



# The St. Paul Union Advocate

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

February 2023

## In This Issue

- 2** Labor's policy agenda on the move at Capitol
- 3** Unions back plan to invest in St. Paul roads
- 4** Airport workers rally for health care
- 5** Sanford-Fairview merger opposed by workers
- 5** Home care workers win \$20 wage floor
- 8** Lawmakers look to St. Paul with sick time bill
- 9** Court case threatens right to strike
- 10** Non-compete clauses draw federal scrutiny



[www.stpaulunions.org](http://www.stpaulunions.org)  
Connecting union members in Ramsey, Washington, Dakota and Chisago counties.

## Making noise, making history



Nicole Dzenowski, a paleontologist at the Minnesota Science Museum, spoke during a union rally Dec. 17 outside the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul, where workers and community supporters called on the Minnesota Historical Society to settle a fair contract with the union of over 250 MNHS employees. Those workers voted to organize with AFSCME Council 5 in November 2021, and Science Museum workers like Dzenowski hoped to do the same in a union election of their own last month. Results of the election, which covered some 260 workers, were scheduled to be announced Jan. 18. Both locally and nationally, museum and cultural workers have been joining AFSCME in waves since the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The union, which also represents staff at the Walker Art Center, now claims to represent about 35,000 cultural workers nationwide.

Union Advocate photo

## In Senate, new DFL majority puts refinery safety atop to-do list

By Michael Moore  
Union Advocate editor

Refinery safety is back on the agenda at the Minnesota Capitol.

Union tradespeople helped pack the Senate Labor Committee's hearing Jan. 12, when members heard public testimony on a bill that would require registered apprenticeship training for workers performing certain jobs in the state's two petroleum refineries.

"In my career it was easy to spot the difference between workers who were trained in registered apprenticeship programs and those who were not," LIUNA member Ben Weideman told senators.

"They understand what their specific duties are, they know how to ask questions and they contribute to a safe and productive culture of quality work, day after day."

Weideman, a former health and safety manager for a large contractor that specializes in hazardous facilities, told lawmakers that petroleum refineries warrant unique public scrutiny because the safety risks there are exponential.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

## Forced to take contract, rail workers call on Biden to act on sick leave, crew sizes

By Michael Moore  
Union Advocate editor

Federal lawmakers may have blocked them from going on strike, but freight rail workers aren't giving up the fight for paid sick leave, safe crew sizes and respect for their essential work.

U.S. rail unions staged rallies Dec. 13 in the Twin Cities, Duluth and elsewhere, looking to keep the spotlight on issues that, workers say, plague their industry.

Gathered near BNSF Railway's Northtown Yard in Fridley, union members called out freight lines for putting greed before their health and safety, and they recounted grim experiences with rail bosses' new business model, Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR).

Implemented by most carriers over the past decade, PSR is a ruthless template for squeezing more profits out of rail operations

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)



Rail workers and supporters rallied at BNSF's Northtown Yard in Fridley.

Union Advocate photo



## Well said!

**"I have a positive vision for the future of our state, and it's rooted in my belief that we're in this together. I still believe that we're one Minnesota – not that we are all the same or that we all agree, but that we can work together across lines of difference to do what's right, what's fair, and make our state a better place for all."**



– **Gov. Tim Walz**,  
in his inaugural  
address, delivered  
Jan. 2, 2023



### Labor Voices: Kera Peterson

## Our shared agenda is advancing at the Capitol

The Minnesota Legislature convened Jan. 3 with working family majorities in the House and Senate who are working in partnership with our labor-endorsed Minnesota Executive Council. The last time we had a pro-worker trifecta in Minnesota was in 2013-14. That Legislature voted to raise the state's minimum wage, expanded collective bargaining rights and made investments in all-day kindergarten.

Union volunteers worked hard to help elect pro-worker candidates across our state. Those elected officials have been hard at work since taking their oaths of office in January, and union members and community allies are engaging with them in meaningful ways to advance our shared legislative priorities.

We have cause to be optimistic about the 2023 legislative session. Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman and Senate Majority Leader Kari Dziedzic are working together closely. Gov. Tim Walz has signaled his support of many bills that our unions are supporting at the Capitol. And the projected \$17 billion-dollar surplus means that legislators have the financial resources needed to make historic investments in Minnesota's families, its workers and their jobs.

Several bills that our unions have advocated for during previous legislative cycles are quickly progressing through the committee process. Workers are delivering powerful testimony in support of Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) and Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST), bills that will improve working Minnesotans' quality of life, ensuring that they are able to take paid time off from work to care for themselves or a family member.

Union members and community allies are weighing in on the Skilled and Safe Workers Act, which will improve labor standards in Minnesota's petroleum refineries, and the Warehouse Worker Safety Act. We are also advancing a measure to extend unemployment insurance to occupations that have been historically excluded from the system.

Our unions are making the most of this opportunity to address systemic racism and improve safety for immigrant workers too. We know undocumented workers in Minnesota are vulnerable to exploitation on the job. That's why unions are working in coalition at the Capitol to address loopholes in the state's human trafficking laws. We're also advocating

**"Several bills our unions have advocated for are quickly making their way through the committee process."**

– Kera Peterson



for the Driver's Licenses for All bill, so that undocumented people can legally drive to work and get their children to school.

And because our shared values include protecting our democracy and expanding voting rights, union members are showing up to support bills like the Restore the Vote Act, which will allow Minnesotans who have completed a felony sentence and are living in the community on probation or parole to exercise their freedom to vote.

Union members have important stories to tell about the issues mentioned here, and because we're powerful advocates, many of our unions will encourage members to contact our legislators in the coming months. We might be asked to send an email, make a phone call, attend a committee hearing or have a conversation with our representative at the Capitol on lobby day.

Since 2022 was a year when legislative redistricting occurred and elections were held, you may have a new state senator or state representative. Now is a great time to visit the Legislature's website, [www.leg.mn.gov](http://www.leg.mn.gov), and find out who represents you and what type of bills they are working on. Many lawmakers send out email updates that include information about their work at the Capitol and town hall meetings, so visit your legislators' webpages and get signed up today!

– Kera Peterson is president of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO. The federation brings together more than 100 affiliate unions representing over 50,000 members who live and work in Chisago, Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties. Learn more about the SPRLF and its work at [stpaulunions.org](http://stpaulunions.org).

## Letters

- Send letters to: 353 W. 7th St., Suite 201, St. Paul, MN 55102
- Email them to: [mmoore@stpaulunions.org](mailto:mmoore@stpaulunions.org)

## The Union Advocate

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## Labor leaders back Carter's pitch to improve St. Paul parks, streets with 1% sales tax

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter and the City Council plan to seek authorization – first from state lawmakers, then from residents – to raise the city's sales tax by 1%. City leaders say the tax would fund long-overdue investments in the capital city's streets and park facilities.

"A one-cent sales tax would provide a billion dollars to revitalize our city's streets and parks, while sharing the cost among the many residents, businesses, commuters and visitors who benefit from them every day," Carter said.

City officials project the tax hike would generate \$984 million over 20 years. Carter's proposal would dedicate three-quarters of the new revenue to rebuilding and improving roads, and the rest to city parks.

Leaders of hospitality, construction and other unions applauded the proposal.

"The poor condition of many of our streets negatively impacts the mobility, safety and access to the businesses that do so much to grow our community," St. Paul Building and Construction Trades Executive Secretary Don Mullin said. "I'm excited for our members to get to work with the huge potential of this investment."

