



The St. Paul Union Advocate

130th Year, No. 3, Issue 5500

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

September 2026

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MAPE member Alec Stewart, one of 15 ICE protesters facing charges, says DHS surveilled unions "because our community connections and solidarity were so effective."

Gap between CEO, worker pay continues to widen, report shows

Union Advocate staff

The nation's top executives gave themselves far bigger raises than the average worker saw last year.

The AFL-CIO Executive Paywatch report, released last month, found that the pay gap between CEOs and the rest of us widened in 2025, with companies on the S&P 500 paying their chief executives 312 times more than the median U.S. worker, a 21% increase over 2024.

The nation's largest labor federation analyzes compensation data each year to produce the report.

This year, researchers chose to exclude one CEO - Elon Musk - from their calculations. Musk's \$158.3 billion pay package, which made him the world's first trillionaire, would have skewed the data, they said.

Still, with an average pay of \$22.8 million last year, other CEOs on the S&P 500 enjoyed their highest level of compensation in the three decades that the AFL-CIO has been producing the report.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 13)

Take a guess!

- Six corporations based in Minnesota exceeded the average ratio for CEO-to-worker pay nationwide in 2025. Find the list on Page 13.

'BRINGING BACK McCARTHYISM'

Feds spied on local unions during Operation Metro Surge

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

Minnesota's largest labor federation accused the Trump administration of "bringing back McCarthyism" last month after court filings exposed wide-reaching federal surveillance of local unions during the deadly and chaotic immigration dragnet last winter.

While purportedly investigating a criminal conspiracy to impede Operation Metro Surge, Department of Homeland Security agents infiltrated a meeting at the United Labor Center in Minneapolis, demanded one local

union's transaction log from U.S. Bank and dug into the political spending of another.

DHS investigators dubbed the spying campaign "Operation Puppet Master."

Undercover agents, posing as protesters, also surveilled meetings at churches, parks, libraries and schools, "at times working to entice people into discussing or committing crimes," according to court documents filed Aug. 13 by an attorney for one of 15 Minnesota protesters facing federal charges stemming from Metro Surge protests.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)



APWU members demonstrate outside the Eagan Post Office during a nationwide day of action.

Union Advocate photo

Union members sound alarm on threats to Postal Service, mail-in voting

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

EAGAN - Twin Cities postal workers are sounding the alarm about threats to Minnesotans' mail service coming out of Washington, D.C.

Joining a nationwide "Protect Our Public Post Office Day of Action," local members of

the American Postal Workers Union demonstrated July 27 outside the U.S. Postal Service distribution center in Eagan, along busy Lexington Avenue.

Union members warned of multiple threats to mail service, including President Donald Trump's latest nominees to the USPS

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 16)

Do Something!

Labor volunteers needed

Healthcare, public education, affordability, Social Security, AI – working families have a lot at stake in the Nov. 3 election, and the labor movement isn't sitting on the sidelines.

Of course, neither are the billionaires and CEOs. Overcoming their big money will take people power, and local union members and retirees can be part of the push for a worker-first agenda by volunteering with the Labor 2026 campaign. Volunteers reach out to union members at the doors and on the phone to talk about labor-endorsed candidates in key races.

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation has two big door-knocks scheduled on Saturday mornings this month: Sept. 12 in Maplewood and Sept. 22 in Cottage Grove. Register for these events, or learn about other volunteer opportunities, at stpaulunions.org/volunteer.



Labor Voices: Kera Peterson

This Labor Day, let's commit to stopping the billionaire takeover

You might think of Labor Day as the unofficial end of summer or the last day before school starts. Maybe it's just a welcome three-day weekend. But in the labor movement, Labor Day is a celebration of the power that we, as workers, have when we join together in unions – the power of solidarity. When working people come together and fight for each other, there's nothing we can't accomplish. We can stand up to the wealthiest CEOs and the most powerful politicians. We can topple corporate greed and rewrite the rules.

Of course, Labor Day also brings us closer to Election Day, and our unions are already working hard, both here in Minnesota and across the country, to power a campaign that takes back our country for working people. We're mobilizing to elect pro-worker candidates who will be on our side, not for the elites.

