some in the caucus to remove Department of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm, an architect of the state's pandemic



Essential workers demand action from legislators holding up disbursement of a \$250 million compensation fund.

response.

As the political fight drags on, workers like Angie Halseth, a case-worker at Lino Lakes Correctional Facility, are left wondering if the compensation they were promised will ever come. A member of the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees, Halseth described the additional duties tacked onto her workload during the pandemic, like administering temperature checks to inmates in quarantine units.

"But like so many, extra work is just the start of the hardships," she added. "We've all worried that our jobs will make us or our families sick. I've had several colleagues become ill from COVID-19 outbreaks at our facilities, including one who gave COVID to their pregnant wife and

elderly in-laws."

Activists were also keen to point out that CEOs in Minnesota have taken exorbitant bonuses and pay raises during the pandemic, while workers in their companies' warehouses, on their shop floors and elsewhere on the front lines see their "hero pay" held up at the Capitol.

The event began on the sidewalk outside the Ameriprise Financial building, where workers hoisted a large photo of CEO James Caracchiolo with the tagline, "This guy got a 283% raise last year!"

"We are a state that is lucky to have more resources available," Halseth said. "I am asking the state to spend those resources helping our frontline workers try to be whole again."

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

May the New Year be happy and healthy for everyone



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Labor Center hosts Red Cross blood drive



Union members stepped up to save as many as 60 lives by giving blood at the St. Paul Labor Center Nov. 30. The drive, sponsored by the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation's nonprofit Labor Studies and Resource Center, Greater Twin Cities United Way and the American Red Cross, collected 20 units of blood from 27 scheduled donors, including two who gave blood for the first time. Each unit of blood can benefit up to three people in need. Donors, pictured clockwise from top-left, include Barb Herrington-Hall, St. Paul Federation of Educators retiree; Sheila Pokorny, AFSCME Council 65; Kelly Gibbons, president of Service Employees (SEIU) Local 284; and Dave Hallas, United Steelworkers Local 7263.

Union Advocate photos



The officers and staff of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation, the Saint Paul Labor Studies & Resource Center, and The Union Advocate newspaper send their solidarity and season's greetings to all union families!

Labor's holiday fundraiser supports families in need

Labor of Love - Sponsor a Family raised \$9,635 this year. Proceeds were used to purchase gift cards from union grocers, which organizers donated to nonprofit agencies Second Harvest Heartland, Catholic Charities, Jewish Community Center and the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's Emergency Fund for distribution to families in need.

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.

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Minutes of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation

OCTOBER 13, 2021

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation met in regular session remotely due to COVID 19 on the above date and was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance by President Peterson at 6 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beedle, Beissel, Edwards, Engeldorf, Gibbons, Guertin, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Slattery, St. Aoro, Tastad-Damer, Vanderport and Varco. Excused were Hoppe, Luneburg, Terry, and Vandassor. Absent were Gorman.

- President Peterson called for a moment of silence for sister Lola Reed.

CREDENTIALS

Credentials were received from Cement Masons Local 633 and IUPAT: Twin Cities Glaziers Local 1324. President Peterson administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates present on-line.

MINUTES

M/S/C TO APPROVE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2021, AS PUBLISHED IN THE UNION ADVOCATE NEWSPAPER AFTER THE ACTING SECRETARY-TREASURER NOTES THERE ARE NO ADDITIONS OR CHANGES CALLED FOR.

COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES OCTOBER 13, 2021

COPE met in regular session remotely on the above date and was called to order by President Peterson at 5 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beedle, Beissel, Edwards, Engeldorf, Gibbons, Guertin, Krey, Lohmann, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, Mayer, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Slattery, St. Aoro, Tastad-Damer, Vanderport and Varco. Excused were DeRoy, Hoerth, Hoppe, Luneburg, Terry, and Vandassor. Absent were Gorman, Naseth and Wise.