Before work can begin, though, the city must gain approval from the Legislature to put the proposed tax increase before voters in a general election.

Members of the City Council put the process in motion Jan. 4, voting 6-1 to approve a resolution formally requesting authorization from the state. Council President Amy Brendmoen called the penny sales tax "one important part of a full funding package that the Legislature can support to make our Capital City truly shine."

Ward 4's Mitra Jalali noted the sales tax would "help correct a chronic, historic underfunding of basic infrastructure" in the city.

She and other council members have pointed to several factors that contributed to the lack of investment. The city's property tax levy remained flat between 1994 and 2005, and in the decade that followed, state aid to municipalities cratered. Last year, a judge deemed St. Paul's street-assessment system, which collected fees from property owners regardless of their tax-exempt status, unconstitutional.

**"These costs right now are purely shouldered by our residents. This measure will help ensure that everyone across the state using St. Paul roads contributes to the costs of maintaining safer streets."**

– Council Member Mitra Jalali

"These costs right now are purely shouldered by our residents," Jalali said. "This measure will help ensure that everyone across the state using St. Paul roads contributes to the costs of maintaining safer streets in our capital city."

St. Paul Public Works has warned that without additional revenue in the road maintenance budget, the city's network of arterial and connector streets will drop from its current rating of "fair to poor" to a rating of "very poor" over the next 20 years.

If voters approve the sales tax, Carter and other city leaders hope to improve the streets' rating to "satisfactory" – an

industry standard that governmental agencies strive to achieve.

"Safe and well-maintained roads and parks not only benefit those who use them, but also provide work for skilled tradespeople like ourselves," said Jamie McNamara, business manager of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 110. "Investing in our infrastructure is an investment in our community and our future."

Other union leaders also pledged support for what Dean Gale, business manager of Plumbers Local 34, called "a smart and necessary step towards maintaining and improving the systems that we rely on every day."

Meanwhile, in the city's parks, which attract 15 million visitors each year, would see \$246 million worth of investments over the next 20 years. The investment would revitalize aging infrastructure, with a focus on the worst-condition parks, community centers, trails, connections and athletic facilities.

Wade Luneburg, secretary of UNITE HERE Local 17, which represents Twin Cities hotel and restaurant workers, said vibrant parks are a vital part of St. Paul's tourism industry.

"Minnesota's capital city prides itself on the world-class entertainment venues," he added. "A one-percent sales tax is an equitable solution to ensuring visitors can contribute to the city's continued growth."

Added Barry Davies, business manager of Ironworkers Local 512: "Strong and well-maintained streets and parks not only enhance the beauty of our neighborhoods, but they also create safer environments for families and businesses. This is the kind of measure that will create jobs and opportunities for workers while also benefiting residents and visitors."

### Saint Paul RLF Retirees to hold nominations for officers in February

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation Retirees will hold nominations for president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and three trustee positions at the organization's Feb. 15 meeting, set to begin at noon at the Labor Center, 353 7th

St. W.

Elections will take place at the March 15 meeting, with officers sworn in April 19.

Only members in good standing may participate in the election process.

The organization, which meets the

third Wednesday of each month, is open to retired members of unions affiliated with the Saint Paul RLF. Annual dues are \$20.

For more information about the elections or the retirees group, contact Bob Mayer at 651-308-4025.

### Support City of St. Paul workers' fight for fair, equitable contracts

Clerical and technical workers at the City of St. Paul have accused management of dragging their feet in contract negotiations that began this winter, and they are asking supporters to call on the city to get serious about bargaining fair, equitable contracts.

The unions, AFSCME Locals 1842 and 2508, have started an online petition at [tinyurl.com/stp-afscme](http://tinyurl.com/stp-afscme).

AFSCME members work on the front lines, delivering vital services across the City of St. Paul each day. But in their first two bargaining sessions since talks began on new union contracts, union members say city leadership has "demonstrated a lack of respect and a disinterest in supporting the negotiations process."

According to AFSCME, management's bargaining team was over an hour late to one of the sessions and refused offers to extend the meeting. And while the city's frontline workers report to their jobs in person every day, nearly half of management representatives have refused to be present in person for negotiations, union leaders said.

"AFSCME members have arrived at negotiation meetings prepared, on time, and ready to have productive dialog," the union's petition says. "They have not been met with the same effort by City leadership."

"We demand that City leadership dignify AFSCME members with a fair, good faith attempt to negotiate with our bargaining teams."

### Don't let Half Price Books run out the clock

Speaking of feet dragging, Half Price Books has slowed its contract negotiations with newly unionized workers at four Minnesota stores to a glacial pace, members of United Food and Commercial Workers report.

Workers at the Half Price locations in Roseville, Highland Park, St. Louis Park and Coon Rapids have been in bargaining with the bookseller for about a year, and the sides have reached tentative agreements on fair discipline policies, improved health and safety standards, protections for transgender employees and robust grievance procedures.

But the feet dragging began when the talks turned to economics, workers say. Now, they are asking supporters – especially HPB customers – to keep public pressure on the bookseller to get negotiations across the finish line.

"When customers talk, HPB listens," the union posted on social media. "That's why we're asking you to please SIGN OUR PETITION and tell the company you support booksellers unionizing!"

Add your name to the petition online at [p2a.co/WG0ThMw](http://p2a.co/WG0ThMw).



## 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

Feb. 28, 6 p.m.

To register for the Zoom meeting,  
email [cnocerini@stpaulunions.org](mailto:cnocerini@stpaulunions.org)

#### Dakota County Assembly

Feb. 9, 7 p.m.

Dakota County United Educators,  
6950 West 146th St., Apple Valley

#### Ramsey County Assembly

Feb. 28, 6 p.m.

To register for the Zoom meeting,  
email [kpeterston@stpaulunions.org](mailto:kpeterston@stpaulunions.org)

#### Washington County Assembly

Feb. 22, 6 p.m.

Washington County Gov't Center,  
Stillwater.



[www.stpaulunions.org](http://www.stpaulunions.org)



# MSP Airport workers unite to support health care campaign, Delta union drive

By Michael Moore  
Union Advocate editor

Airport workers marched and rallied for health care and union rights Dec. 8 outside Terminal 2 in Bloomington. The action was among dozens staged by airport workers and their unions fighting for safe and stable jobs across the country.

In Minnesota, workers at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport used the day of action to advance their campaign for affordable health care.

Dawit Meles, who works for airline caterer LSG Sky Chefs, said he picks up overtime shifts to cover the cost of his individual insurance plan. A more affordable option, he said, would give him more time to spend with his family.

“For my single insurance I pay over \$300 a month,” he said. “My wife and kids get their insurance through the state because I can’t afford the (family) insurance LSG Sky Chefs offers.”

Meles’ union, UNITE HERE Local 17, and other unions representing airport workers are pushing the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) to amend the ordinance it passed three years ago increasing MSP’s minimum wage, adding an “hourly health and wellness benefit” to the minimum compensation airport contractors must offer their employees.

Last year, unions surveyed nearly 300 MSP service workers from 17 different employers and found that, among workers who had health insurance, just 15.2% reported getting coverage through their employers.

“We know that essential airport workers – often Black, Brown and immigrant workers – make this airport the award-winning airport that it is,” SEIU Local 26 Secretary-Treasurer Brahim Kone said. “But too often to make ends meet they have to struggle, and that’s not right. It’s time for those in power to stand up and do what is right for these workers.”

A MAC commissioner who attended the rally sounded receptive to the idea.