Unfortunately, we've seen what a billionaire-first government looks like ever since President Trump and his allies in Congress took power last year. Their "big, beautiful bill" gave record tax cuts to billionaires and corporations – paid for with cuts to healthcare, food assistance and other services that working families rely on. Before the bill passed, unions joined a chorus of voices warning that the measure would leave more Americans uninsured, increase costs for local providers and raise premiums for the rest of us. Now it's happening, making it harder than ever for working families just to make ends meet.

Healthcare isn't the only thing more expensive in Trump's economy. From gas and groceries to rent, families' costs are skyrocketing. Too many of us feel like we're falling behind or just barely getting by, whether we're working longer and harder than ever for less in return or attempting to retire. Too many working people are living on the edge, stressing over every bill, every purchase, every paycheck.

It doesn't have to be this way. And it shouldn't. Working people built this country, yet every day we seem to matter less

"Too many working people are living on the edge, stressing over every bill. It doesn't have to be this way."

– Kera Peterson



to the wealthy elites in power.

It's past time that elected officials, from the Capitol in Washington to our city halls, prioritize working people by creating good jobs with better pay and affordable health care, and by protecting the programs we all depend on like Social Security and Medicare. We also need leaders who will fight to remove barriers workers face when they try to organize a union and bargain a first contract. More than 70% of Americans and nearly 9 in 10 people younger than 30 support unions, and polls show that millions of workers would join a union tomorrow if they could. Yet less than 12% of the workforce enjoys union representation on the job.

So on this Labor Day weekend, let's take a moment to celebrate our solidarity, and then let's recommit ourselves to fighting for worker power. Because the stakes have never been higher. Our labor movement is ready to fight for an economy, a government and a country for the people, not the billionaires. We'll knock on doors, we'll make phone calls and send texts, we'll rally and we'll fight to elect the candidates who share our vision for the future. We'll share volunteer events on our website and social media. We hope you'll help us win for working people on Election Day!

– Kera Peterson is president of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.

Letters

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

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Up with the burgers, down with the bosses

The East Side Freedom Library in St. Paul will celebrate community, solidarity and the labor movement at its annual Labor Solidarity Picnic on Sept. 12.

The free, public event will run from 1 to 4 p.m. on the lawn outside the library, located at 1105 Greenbrier Street. It will feature food, live music, and a program uplifting recent labor struggles in the area. Additionally, a silent auction will benefit the ESFL's labor programming next year.

Learn more about the event and the East Side Freedom Library's labor programming at eastsidefreedomlibrary.org.

Yellow Ribbon Ribfest is back in Arden Hills

Top pitmasters from the Building Trades will compete again this year at Yellow Ribbon Ribfest, serving up barbecued ribs and chicken at the annual event benefiting veterans, military personnel and their families.

Ribfest is scheduled to take place Sept. 19 at the 34th Red Bull Infantry site in Arden Hills, located at 4800 Hamline Ave. N. Doors will open to the public at noon.

Ribfest features live music, activities for kids, a military flyover and, of course, opportunities to sample barbecue from up to 45 different teams, which compete for \$2,500 in prizes.

The event, in its fourth year, is sponsored annually by the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council and its partners.

Learn more and plan your visit at yellowribbonribfest.org.

Class explores bargaining first contracts

The University of Minnesota's Labor Education Service (LES) will continue its series of community classes for workers this fall. The brief, online courses are tailored to busy activists looking to sharpen their skills or explore new topics.

Announced classes include "Effective First Contract Negotiations," a two-part, evening workshop scheduled Oct. 5-6 that will explore how new unions can carry the momentum of their organizing campaigns into their first contract campaigns.

Community Classes are offered on a sliding fee scale, ranging from free to \$100.

Learn more and register at z.umn.edu/LESCommunityClasses.



Nurses hold a press conference in Rice Park after a bargaining session with Hazelden Betty Ford. MNA members traveled to talks in St. Paul – nearly an hour's drive from their workplace in Center City – at the employer's request. Union Advocate photo

Nurses end strike after Hazelden agrees to safety measures

Nurses ended their strike at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation's Center City campus after settling a first contract that, union members say, will address concerns that sparked their historic organizing campaign.

Members of the Minnesota Nurses Association's bargaining unit – about 60 nurses in all – voted to ratify the contract July 30. Negotiators reached a tentative agreement with Hazelden two days earlier.

That brought a halt to picketing outside the prestigious addiction-treatment facility that began July 15 and persisted through steamy temperatures, smoky air and gridlock at the bargaining table.

That resolve sent a strong message to management, members of the bargaining team said.