Items to come before this board included:

- The National AFL-CIO has approved the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation's request to conduct the endorsement process remotely due to COVID restrictions.
- The following recommendations for labor endorsement:
 - Ramsey County Labor Assembly requested granting Labor Endorsement for Don Mullin, White Bear Lake Mayor, and North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale ISD 622 Operating and Capital Projects Levy.
 - The Dakota County Labor Assembly screened five candidates for the Rosemount-Apple Valley ISD 196 School Board. The committee decided to make no endorsement.

M/S/C TO RECOMMEND LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO DON MULLIN, WHITE BEAR LAKE MAYOR, AND THE NORTH ST. PAUL/MAPLEWOOD/OAKDALE ISD 622 OPERATING AND CAPITAL PROJECTS LEVY.

- The following requests:
 - **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$2,000 CONTRIBUTION TO THE ST. PAUL DFL.**
 - **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO BE A GOLD SPONSOR IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,000 TO THE CD2 DFL 19TH ANNUAL FALL GALA.**

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES OCTOBER 13, 2021

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 Peterson reported on the following:
 - Welcoming new board member Stacey Vanderport, Mounds View Education Association, who is replacing

Nick Faber.

- Appointing Greg Renne, IUPAT Twin Cities Glaziers Local 1324, to the executive board to replace Ken Gorman, IUPAT Twin Cities Glaziers Local 1324.

- Transferring up to \$100,000 from the General Fund account to an existing CD that is renewing at the St. Paul Federal Credit Union.

- St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's Labor Red Cross Blood Drive being held on Tuesday, November 30 from 2:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Labor Center.

- The St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center is having their annual Labor of Love – Sponsor a Family program. This year we will also be making a financial contribution to Second Harvest Heartland.

- Annual holiday party.
- We will be looking at the possibility of a potential Spring of 2022 for the Union Resource Job Fair.

- The Jean Jones School Supply initiative raised \$1,096 to purchase school supplies, and they were delivered to St. Paul Title 1 Project Reach program.

- **M/S/C TO APPOINT GREG RENNE, IUPAT: TWIN CITIES GLAZIERS LOCAL 1324 TO REPLACE KEN GORMAN.**

- **M/S/C TO TRANSFER UP TO \$100,000 TO AN EXISTING CD THAT IS RENEWING AT THE ST. PAUL FEDERAL CREDIT UNION.**

- **M/S/C TO CANCEL THE 2021 HOLIDAY PARTY IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP EVERYONE SAFE DUE TO COVID 19.**

- ORGANIZING UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS:

- AFSCME, Bakery Workers Local 22, UFCW Local 1189 and the City of Saint Paul Tri-Council, consisting of IUOE Local 49, Laborers Local 563 and Teamsters Local 120, gave updates on their organizing activities.

- THANK YOU NOTES were received from the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center for the RLF's \$500 contribution toward their Tenth Annual Labor Bowl and from LIUNA District Council of Minnesota and North Dakota for the RLF's \$500 contribution toward their 2021 Annual Family Fun-Raiser.

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 September 2021. The report was accepted as read.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Peterson reported on the board deciding to cancel the 2021 Holiday Party to keep everyone safe.

STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS

- Erica Dalager Reed, AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison, reported that LSRC's Tenth Annual Labor Bowl raised over \$30,000 to benefit the program, the Labor Day Parade had 75 participants in our marching unit and blood drives.

- Colleen Nocerini, Political Organizer, updated everyone that we are looking at possible in-person events in early 2022. We are currently working on plans for the 2022 election.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- Michael Madden reported on behalf of the Chisago County Labor Assembly. We are looking at increasing involvement from active local members. Our next meeting will be the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. via zoom.

- Connie Beissel reported on behalf of the Dakota County Labor Assembly. We met and screened candidates for Rosemount-Apple Valley ISD 196 School board. It is very important that members become involved in screenings. Our next meeting will be the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. via zoom.

- Brian Beedle reported on behalf of the Washington County Labor Assembly. We will not be having our

annual holiday party. We will be meeting via zoom to discuss the Stillwater ISD 834 Levy for technical equipment and staff. Our next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. via zoom.