“We will look to this coalition for guidance and support as we move forward to try to solve health care and other issues that are important,” Commissioner Rich Ginsberg said, “because it’s the workers that make the airport work.”

The coalition of airport unions behind the rally also included the Teamsters, the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, and the Machinists – three unions that recently announced a coordinated campaign to support workers attempting to unionize Delta Air Lines.



Brahim Kone, secretary-treasurer of SEIU Local 26, called on the MAC to require airport employers to offer affordable health benefits. “It’s time for those in power to stand up and do what is right for these workers,” he said.



State Rep. Kaela Berg (DFL-Burnsville), a member of the Flight Attendants union, offered solidarity to workers at the airport rally.

Delta is turning massive profits, and executives like CEO Ed Bastian, whose pay was 26% higher last year than his peers’, are reaping the benefits. But rank-and-file workers like Miles Dousette, who works for Delta Cargo at MSP Airport, are working two jobs to make ends meet.

“There’s no work-life balance,” said Dousette, in his third year with the company. “They say we’re a family. They say they want this to be a career. Then why don’t we get career wages?”

Dousette said workers in his department earn \$18 per hour for their first three years, followed by modest annual



Hundreds of MSP Airport workers and supporters marched along Humphrey Drive outside MSP Terminal 2 in advance of the union rally. Union Advocate photos

increases that top out after the 10th year.

“Delta likes to brag about profit sharing, but I worked six days a week for 10 months straight, and I got the same check as everyone else,” Dousette said.

He told workers at the rally that the company is plagued by understaffing, outdated warehouse equipment and executives who turn a deaf ear to workers’ concerns.

“The scheduling is atrocious, and when we ask management to do something about it, we always hear, ‘we can’t’ or ‘we’re working on it,’” he said. “We need a union now.”

## Registered nurses named most trusted profession for 21st consecutive year in Gallup polling

For the 21st consecutive year, Gallup polling has found that the professionals Americans trust most are registered nurses.

In polling conducted Nov. 9 through Dec. 2, 2022, 79% of Americans said nurses have “very high” or “high” honesty and ethical standards, far more than any of the other 17 professions they were asked to rate.

National Nurses United, the union of registered nurses that includes members of the Minnesota Nurses Association, said the poll shows the public is behind nurses’ longstanding campaign for an equitable health care system that puts patients before profits.

“We are thrilled by this continued recognition as the nation’s most trusted profession,” NNU Executive Director Bonnie Castillo, a registered nurse, said. “It strengthens our movement for better working conditions and patient care standards in the broken American health care system.”

Nurses have taken the number one spot on Gallup’s poll in all but one year since they were added in 1999. The exception is 2001, when firefighters were measured on a one-time basis shortly after Sept. 11.

“Nurses take seriously the sacred bond of trust that patients, their families and the public share with us. It

drives us to do anything and everything in our power to protect our communities from corporate greed,” NNU President Deborah Burger said. “As we move into the fourth year of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are renewing our fight against a money-driven health care system that refuses to adequately prepare for and protect against public health crises.”

While still the highest, nurses’ rating in the Gallup poll has slipped 10 points since the pandemic began.

The least trusted profession, according to the Gallup rating? Members of Congress, whose ethics rating polled at less than 10%.



## SEIU home care workers strike deal raising wage floor to \$20 by 2025

The minimum wage for home care workers will increase to \$20 under the terms of a new tentative agreement between the Walz administration and SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa, reached last month.

The contract, which must be ratified by union members and funded by the Legislature before taking effect, will raise wages for over 20,000 caregivers statewide by 25 to 48%, according to SEIU.

Union members and clients said the wage increases will help attract and retain caregivers to the industry, which has struggled with a shortage of workers. That, in turn, will allow more Minnesota seniors and people with disabilities to access the care they need to stay safely in their homes.

The agreement also establishes a wage scale, compensating home care workers based on their experience in the field. Workers like Tavona Johnson, a member of the union bargaining team from Austin, called it another step toward professionalizing their field.

"I feel that together with the big wage floor increase, this new wage scale means that home care workers will be able to protect our own dignity and integrity by having the option to work our way out of poverty, and maybe not having to work multiple jobs any more to make ends meet," Johnson said.

Additional gains in the tentative agreement include a one-time, \$1,000 retention bonus for any worker who has provided home care for six months or longer, beginning in July 2023. The agreement also establishes a more professional orientation program for new caregivers.

The union's bargaining team included not only home care workers, but clients and family caregivers as well – all elected by their peers. They negotiated with the Walz administration for over three months before reaching the agreement.

Lauren Thompson, a home care client who was on the bargaining team, said the historic wage increases included in the tentative agreement reflect increased awareness of the value home care workers provide to Minnesota residents.

"You can see that more than ever in the progress we've made in this contract and the investments the state is choosing to make in this critical work that supports families in every Minnesota town and community," Thompson said.

Minnesota home care workers formed a union with SEIU in 2014. Their first contract with the state, which took effect in July 2015, included a wage floor \$10.50 per hour.

### The Union Advantage

**\$10.50**

Wage floor in SEIU members' first contract with the state, reached in 2015 after a historic statewide organizing drive

**\$20.00**

SEIU home care workers' wage floor in 2025, provided their new contract is ratified and approved by state lawmakers



Minnesota Nurses Association Executive Director Rose Roach spoke during a press conference before Attorney General Keith Ellison's hearing on the proposed Fairview-Sanford merger. photo courtesy SEIU Healthcare MN and Iowa

## On Fairview-Sanford merger, union members warn: 'Bigger does not always mean better'

At a public hearing Jan. 10 hosted by Attorney General Keith Ellison, union members spoke in opposition to the proposed merger of Fairview and Sanford Health, warning that it would not benefit patients or health care workers, only the executives already making millions off of the health care system.

Ellison is holding meetings across the state to receive feedback from the public – and reaction from the health care systems – as his office investigates whether the proposed merger complies with state and federal laws.

At a press conference before the hearing in St. Paul, members of two large health care unions and the state's largest labor federation, the Minnesota AFL-CIO, put forward a united front of opposition, warning that South Dakota-based Sanford would be less accountable to Minnesota workers, consumers and authorities.

Ericka Helling, an intensive care nurse at Fairview Southdale and a 25-year employee of the system, said she was "alarmed that a Minnesota institution could be bought and sold to an out-of-state entity."

She noted that South Dakota is very different from Minnesota, where Helling's union, the Minnesota Nurses Association, has a powerful seat at the table both in bargaining contracts and in oversight of the industry.

"Worrisome for me, as a union nurse, is what happens when an employer buys out a system," she said. "Is our contract recognized? Do we need to fight all over again for the high standards and protections our contract provides the practice of nursing and patient care?"

M-Health Fairview, Helling noted, refused to include language in its nurses' most recent contract, settled in December, that would have extended the agreement's terms through any merger.

Cliff Adams, a member of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa who works at Fairview's Masonic Children's Hospital, echoed Helling's concerns about accountability, and he called on Ellison and other leaders to focus on "the problems in our own backyard first and foremost," including staff burnout, safety and racial equity.

"In the last four years we have seen our health care

system strip away the caring aspect and monetize the health aspect," Adams said. "We have seen failure from our employer. We are struggling to tackle these major issues with a large, home-based, Minnesota-oriented organization..."

"Bigger does not always mean better."

Union leaders, meanwhile, urged Ellison and other state officials to consider what impact a recent wave of health care mergers, consolidations and acquisitions across the country has had on the quality and affordability of care.