"It was taxing physically, financially, mentally and sometimes spiritually, but the best thing about it was we were really able to bond on that line," Anne Coleman, a registered nurse at Hazelden for the last two years, said. "And not only did we bond, but we were able to have our voices heard, which we know has not been the case consistently for years and years – especially around security and safety."

"This was historic, and I'm really proud of our team."

Indeed, nurses at the Chisago County campus became the first anywhere across Hazelden Betty Ford's system to win a

union contract, and one of their key gains – providing staff with panic buttons – will extend to nurses and other caregivers nationwide, veteran registered nurse Jody Burton said.

"It's going to be in California, Chicago, Florida – it's a huge win," Burton said. "From Day 1, they were like, 'No, this (safety language) is never going to be part of your contract.' But we won it, and we won it for everyone. We're a powerful team."

The contract establishes a firm deadline for management to implement panic buttons and other workplace safety measures. Nurses also pushed Hazelden to staff their rural facility with security or safety personnel, and the employer committed to "a contractual pathway to implement safety staff," according to MNA.

Safety emerged as a top issue in negotiations for union members, who pointed to the increased abuse of highly potent drugs, like fentanyl, among their patients. MNA pulled public data that found county sheriff's deputies responded to nearly three calls each week, on average, to the Center City campus between Jan. 1, 2025, and July 19, 2026.

Coleman called the contract "a move in the right direction that I don't think would have happened if we had not gone on strike," and she pledged that the union would "keep promoting and advocating for safety protocols to help us do our jobs."

"And it's not just about the nurses," she added. "I think about the techs who have been in verbal and physical altercations. I think about the other nurses who have been kicked, punched, spit on. I think about the other patients who are terrified by a psychosis event. In a highly emotional, stressful environment, there should be better safeguards, and this contract is leading that way."

The contract also delivers economic gains and puts nurses' health-insurance benefits in writing, protecting against the kind of sudden, arbitrary cuts that many Hazelden employees experienced two years ago – and provided the spark for nurses to form a union with MNA.

Additionally, nurses gained recognition of their full bargaining unit, including casual and on-call nurses. Hazelden fought to divide the unit during their organizing drive, forcing two separate union elections, both of which were successful.

Now, Burton said, nurses are eager to get back to work and back to their patients. The financial strain of going on strike was significant for many union members, she added.

"But you could never tell by the way people showed up on the line with their family, shouting and screaming and digging in their feet," Burton said. "We would have fought longer if we'd have had to."

– Michael Moore, UA editor

Dreaming big: What if union membership tripled nationwide?

About 15 million American workers are union members, but polling shows that some 50 million more would join a union today if they could.

What if that happened?

That's the question researchers at the Economic Policy Institute sought to answer in a first-of-its-kind report, "The Case for Tripling Union Membership," published in July.

Tripling union membership, from roughly 10% of the workforce to 30%, would restore union density to levels not seen since the 1950s, when union power delivered rising wages for working people, helped narrow racial wage gaps and built a thriving middle class.

In their new report, EPI researchers argue that similar benefits are possible today: higher wages across the board, lower inequality, stronger communities and a healthier democracy. The report also shares a policy roadmap to boost union membership and expand the benefits of collective bargaining.

"Tripling union membership is not a nostalgic pipe dream," EPI President Heidi Shierholz said. "It is exactly what workers want, and federal and state policymakers have a clear roadmap to make it happen."

"Collective bargaining is the most effective tool for workers to raise their wages and secure a fair share of economic growth. If policymakers are serious about

tackling affordability problems, expanding union membership and collective bargaining should be at the center of their agenda."

The report estimates that tripling union membership would:

- Deliver a 14.5% raise for the median worker, amounting to more than \$7,700 annually – or nearly \$270,000 over a 35-year career. Increases would apply union and nonunion workers alike.
- Shift \$1.2 trillion to workers annually. This would reverse one-third of the increase in inequality experienced since 1979.
- Raise worker earnings in every state, including by an estimated \$6,500 annually in Minnesota and \$9,200 in Wisconsin.

• Significantly narrow racial wage gaps. Because unions tend to boost wages more for Black and Hispanic workers than for white workers, tripling union membership would close racial wage gaps by more than one-third.

• Increase the number of people covered by health insurance. Greater collective bargaining power would reduce the number of nonelderly people going without health insurance by about 25%.