- Theresa St. Aoro reported on behalf of the Ramsey County Labor Assembly. We screened and recommended endorsement of Don Mullin for White Bear Lake Mayor and for the North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale ISD 622 Operating and Capital Projects Levy. Our next meeting will be the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. via zoom.

NEW BUSINESS

- President Peterson called for a floor vote on recommendations for labor endorsement.

M/S/C TO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO DON MULLIN, WHITE BEAR LAKE MAYOR; AND THE NORTH ST. PAUL/MAPLEWOOD/OAKDALE ISD 622 OPERATING AND CAPITAL PROJECTS LEVY.

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$600 CONTRIBUTION TO DON MULLIN, WHITE BEAR LAKE MAYOR CAMPAIGN.**

- **M/S/C TO ABSTAIN FROM MAKING AN ENDORSEMENT FOR ROSEMOUNT-EAGAN-APPLE VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD.**

GOOD AND WELFARE

- Michael Madden suggests we consider putting establish an AFL-CIO Union Veterans Council to Save our VA in Minnesota.

M/S/C TO INVITE TOM DIMOND TO MEET WITH RLF DELEGATES REGARDING VETERANS ISSUES.

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

Submitted by,
BERNADINE ENGELDORF
Acting Secretary-Treasurer

NOVEMBER 10, 2021

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation met in regular session remotely due to COVID 19 on the above date and was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance by President Peterson at 6 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beedle, Beissel, Engeldorf, Gibbons, Guertin, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Renne, Ryan, Schmidt, Slattery, St. Aoro, Tastad-Damer, Terry, Vandassor, Vanderport and Varco. Excused were Hoppe, and Sansom. Absent were Edwards and Luneburg.

COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES NOVEMBER 10, 2021

COPE met in regular session remotely on the above date and was called to order by President Peterson at 5 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beedle, Beissel, Engeldorf, Gibbons, Guertin, Hoerth, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, Krey, Mayer, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Renne, Ryan, Schmidt, Slattery, St. Aoro, Tastad-Damer, Terry, Vandassor, Vanderport and Varco. Excused were Hoppe, Lohmann, and Sansom. Absent were DeRoy, Edwards, Luneburg, Naseth and Wise.

Items to come before this board included:

- President Peterson thanked members for calling elected officials in support of reconciliation bill. She updated that the RLF is starting to hear from candidates, but the Minnesota AFL-CIO will not be conducting screenings until redistricting is done. If you hear from candidates, please notify the Saint Paul RLF staff.
- The following REQUEST:
 - **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE**

A \$2,000 CONTRIBUTION TO GOVERNOR TIM WALZ'S CAMPAIGN.

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES NOVEMBER 10, 2021

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 Peterson reported on the following:
 - Swearing in of Greg Renne, IUPAT Twin Cities Glaziers Local 1324 and Stacey Vanderport, Mounds View Education Association.

- The Pipefitters Local 455 and the St. Paul Plumbers Local 34 will be reaffiliating with the Saint Paul RLF.

- Appointment of Scott Seath, Pipefitters Local 455 and Dean Gale, Plumbers Local 34 to the Saint Paul RLF Executive Board.

- Union Veterans Council and Operation Union Veterans Day can be live streamed. Information was sent out to delegates.

- Debrief conversation with Tom Diamond, Minnesota DFL Veteran Caucus.

- Bill McCarthy, President, Minnesota AFL-CIO is retiring in February 2022. The election for President of the Minnesota AFL-CIO will take place in conjunction with the December 14, 2021, General Board Meeting.

- **M/S/C TO APPOINT SCOTT SEATH, PIPEFITTERS LOCAL 455 TO THE SAINT PAUL RLF EXECUTIVE BOARD.**

- **M/S/C TO APPOINT DEAN GALE, PLUMBERS LOCAL 34 TO THE SAINT PAUL RLF EXECUTIVE BOARD.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$250 CONTRIBUTION TO THE ST. PAUL LABOR STUDIES AND RESOURCE CENTER'S ANNUAL LABOR OF LOVE – SPONSOR A FAMILY.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$250 CONTRIBUTION TO THE ST. PAUL LABOR STUDIES AND RESOURCE CENTER'S JEAN JONES COATS INITIATIVE.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$3,000 CONTRIBUTION TO THE EAST SIDE FREEDOM LIBRARY.**

- ORGANIZING UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS: Bakery Workers Local 22, Minnesota Nurses Association, SEIU Local 284, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, Saint Paul Federation of Educators, and UFCW Local 1189 gave an update on their organizing activities.