"Studies show that health care mergers have caused a 41% increase in prices with no evidence of improved quality of care," MNA Executive Director Rose Roach said. "What we need is public stewardship and oversight, holding the hospitals accountable to us, the public, not these independent, profit-making entities that focus on generating revenue."

And when it comes to stewardship, neither Sanford nor Fairview has a track record that inspires much trust.

M-Health Fairview closed two hospitals in the middle of the pandemic, including the state's only dedicated COVID-19 hospital. At the same time, CEO James Hereford took a 90 percent raise to more than \$3.5 million in annual compensation.

Sanford, meanwhile, paid a \$49.5 million golden parachute to disgraced CEO Kelby Krabbenhoft, who spread medical disinformation during the pandemic.

"Our state government has an obligation to pursue lower health care costs, better outcomes for patients and better conditions for health care workers," Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bernie Burnham said. "This merger will do the exact opposite."

"As health care becomes more consolidated year after year, the only people benefiting are the CEOs. Now Minnesota's regulators have a chance to draw a line in the sand and tell these regulators enough is enough."

Union opposition helped tank a previous proposal to merge the two systems, forwarded in 2013.

Sanford and Fairview have said they hope to complete a merger by the end of 2023.

The Attorney General's office is also collecting public feedback on the merger online. Leave a comment at [www.ag.state.mn.us/sanford-fairview/form.asp](http://www.ag.state.mn.us/sanford-fairview/form.asp).



## Starbucks stalls, baristas strike



Workers at Starbucks locations in St. Paul and St. Anthony joined a nationwide strike Dec. 16-18 to protest the coffee chain's slow-footed approach to negotiating first contracts with newly unionized stores. "We show up to bargain; they walk out," said Nan Watts, a barista in St. Paul, said. "We haven't seen a lot of effort being put into bargaining on the ground level, so this is our way of saying, nationally, that we do care enough to strike for a contract." It was the second time in a month that baristas at the two local stores staged targeted, unfair-labor-practice strikes. Pictured are workers and supporters outside Starbucks at 300 Snelling Ave. S, which had to postpone opening by nearly two hours because of the walkout Dec. 16. St. Paul workers returned to their posts the following day, but picketing continued all weekend at the St. Anthony store.

Union Advocate photo

## Got an eye for photos? Entries are open for Women Building Success' annual photo competition

Local tradeswomen with an eye for photography on the jobsite are invited to enter Women Building Success' annual photo contest.

Winners in three categories will be determined March 8 during a celebration from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 292 hall in Brooklyn Park, 6700 Broadway Ave.

The categories are:

- Photo of you working
- Photo of the jobsite/building
- Photo of your tools/craftsmanship

Judges will select three finalists in each category, but final voting will take place at the March 8 event. Winners will receive cash and other prizes. According to organizers, the contest has awarded over \$1,500 to its winners.

To enter a photo, email it along with your name and preferred email address to [events@womenbuildingsuccess.org](mailto:events@womenbuildingsuccess.org).

Entry deadline is March 8.

Learn more and find contest rules online at [www.womenbuildingsuccess.org](http://www.womenbuildingsuccess.org).

### Capitol exhibit

New this year, select photos entered in the Women Building Success contest in recent years will be on display in the Minnesota State Capitol's north corridor from March 1-4.

The exhibit will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Women Building Success is a nonprofit dedicated to recognizing, celebrating and promoting the success of women pursuing careers in union construction trades.

## Pick Your Favorite Way to Play

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Union tradespeople packed the first committee hearing on Senate File 10, which would require certain jobs in Minnesota's petroleum refineries to be filled by workers who have enrolled in or completed a registered apprenticeship program.

photo courtesy LIUNA MN

## Measure would require refineries to hire workers with apprenticeship training

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

"Refineries are not a normal construction site," he said. "It's potentially dangerous for the individual workers, their co-workers, the surrounding community and the environment. Any refinery moving away from contractors that require and promote registered apprenticeship is taking a step backward from the progress we've made in the workplace throughout my career."

That's exactly what workers say is happening at the refinery in St. Paul Park, where union members have accused Marathon Oil of replacing local, highly trained tradespeople with non-union workers from other states.

The dispute came to a head in early 2021, when Marathon locked out members of Teamsters Local 120 for nearly five months, after union members refused to accept language that would have allowed the refinery to outsource up to 50 jobs.

At the same time, Marathon began severing ties with local contractors that had regularly provided maintenance and other services at the facility. Building Trades unions erected banners outside the refinery, warning that local laborers, pipefitters and other tradespeople familiar with the refinery had been replaced with subcontractors from across the country.

Inside the refinery, Teamsters noticed the difference.

Dean Benson, a vacancy relief officer at the facility and chief steward for Local 120, told senators he worked alongside subcontractors who didn't know how to use critical safety equipment like a self-contained breathing apparatus. He knew they were from out of state, Benson said, when he watched the subcontractors struggle to figure out how Minnesota fire hydrants work.

"These guys don't know what they don't know, and that's dangerous in a place like the St. Paul Park refinery," Benson said.

The growing chorus of concerns from workers like Benson and residents of St. Paul Park and surrounding communities quickly reached lawmakers like Karla

Bigham, who carried the apprenticeship requirement two years ago while serving in the Senate.

A companion measure passed the House, and Bigham's Senate bill briefly made it into a larger package of legislation with bipartisan support. But in the 2021 session's waning hours, Republican leaders abruptly withdrew their support, killing the measure.

With DFLers now in the Senate majority, it stands a good chance of passing, according to lead author Sen. Judy Seeberger, who has succeeded Bigham, now a Washington County commissioner, in Senate District 41, which includes St. Paul Park.

"When I was campaigning for office, I got the message loud and clear that this was something urgently needed to ensure workers in the refinery and the communities around the refinery were as safe as possible," Seeberger said.

"Minnesota's registered apprenticeship programs are the gold standard when it comes to training," she added. "When we're talking about oil refineries, which are such dangerous environments to work in, we should expect nothing less than the most experienced, skilled and safe workers in those facilities."

Seeberger's bill, Senate File 10, passed out of the Labor Committee Jan. 12, but representatives of Big Oil did their best to derail it. The American Petroleum Institute's Lynn Granger warned Seeberger's bill "is not about safety" but, rather, "the government inserting itself in the hiring practices of the private sector."

Commissioner Bigham, who also testified at the hearing, wasn't buying it. She noted that other states where Marathon operates refineries have apprenticeship requirements on the books.

"This legislation does not require refineries to hire union," Bigham said. "There's nothing that stops Marathon or any other refinery in the state from doing their own apprenticeship program."



Seeberger

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# On earned sick and safe time, state lawmakers look to follow St. Paul's lead

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

Minnesota lawmakers last month held up St. Paul's earned sick and safe time ordinance as a shining example of policy they hope to replicate statewide.

Sen. Sandy Pappas of St. Paul and Rep. Liz Olson of Duluth, lead authors of legislation that would extend paid sick and safe time to an estimated 900,000 working Minnesotans, said the time has come to ensure no one is forced to choose between their paycheck and their health.

"Over several sessions here at the Capitol, we have spent a great deal of time vetting this critical solution for economic security," Olson said during a press conference with workers and advocates in advance of the measure's first committee hearings.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic's darkest days, we saw just how important it was for people to stay home when they were sick," she added. "But this was a problem well before COVID, and it's a problem we are going to solve now."

The solution looks much like the policy members of the St. Paul City Council sent to then-Mayor Chris Coleman's desk in September 2016.