• Strengthen communities. States with high union density invest more in public education, have higher unemployment insurance reciprocity rates and have all adopted Medicaid expansion.

• Protect democracy. Unions boost voter turnout, equip workers with civic skills and actively defend voting rights. States with high union density have passed far fewer voter restriction bills than low-density states.

Of course, tripling union membership won't actually happen overnight. Organizing is deliberate work that requires the investment of energy and resources – a commitment the AFL-CIO, the nation's largest labor federation, made at its constitutional convention in June, pledging to organize 2 million new members over the next five years.

Unions have also pushed policymakers to modernize federal labor law and even the playing field in workplace organizing drives.

The report unveils two new policy proposals designed to grow collective bargaining and union density – proposals that, authors say, are "built to work alongside" organized labor's top policy priorities, the PRO Act and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act.

One proposal would guarantee annual raises for newly unionized workers. A mandatory cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) would provide a meaningful guardrail for workers whose first contract bargaining ends up in arbitration – and undercut the employer's ability to drag out the process.

The other ambitious proposal: require collective bargaining as the default option when CEO-to-worker pay ratios exceed 100-to-1. "Declining unionization and the stratospheric rise in CEO pay are deeply connected," EPI's researchers said. "Strengthening the bargaining power of workers in severely imbalanced companies would enable them to capture a larger share of the wealth their work creates."

The report also calls on states to repeal so-called "right-to-work" laws and ensure collective bargaining rights for all public-sector workers, which alone would increase union density nationally from 9.9% to 14.4%.

– Union Advocate staff

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AFT calls on educators, families to avoid Target during back-to-school season

As back-to-school shopping season ramped up last month, the American Federation of Teachers launched a nationwide campaign to urge educators and families to stock up on supplies someplace other than Target.

The union's "Shop Smart, Support Working Families" campaign is a response to Target's refusal to condemn the unlawful Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity that continues to roil communities around the country – a position the union called "starkly accommodationist."

The nation's largest labor federation, the AFL-CIO, endorsed the boycott in June at its constitutional convention in Minneapolis.

AFT encourages supporters to find alternate retailers that respect labor rights at ShopSmart.AFT.org.

Additionally, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1189 maintains a list of union retailers in the East Metro at ufcw1189.org/shop-union.

The AFT, with 1.875 million members nationwide, rolled out its boycott in August after the union's attempts at dialogue with Target leadership "did not receive a constructive response."

Educators spend an average of \$895 of their own money on school supplies each year, and union pension funds hold billions in Target stock.

In March, the union passed a resolution demanding the Minneapolis-based business speak up against the ICE atrocities in its own backyard. AFT President Randi Weingarten wrote to Target CEO Michael Fiddelke in January and again in March.

"We gave Target ample time to stand



with the communities in which they operate and help their neighbors, but its silence about federal immigration abuses has been deafening," Weingarten said. "We wrote letters, passed resolutions and reached out to management in good faith but have yet to see any meaningful movement."

Twin Cities union leaders praised AFT for holding Target accountable.

"We're disappointed that Target has failed to live up to its promises to be a good neighbor to the families who have shopped there for years," Natasha Dockter, a vice president of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, said. "In this scary time, we all need to come together, from the classrooms to the corner offices, to protect Americans' right to free speech and to ensure our democracy endures."

Happy Labor Day from the 86,000 members of Education Minnesota!

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HAPPY LABOR DAY!



www.mnguild.org

Chartered in 1933, the Minnesota Newspaper and Communications Guild represents media, communications, printing, and nonprofit workers and union staff.

We stand in solidarity with our union siblings in our shared struggle for dignity and rights at work.

HAPPY LABOR DAY!



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Organizing Report

'Shared passion for community' drives union campaign at Bouldering Project gyms

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

After a meeting with the CEO left more questions than answers, workers at two Bouldering Project gyms in the Twin Cities moved quickly to organize a union.

Workers voted to 79-7 to form a bargaining unit with Workers United, an affiliate of the Service Employees (SEIU), in a landslide election Aug. 6 overseen by the National Labor Relations Board.

The new unit brings together 117 workers at the St. Paul and Minneapolis climbing gyms, from climbing supervisors and youth programming staff to front-desk and maintenance workers.

The climbing industry has expanded steadily over the past decade, and with projections to continue growing, the industry is attracting outside investment, including from private equity.