- THANK YOU NOTES received from IUPAT District Council 82 for the RLF's \$500 contribution to their annual PATCH Golf Fundraiser, CTUL for the RLF's \$500 contribution toward their annual Gala, and Robert Kasper for the RLF's donation to Meals on Wheels on behalf of his mother.

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 October 2021. The report was accepted as read.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

President Peterson reported on the following:

- Congress passing the infrastructure bill and it is on the President's desk. This will have significant positive impacts to transit, transportation, and broadband access. Thanks to Reps. Craig and McCollum for supporting this bill.

- U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Marty Walsh states that the next hurdle will be the "Reconciliation Bill."

- Election Updates: Mayor Melvin Carter won his re-election in St. Paul, two RLF endorsed Saint Paul School

Board candidates also won. Operating and technology levies passed in the east metro and most throughout Minnesota. The Minnesota AFL-CIO legislative candidate screening process will not start until after redistricting is complete.

- The National AFL-CIO Union Veterans Council will be live streaming to provide information.

- Discussion with Tom Diamond, DFL Chair, Minnesota Veterans regarding water and infrastructure problems at Minneapolis VA home. I have communicated with the Minnesota Building Trades about this.

- Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bill McCarthy will be retiring in February 2022. There will be an election at the December 2021 meeting.

STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS

- Michael Moore, editor, Union Advocate Newspaper, updated the delegates on the upcoming Holiday Issue and the Minnesota Newspaper and Communication Guild's recognition from CWA for organizing 100 or more members since its last convention.

- Erica Dalager Reed, AFL-CIO Community Services liaison, reported that the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's Annual Labor-Red Cross Blood Drive is being held on Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021, at the St. Paul Labor Center. There are 12-14 slots available. She is also working with tax filing assistance program that is offering free state and federal tax filing with on-line software that is available to anyone wanting to use it. Online webinars and phone assistance is being testing out in the labor community at no cost and no income qualification.

- Colleen Nocerini, political organizer, announced the Dakota County Labor Assembly will the meeting on Thursday, Nov. 11 and the Chisago County Labor Assembly will meet on Tuesday, Nov. 23 with no December meeting.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- Michael Madden reported on behalf of the Chisago County Labor Assembly. We will be having an event at Middle School Chisago in support of maintenance and custodial first contract negotiations. Our next meeting will be the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. via zoom.

- Connie Beissel reported on behalf of the Dakota County Labor Assembly. Our next meeting will be the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. via zoom. Contact Colleen Nocerini or Kera Peterson if you would like to be included.

- Brian Beedle reported on behalf of the Washington County Labor Assembly. We will be meeting via zoom. The Stillwater ISD 834 Levy for technical equipment and staff passed. We will have a small group of volunteers to work with Holiday for Hope. Our next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. via zoom.

- Theresa St. Aoro reported on behalf of the Ramsey County Labor Assembly. We discussed organizing Half Price Books stores and the vaccination mandate for the City of Saint Paul. Our next meeting will be the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. via zoom.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bob Ryan, USW Local 264 attended the meeting with the State Commissioner of Transportation. Representative Dean Phillips called out those in Congress who voted against the infrastructure bill. He asked to hold them accountable when they hold hands out for donations at the ribbon cuttings.

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

Submitted by,
BERNADINE ENGELDORF
Secretary-Treasurer

McCarthy: Labor 'needs to be front and center' in struggle for racial, economic justice

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The Minnesota AFL-CIO brings together over 1,000 local unions, which represent over 300,000 working people across the state. The federation supports unions in their efforts to build power for workers through contract and organizing campaigns, as well as the political process.