The DFLers' proposed legislation would require employers to provide one hour of sick time for every 30 hours an employee works, with accrued time capped at 48 hours per year – a rate on par with the St. Paul ordinance.

Employees would be able to carry over unused time from year to year, but their accrued time could not exceed 80 hours, barring an independent arrangement between the employer and employee.

The legislation spells out a range of ways workers could use their accrued time, including to recover from or seek



State Sen. Sandy Pappas (D-St. Paul), who has been lead author on a bill to expand earned sick and safe time since 2014, listened as Laura Carpenter recalled accessing her benefits to get legal protections from an abuser in 2018. Union Advocate photo



CTUL member Maria Vazquez (L) and City Council Member Rebecca Noecker.

care for injuries and illnesses to themselves or family members.

Maria Vazquez, a member of the

worker center CTUL, was working as a housekeeper in St. Paul when the city council took up earned sick and safe time seven years ago. At the Capitol press conference, she recalled showing up to work with a fever and trembling legs before finally gaining access to the benefit.

"Other people would rightly ask, 'Why are you going to work when you are sick?'" Vazquez said through an interpreter. "But when you are employed without those benefits, you still have responsibilities..."

If I didn't go to work, it was (choosing) between my health or the roof over my head, the food on the table."

Preventative-care appointments and weather-related school closures

also would qualify under the proposed legislation, as would so-called "safe time" – absences that result from suffering domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking.

Laura Carpenter, a former food service worker in the Minneapolis Public Schools, recalled accessing her earned sick and safe time to seek legal protection from an abusive partner in 2018.

"I was able to take the day off work and go downtown to the (Hennepin County Domestic Abuse Service Center), where I was supported by an advocate who helped me navigate the legal system," Carpenter remembered. "This resource was invaluable for my family ... but I wouldn't have been able to access it during the daytime hours if I was worried about my job security or losing my income."

Fourteen states and the District of Columbia have earned sick and safe time policies on the books, as do the cities of Minneapolis, Duluth and Bloomington.

In St. Paul, the ordinance has worked so well that council members were poised to strengthen it, extending coverage to employees of companies outside St. Paul when they perform work in the city.

The goal, Ward 2's Rebecca Noecker said, is an even playing field – something a statewide measure could ultimately ensure.

"There's a narrative that these sorts of policies are bad for businesses, but that can't be farther from the truth," Noecker said.

"We have seen business owners in my ward and throughout the city respond really positively to the way that these policies provide a benefit that they would like to be able to provide for their employees."

## Give driver's licenses to Minnesota's undocumented residents, advocates say

By Grace Deng

Minnesota Reformer

Newly energized by the Democratic trifecta, a coalition named "Driver's Licenses for All 2023" rallied on the first day of the 2023 legislative session, calling on state lawmakers to pass legislation allowing undocumented Minnesotans to obtain driver's licenses.

"Immigrant parents cannot take their children to recreational and educational activities, and the result is that our youth are being left behind," said Jovita Morales, founder of Minnesota Immigrant Movement, at a rally on the opening day of the Legislature. "It is not our children's fault that these laws are causing inequitable access to opportunities for the future. It is unfair."

As of 2019, the state is home to an estimated 81,000 undocumented immigrants, according to the Migration Policy Center. Advocates say issuing licenses to undocumented immigrants makes roads safer: Studies show hit-and-runs and uninsured drivers decreased in states that

allow undocumented people to obtain driver's licenses.

The idea has some bipartisan support, including from law enforcement officers who don't want unlicensed drivers on the road.

The state's largest labor federation, the Minnesota AFL-CIO, and wide range of unions have endorsed the measure.

Chants of *si se puede* — the labor and immigrant rights mantra roughly translated to "yes we can" — could be heard across the Capitol hallway in between speeches from union leaders, immigrant rights organizations, Gov. Tim Walz, Archbishop Bernard Hebda and sponsors of the bill in both chambers. Walz called the current law "a cruel policy that did nothing good."

"Our employers need workers. We know that this community works," Walz said. "Why would we make it more difficult for them to get there safely? Why would we hold back our economy?"

Outside, people with the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee

braved the winter storm to rally for the bill. Speakers lambasted Democrats, however, for inaction on immigration and workers' rights, including driver's licenses.

"Now is the time that we should be demanding more, not less. We have already seen in the newspaper and on the radio: Democrats hedging their bets about what we can do. But the power of the people is unstoppable," said David Gilbert-Pederson, a member of MN Workers United.

Senate President Bobby Jo Champion, DFL-Minneapolis, who sponsored a driver's license bill that passed the upper chamber a decade ago but failed in the House, urged patience in a recent Star Tribune story. He was castigated for it.

Various bills approving driver's licenses for undocumented Minnesotans have circulated in the Legislature for over a decade, but DFL House and Senate majorities offer new hope the bill might pass.

Sen. Zaynab Mohamed, DFL-Minneapolis, a first-term lawmaker who

is the chief author of the Senate legislation, said the bill "is a top priority for me as an immigrant, a top priority for our immigrant communities across the board, and it is a top priority for all Minnesotans."

Rep. Aisha Gomez, DFL-Minneapolis, is co-sponsoring the bill in the House with Rep. Maria Isa Pérez-Vega, DFL-St. Paul. Gomez said the legislation is also a top priority in the lower chamber.

Eighteen states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico issue driver's licenses or similar documents that offer driving privileges to undocumented people. Until 2003, Minnesota allowed any state resident, regardless of immigration status, to obtain a driver's license.

"During the pandemic, they called us essential workers," said Carpenters Local 68 union member Daniel Del Toro, who was reading the remarks of fellow union member Josue Maldonado. "But we know we have always been essential to our families."

– The Reformer publishes online at [minnesotareformer.com](http://minnesotareformer.com).



## St. Paul Community Ed course will explore history made by Minnesota workers

At key turning points in our country's history, Minnesota workers have had a significant impact on the national labor scene. Through St. Paul Public Schools Adult and Community Ed, the East Side Freedom Library's Peter Rachleff will offer a five-week course not only exploring these rarely told stories but also discussing how they are relevant to the challenges we face today.

In the spring of 1894, Great Northern Railroad workers joined the new American Railway Union and took on the oligarch, James J. Hill. Their struggle not only forced Hill to take back the wage cuts he had imposed, but it inspired 125,000 railroad workers to launch a nationwide strike that summer in support of workers who built sleeping cars for the Pullman Company. This strike led to the establishment of Labor Day as a national holiday.

Inspired by decades of independent political organizations and campaigns across the Midwest, Minnesota workers and farmers founded the Farmer Labor Party in 1924. It became a model for other independent political ventures in 6 states. By 1932, it had become the most popular political party in the state, and, for the next decade, it would elect three governors, four U.S. senators and eight congressmen, and maintain a majority

in both houses of the Legislature. In 1944, the Minnesota Farmer Labor Party merged with the Democratic Party, becoming the "DFL."

In 1934, Minneapolis truck drivers and warehouse workers took on the most powerful anti-union business organization in the country, and, in three strikes, turned Minneapolis from an open-shop town into a union town. Using an industrial form of organization, militant picketing tactics and offering solidarity to other workers, they spread unionism from Fargo to Omaha. Their impact led to the passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935 and the formation of the CIO. Across the U.S., membership in unions grew from 2.5 million in 1932 to 14 million in 1945.

The National Labor Relations Act had excluded farmworkers, domestic workers and public employees from its procedures and processes. The civil rights and women's movements brought new energies, ideas and occupations into the scope of the labor movement. In 1970 Minneapolis teachers struck in conscious violation of state law. Their action not only changed their employment situation but also led to the 1971 passage of the state Public Employees Labor Relations Act (PELRA). The teachers' success inspired other edu-

cators and government employees across the country to organize and demand their rights.

Not all these stories led to victories for workers and unions. In 1985-86, the strike by Hormel Foods workers in Austin, Minn., became the national poster child for the struggle against economic neoliberalism, as the US political economy shifted away from the structures, practices and policies which had dominated the 1940s-1970s. Despite extraordinary mobilization of rank-and-file workers and family members, and extensive solidarity from other workers, Hormel defeated the local union. In the decades that followed, corporate employers across the U.S. reorganized work processes, contracted out work, closed plants, exported jobs, fired and permanently replaced strikers, and sought to eliminate unions. Too often, governments at all levels supported these anti-union strategies. The consequences for unions and workers were grim.

Three-plus decades of such employer and government behavior, the rise of a new generation of workers and the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic have, in the past three years, given birth to a newly-energized, creative and hopeful labor movement. It has been mani-

### The Basics

- **What:** Minnesota Workers Make History, a virtual course taught by Peter Rachleff
- **When:** Monday nights, Feb. 6 through March 6, via Zoom
- **Cost:** Sliding scale, \$48-\$67
- **Register Online:** [tinyurl.com/MNWorkersHistory](https://tinyurl.com/MNWorkersHistory)

festated from Amazon warehouses to Starbucks coffee shops, from hospitals to bookstores and beyond. New activists and organizers are learning from our rich labor history in Minnesota, wherever they are employed and whatever kind of industry they are working in. They will be the architects of the next historic turning point in labor history.

Minnesota Workers Make History will meet via zoom on five consecutive Monday nights, Feb. 6 through March 6, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Participants will be provided with readings and videos for each class.

Register for the course at [tinyurl.com/MNWorkersHistory](https://tinyurl.com/MNWorkersHistory).

For more information on the course, reach out to Rachleff, the instructor, at [peter@eastsidefreedomlibrary.org](mailto:peter@eastsidefreedomlibrary.org).

## U.S. Supreme Court case could put limits on workers' right to strike

By Mark Gruenberg  
PAI Union News Service

**WASHINGTON** — In a complex case from Washington state, the right-wing dominated U.S. Supreme Court tackled the right to strike and whether corporate lawsuits can stop it.

"The right to strike is on trial today at the U.S. Supreme Court," AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler warned in a Jan. 10 tweet about the case, *Glacier Northwest, Inc. v. Teamsters Local 174*. "For nearly a century, federal law has protected workers' right to strike in order to improve their wages, hours and working conditions."

Now that right is under threat from the corporate class and the radical right — as shown by a long line of friend-of-the-court briefs from conservative legal groups and political lobbies. In the case, they seek another weapon against unions: After-the-fact lawsuits for cash.

The story is so convoluted that progressive justices Elena Kagan, Sonia Sotomayor and Ketanji Brown Jackson handled most of the questioning of the attorneys for both sides, and of President Joe Biden's Justice Department, which was officially neutral.

At issue in the case, as laid out in the hour-and-a-half session, are who can rule whether a strike is legal or not, whether the union can be sued afterwards for damages, and if the National Labor Relations Act, as a federal law governing labor-management relations, pre-empts such court cases.

### Sued for 'property damage'

Teamsters staged an 11-day strike at Glacier in August 2017 — a strike the National Labor Relations Board ruled was legal. After Glacier and Local 174 settled, Glacier sued the union for allegedly letting members disable its cement mixers by letting cement dry within the non-rotating barrels on each truck.

The Washington State Supreme Court tossed

Glacier's suit. Meanwhile, the National Labor Relations Board filed a labor law-breaking complaint against Glacier, making the strike legal. Glacier took its loss in the state court all the way to D.C., seeking the right to sue — and, in turn, for other employers to scare off union members from striking with that threat.

"Glacier sued Local 174 over a concerted work stoppage, conduct at the heart of labor law's protections," said Seattle attorney Darrin Dalmat, defending the union and the right to strike. "Under settled law, strikers lose those protections if they fail to take reasonable precautions to avoid aggravated, imminent, foreseeable harm to employer property."

"Applying that test, the board never found a forfeiture" of the right to strike "merely because perishables spoil," Dalmat said of the cement in the trucks.

In fact, the concrete didn't spoil. Glacier admitted that in documents filed with the justices.

If Glacier Northwest wins the right to sue after a legal strike, its victory opens the way to similar lawsuits by firms against unions nationwide for alleged "property damage" by strikers. Such suits can break union finances and thus endanger the right to strike.

That's what Glacier Northwest and its right wing and corporate backers want.

"Frankly, we'd prefer not to be before an administrative agency" — the NLRB — "where the agency is the judge, jury and executioner," and can penalize labor law-breakers, said former Republican Solicitor General Neal Francisco, arguing for Glacier. "We prefer to be in a court system where we have a neutral judge and the potential for a jury."

### Overwhelmed by political pressure

Left unsaid by Francisco, now a top lawyer at notorious union-buster Jones Day: State courts, including supreme courts, are often overwhelmed by political pressure, since many of those judges are elected. Knowing that, Republicans have for at least a decade

pumped millions of dollars into electing pro-corporate and right-wing state and local judges.

They've also continually lambasted "unelected bureaucrats" in D.C., a favorite GOP political piñata, including the NLRB's staff. And in 1995, the GOP approved legislation to let Congress permanently outlaw specific federal rules. Its first target? OSHA's ergonomics rule.

Local 174's lawyer, Dalmat, said the NLRB is the right place for the Glacier case. He also reiterated that the Washington Supreme Court tossed Glacier's damage suit against the union.

"These pleaded facts show reasonable precautions" by the union to prevent damage, said Dalmat. "At a minimum, there's enough evidence in the record to allow the board lawfully ... to rule in our favor."

The court is expect to issue its ruling in the case sometime in June.

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# Rail workers push federal action to address health, safety concerns

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

and workers, locomotive engineer Joel Mueller said.

"Railroad workers are at a breaking point," he told more than 50 supporters who joined the midday rally. "We work 12-hour days, and we are on call seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

Mueller, who serves as statewide chair of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), said most railroad workers can't take a day off without scheduling it weeks in advance.

"We go to work sick because a lot of times the alternative could be dismissal or discipline from the railroads," Mueller said.

Twelve unions representing over 115,000 rail workers had hoped to gain paid sick leave in joint contract negotiations with the carriers this year. Ultimately, the benefit was left out of a tentative master agreement that the Biden administration helped mediate.

When members of four unions voted to reject the contract and authorize a strike in November, the eight other unions pledged not to cross their picket lines. That prompted President Biden to seek congressional support for imposing the contract's terms and undercutting workers' right to strike legally.

Congress granted the request. A companion bill adding seven paid sick days into the master agreement passed in the House but fell eight votes short of passing the Senate.

Now, rail unions and some lawmakers are urging Biden to use his executive powers to force railroads, as federal contractors, into offering workers paid sick time. Former President Barack Obama issued a simi-

**"Sometimes you need another guy on the train – even if you don't like him – to keep you awake, to keep you focused."**

– Pat Dwyer,  
SMART-TD Local 1000

lar executive order on Labor Day 2015, but it left out contractors covered by the Railway Labor Act.