McCarthy's retirement will become official Feb. 1, and the federation's board members were scheduled to elect his replacement after this edition of The Union Advocate went to press. McCarthy reflected on his leadership of the federation – and his career in labor – in this interview, which has been edited for length and clarity.

UA: Minnesota has avoided the fate of a lot of other Midwestern states, where Republican legislatures and governors have attacked unions, weakened collective bargaining rights and gutted prevailing wage. How have we managed that?

McCarthy: We've had our battles. We've had attacks. But we are a state of workers that come together and are united, and that's where our strength is – in unity. And we've fought off those attacks. We take the fight on, and we win.

UA: And we win because we have political power, and the political program is something the state AFL-CIO directs. What's made that program so successful?

McCarthy: It's full participation by the affiliates, their leaders and the central labor councils. I spent 14 years as president of the Minneapolis federation, and we were fully engaged in the community, just like St. Paul and most of our labor councils are.

So it's not just the state federation, which oversees and helps guide the program when it comes to helping elect people to office. But it has to be done at the grass-roots level too. So those labor councils, those affiliates and their members have come forward ... and without their participation, we couldn't (be successful).

UA: Labor federations are a big tent. How hard is it to keep everyone moving in the same direction?

McCarthy: I mean, that's the job. That is the job of the president... When I came on as a leader, I wanted to make changes. Changes do not come easy to a large

institution like the federation. So if you want to make change, to get things moving in a certain direction, it comes slow... It's just the work every day – the incremental and the hard work – in making these organizations better. There isn't one big recipe; it's just hard work.

UA: How have you succeeded in making change?

McCarthy: There are certain things that happened, like the death of George Floyd, that moved this organization toward addressing the racial and economic injustice in our communities. I think that we've led – and continue to lead – in that area. And that's just hard, community work. It's working with everybody and bringing everybody along, because not everybody sees things the same way I do, or other people within our federation. These are tough, hard issues, and we've just got to keep at it. And I know we've failed along the way. We've made mistakes. Our movement has failed in many ways, historically, at certain times, but right now, in this place and time, where we're at, our state federation needs to be front and center in leading on this issue.

UA: I think people took note of that when you publicly called on Bob Kroll to resign as head of the Minneapolis police union. What makes this a labor issue?

McCarthy: We cannot be a labor movement that's effective in any way if we're not working on social and racial justice issues. For me, watching the film of the death of George Floyd just profoundly affected me. We just couldn't stand by and not do anything.

UA: After the COVID outbreak, the state AFL-CIO pushed Gov. Walz to issue an order protecting workers' right to speak up about unsafe conditions, and fought at the Capitol for expanded unemployment and workers comp. What were those early days of the pandemic like?

McCarthy: Thank God for Gov. Walz. Here's a man who, I think, really understood what the workers were going through, especially our frontline workers. We asked him to do certain things, to create executive orders to support workers – and he agreed. Many of those executive orders were things that we had asked him to do.

UA: The pandemic also has sparked a wave of union organizing. How has the federation tapped into that energy?



Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bill McCarthy (R) paused for a picture with a union member during the 2016 Pride Festival parade in Minneapolis. Union Advocate file photo

McCarthy: I've always felt like there needs to be a priority around organizing. Many state federations scratch their heads and wonder why. We don't organize workers (directly), but organizing work comes in a lot of different ways. When I was president of the central labor council, I was responsible for legislation at City Hall that created a labor peace agreement for hotel workers. If there was any dollars from the city going into a hotel development, they had to use a card-check agreement. That's organizing.

I think also about our nonprofit, the Minnesota Training Partnership. They're doing a tremendous job getting grant money to support unions and their apprenticeship programs – in the building trades, window washers, manufacturing. That's all organizing. The more we're supporting our affiliates, the bigger they're going to be able to grow their unions. I really have to give credit to Todd Dahlstrom and Jerome Balsimo. They've brought in millions of dollars in grants to support our unions.

UA: What are the organization's strengths – and its challenges – as it moves toward a leadership transition?

McCarthy: I feel like I've left the organization in a good place. We have a strong team, one of the best teams I've worked with. Whoever moves into the leadership role is going to have an opportunity to make it better.



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