"We need an executive order from the Biden administration to protect our members," Mueller said. "That means sick days."

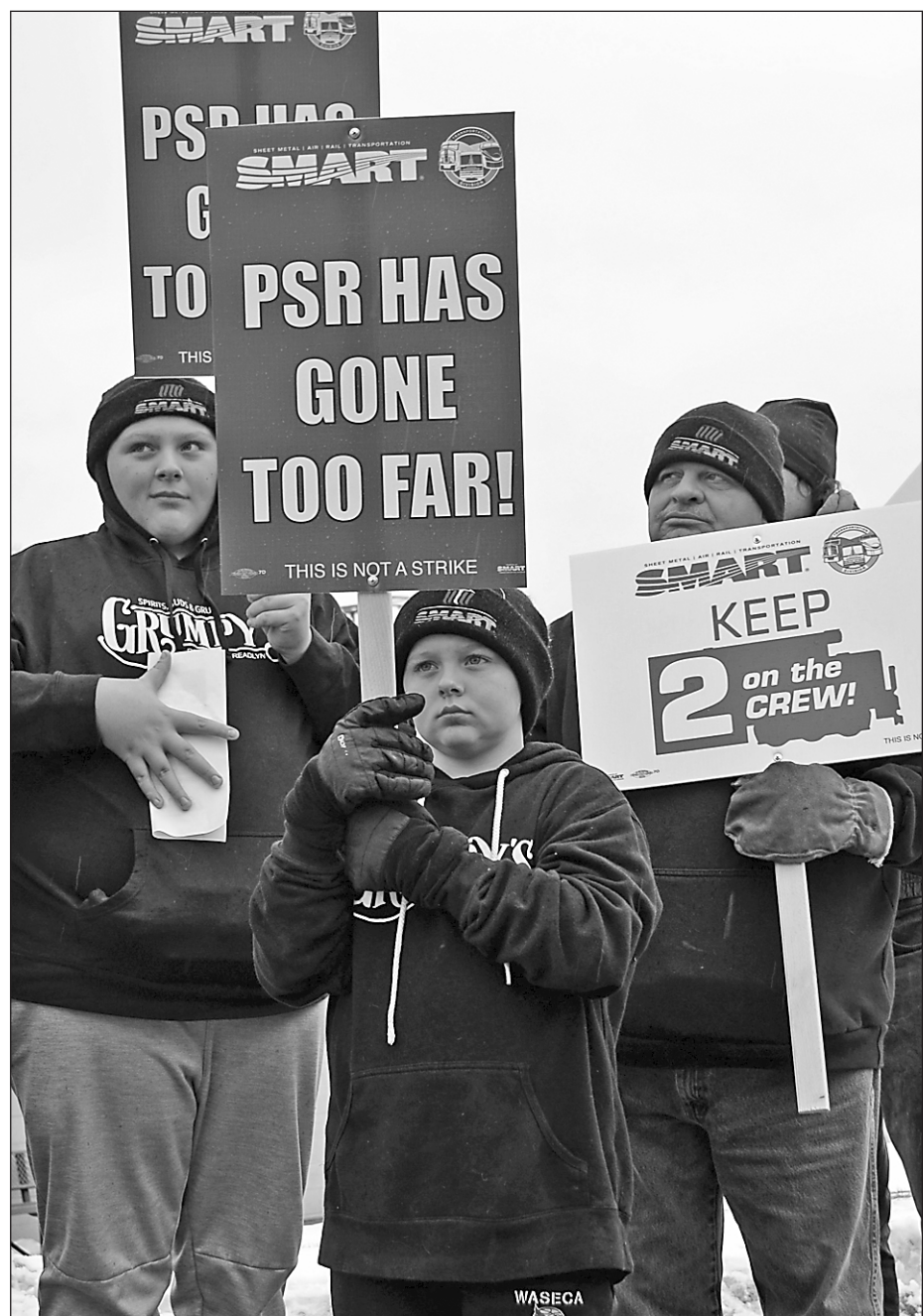
Rail workers also are holding out hope for federal action to address another of their top demands: keeping two crew members aboard trains. Railroads are looking to technology to cut their labor costs, but that comes at a risk, Mueller said, noting some trains now stretch up to three miles long.

"It's important that we have another set of eyes and ears in the cabin of the locomotive," he said.

The Federal Railroad Administration is held public hearings in December on newly proposed rules establishing minimum crew sizes for trains, and rail unions are monitoring the process closely.

Pat Dwyer, a member of SMART-TD Local 1000, recalled once having a severe allergic reaction to food while operating a freight train. The second crew member not only averted disaster, Dwyer said, but potentially saved his life.

"Two people on a train is deathly important, and people don't understand that," Dwyer said. "Sometimes you need another guy on the train – even if you don't like him – to keep you awake, to



Robert Dickerson, a member of Waseca-based SMART-TD Local 64, brought his sons Alexander (L) and William to the rally. "I've worked this job the whole time they've been alive," he said, "but I do not encourage them to work for the railroad, sad to say."

Union Advocate editor

## With ban on non-compete clauses, federal agency aims to put \$300B in workers' pockets

By Mark Gruenberg

PAI Union News Service

Ten months ago, an upset Emily Olson, a former hair salon executive in the Twin Cities, brought a tearful tale about her experience with non-compete clauses to Minnesota lawmakers. Now, a top trust-busting federal agency plans to ride to her rescue – and to aid an estimated 30 million other workers, too.

"I'm here to defend the right to pursue happiness," Olson told lawmakers during a February 2022 hearing on legislation that would restrict non-compete clauses, which employers use to block workers from taking a job with a competing employer or starting a competing business on their own.

An estimated 20% of U.S. workers are bound by non-competes, but that may soon change, as the Federal Trade Commission, with notable union endorsement, has proposed a rule to ban the clauses from individual employment contracts.

FTC officials claim the rule would put between \$250 and \$300 billion in workers' pockets long term, and it also would help alleviate a lot of pain workers like Olson often face.

Olson told lawmakers she "moved up the ladder really fast at the salon" where she was hired, earning a promotion to regional director overseeing four salons. But when she gave birth, Olson said, she realized she couldn't juggle a baby and a management job.

That's when the non-compete language in her employment contract kicked in.

"I knew I had to leave," she said. "But before I could even find a job, I was sent many letters by their lawyer telling me to cease and desist. It was clear my employer owned me..."

"I had to start at the bottom and I was essentially homeless and on welfare. How is this legal? How can they get away with this?"

The FTC not only wants to ensure

bosses can never get away with such clauses again, but also to compensate workers like Olson for income lost to non-competes of the past.

Unions backing the proposed rule include the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, the Communications Workers (CWA) and the Service Employees (SEIU).

It's not just highly paid workers who get hurt by non-competes, FTC Office of Policy Planning Director Elizabeth Wilkins told the PBS Newshour after the agency unveiled its proposed anti-non-compete rule Jan. 5.

Non-competes, Wilkins said, cover workers ranging from lawyers and executives to "middle-wage workers such as nurses and journalists" to janitors, security guards "and folks who are flipping burgers."

In plain English, bosses shove contracts with non-compete clauses in front of job applicants and demand "sign this," she added.

AFSCME, whose members include

nurses and security guards, denounced non-compete clauses in a convention resolution last year. Other unions signed onto a join letter with the watchdog group Public Citizen urging the FTC to draft a rule barring the practice.

"Tens of millions of workers across the U.S. economy remain vulnerable to economic disempowerment through employers' use of, or threat to use, non-compete clauses," the joint letter says. "By limiting a worker's mobility, non-competes drive down wages...and keep workers stuck in unsafe or hostile workplaces."

"Instead of retaining workers through coercive non-compete clauses, employers should maintain a loyal workforce by offering good wages, regular raises and promotions, and fair treatment."

The FTC is accepting public comments on the new rule during a 60-day window that ends March 10. To submit a comment, go to [ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov).





# Minutes of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation

## NOVEMBER 9, 2022

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

President Peterson read the Code of Conduct. She will go over the Code of Conduct at the beginning of each meeting. The Code states: The AFL-CIO is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination and harassment. We ask all meeting participants to embrace our values of equity and equality and conduct themselves in this meeting consistent with those values. The RLF meetings that are held the Second Wednesday of the month will have a designee as the first point of contact for anyone who thinks they have experienced discriminatory, harassing or otherwise unacceptable behavior. President Peterson has assigned two designees as points of contact that will be announced at the start of each meeting. We urge you to contact him/her if you have any concerns. The designees are Mary Sansom, acting Secretary-Treasurer, and Perry Schmidt, Vice President.

## CREDENTIALS

Credentials were received from AFSCME Local 1842 and Local 2508. President Peterson administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates in attendance.

## MINUTES

**M/S/C TO APPROVE MINUTES OF SEPT. 14, 2022, 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 NOVEMBER 9, 2022

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

President Peterson gave an update on the results of the Minnesota elections on Tuesday, Nov. 8.

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

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES NOVEMBER 9, 2022

The Executive Board met 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 Labor of Love – Sponsor A Family, Jean Jones Coats Initiative, Labor-Red Cross Blood Drive on

Tuesday, Nov. 29, the upcoming Holiday Party and forming a Resolutions Committee.

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$400 CONTRIBUTION TO THE LABOR OF LOVE – ADOPT A FAMILY.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$400 CONTRIBUTION TO THE JEAN JONES COATS INITIATIVE.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE SAINT PAUL RLF TO MOVE THE COPE AND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS TO THE UPSTAIRS CONFERENCE ROOM STARTING JANUARY 2023.**

- **ORGANIZING UPDATES/CAM-PAIGNS:** AFSCME, Minnesota Nurses Association and Teamsters Local 120 gave updates on their organizing activities.

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

## REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Acting Secretary-Treasurer Sansom reported on the financial status of the Federation as of October 2022. The report was accepted as read.

## REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- Colleen Nocerini, political organizer, reported on behalf of the Chisago County Labor Assembly. Our next meeting will be held via zoom at 6 p.m. on Dec. 6.

- Connie Beissel reported on behalf of the Dakota County Labor Assembly. We will be donating a labor history book to all 15 high schools in Dakota County. Our next meeting will be the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. in person. Contact Colleen Nocerini or Kera Peterson if you would like to be included.

- Brian Beedle reported on behalf of the Washington County Labor Assembly. Our next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m.

- Martin Hoerth reported on behalf of the Ramsey County Labor Assembly. Our next meeting will be the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. in person where we will be phone banking and candidate screening.

## PRESIDENT REPORT

President Peterson reported on the Labor 2022 program and results. Hundreds of union members and retirees participated in the program state-wide. Labor-endorsed candidates won their races at the local, state, and federal levels. It's important to build relationships with newly elected officials.

## STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS

Nocerini thanked everyone for their efforts in support of labor-endorsed candidates this cycle.

## NEW BUSINESS

- The St. Paul Retirees group will begin meeting on Nov. 16, 2022, in the RLF conference room at the Labor Center.

- Sansom informed everyone of the Dec. 8 rally with the Teamsters, SEIU, UNITE-HERE and IAM at the airport. She will send the time and local to Kera to send out.

- The December meeting will be held at the IBEW Local 110 building.

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

Submitted by,  
**MARY SANSOM**  
Acting Secretary-Treasurer

## Labor fundraiser supplies winter clothes for St. Paul kids



As 2023's first storm system arrived in the metro Jan. 3, Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation President Kera Peterson (L) delivered winter clothing to the Saint Paul Public Schools' Title I office. Project REACH Supervisor Heather Alden received the gear on behalf of SPPS; her office is charged with outreach to families in the district experiencing homelessness. The Regional Labor Federation's nonprofit, the Saint Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center, purchased the clothing with contributions to its Jean Jones Initiative. The biannual fundraiser collected over \$2,200 this winter. Additionally, members of Steamfitters Pipefitters Local 455 collected new coats and boots for SPPS students at their union hall, and Union House in Wyoming donated six boxes of warm, American-made socks.

Union Advocate photo

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## DECEMBER 14, 2022

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation met in regular session on the above date and was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance by President Peterson at 6 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beedle, Beissel, Edwards, Engeldorf, Gale, Gibbons, Guertin, Hill, Hoppe, Markham-Kocurek, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Slattery, VanDassor, Vanderport and Wynn. Excused were Hoerth, Madden, Seath, Tastad-Damer, and Varco. Absent were Luneburg, Mayer, Naseth and Wise.

President Peterson read the Code of Conduct, printed above, and designated as points of contact Bunny Engeldorf, Secretary-Treasurer, and Perry Schmidt, Vice President.

## MINUTES

**M/S/C TO APPROVE MINUTES OF OCT. 12, 2022, AS PUBLISHED IN THE UNION ADVOCATE NEWSPAPER AFTER THE SECRETARY-TREASURER NOTES THERE ARE NO ADDITIONS OR CHANGES CALLED FOR.**

## COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES DECEMBER 14, 2022

COPE met in regular 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, Gale, Gibbons, Guertin, Hill, Hoppe, Krey, Markham-Kocurek, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Slattery, VanDassor, Vanderport

and Wynn. Excused were Hoerth, Lohmann, Madden, Seath, Tastad-Damer, and Varco. Absent were Luneburg, Mayer, Naseth and Wise.

Items to come before this committee included:

- President Peterson discussed the upcoming 2023 elections. We will be circulating and asking for input from the RLF affiliates regarding the Candidate Questionnaires that we are currently using.

- **THANK YOU NOTE** received from Stan Karwoski, Washington County Commissioner, for the RLF's \$200 donation.

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

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES DECEMBER 14, 2022

The Executive Board met 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 Affiliate support, AFL-CIO Leadership Training, Labor of Love – Sponsor A Family, Labor-Red Cross Blood Drive, Jean Jones Coats Initiative and the Winter Carnival Grande Day parade and warm up party.

- President Peterson also has been appointed to the City of Saint Paul Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee and reappointed to the Labor Standards and Reapportionment Committee.

- **ORGANIZING: UPDATES/CAM-PAIGNS:** AFSCME, Minnesota Nurses

Association, SEIU Local 284 and Teamsters Local 120 gave updates on their organizing activities.

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 November 2022. The report was accepted as read.

## THANK YOU NOTES

Notes were received from the Minnesota State Association of Letter Carriers for the RLF's financial support in their yearly state convention booklet and from the Jewish Community Center for the Cub Food gift cards that were given to them through the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's Labor of Love-Sponsor A Family program.

## PRESIDENT REPORT

President Peterson thanked all the delegates for continued commitment to serving the St. Paul RLF and staff for all the work that has been done throughout the year.

- **PRESIDENT PETERSON DEFERRED ALL REPORTS UNTIL JANUARY 2023 TO ACCOMMODATE THE 2022 HOLIDAY PARTY.**

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

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



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