Climbing workers, in turn, have been forming unions to protect their voice as the industry changes. Vertical Endeavors workers in the Twin Cities unionized in 2023 with the United Food and Commercial Workers. Bouldering Project gyms in Brooklyn and Boston saw successful union drives over the last year, and Workers United represents staff at over 30 climbing gyms nationwide.

The organizing bug reached Bouldering Project's Twin Cities gym via an unlikely source: a gym member who traveled to Brooklyn and, by coincidence, met Bouldering Project workers there who had recently unionized. The member connected the Brooklyn worker with a Minneapolis worker after returning home.

From there, the campaign took shape, tapping into a growing sense that the culture at Bouldering Project was undergoing a shift that dated back to its acquisition by private equity after the COVID pandemic, according to Arrow Shipp, a supervisor in the St. Paul gym entering their fourth year on the Bouldering Project staff.

"Part of the reason people want to be at the Minneapolis Bouldering Project is the community they've built – the vibes, the inclusivity, being local at the core," Shipp said. "I think a lot of people were feeling like we're pushing promos for new members more than we are building community with current members. We're losing those core values that the company claims, and I think people were getting tired of the energy."

A few months later, Bouldering Project announced CEO Trevor Ackerman would be holding town-hall meetings with workers at all its locations

Here's who else is forming unions

- Hospice workers at Lakeview Memorial Hospital Association in Washington County voted 30-2 Aug. 11 to form a union with SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa.
- RNs at two healthcare facilities – 44 nurses at the Fairview Southdale Heart Clinic and 123 nurses at HealthPartners' Hutchinson hospital – were scheduled to vote in union elections, after organizing drives by the Minnesota Nurses Association.

across the U.S. When Ackerman came to the Twin Cities, workers – some involved in the not-yet-public organizing effort and some not – were ready with direct questions, expecting a give-and-take dialogue, Shipp said.

That wasn't what they got.

"It felt very performative," Shipp said. "We asked Trevor questions directly, and he kind of danced around the answers."

Ackerman asked for more time to process workers' concerns and pledged to respond. That response came June 1 with a letter saying that workers in nine positions would be getting a 25-cent raise, and workers in adult programming would be getting an additional 13 cents. Front-desk workers like Shipp would get nothing.

"Those raises felt kind of like a slap in the face," Shipp said. "They weren't hearing us; they were trying to appease us."

Now that they've unionized, Twin Cities workers will look to address their issues with a seat at the bargaining table.

Priorities for a first contract, according to the union, will likely include job security and pay. The wages of some full-time workers are low enough that they could qualify for public assistance.

Shipp, 27, said the organizing process has deepened connections between coworkers, many of whom have never been members of a union before.

"We learned that we have a shared passion for community and the fight for workers' rights," Shipp said. "Spending time talking about that and getting together to work toward this common goal was really incredible."

"Sometimes society feels like it's in a really tough spot right now. It's so cool to have people come together and support each other."

UFCW Local 1189

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History rhymes at event to commemorate 92nd anniversary of ‘Bloody Friday’

By **Peyton Haug**
minnesotareformer.com

When Minneapolis police sprayed bullets into a crowd of hundreds of strikers in 1934, John Hanson’s father plugged wounds to stop blood from seeping into the cobblestone.

“My father approached the closest fallen man, who was moaning, screaming and bleeding into the pavement,” he said. “Can you imagine what those cracks were looking like?”

Standing 92 years later on the same ground, Hanson the younger lamented the deaths of Henry Ness and John Belor – the two union members police killed after shooting nearly 70. “In the end, victory took mutual aid, caring for one another, coalition building, trust, solidarity and resilience,” he said.

Hanson’s father, also named John Hanson, was a coal truck driver and member of the Committee of 100, a group of union leaders elected to manage the 1934 strikes and union activity beyond. His recollection was among the stories that striker descendants shared with the nearly 100 people who gathered July 19 for an annual event remembering tribulations surrounding what’s known as Bloody Friday.

The 1934 shooting was a crescendo of a months-long battle that pitted the truckers and warehouse workers of Teamsters Local 574 against the “Citizens Alliance,” who were the corporate owners trying to suppress workers’ pursuit of fair wages and working conditions. President Franklin Roosevelt eventually intervened to hand the workers a victory. The companies succumbed to worker demands, and union participation exploded in Minnesota and across the country. Local 574’s membership alone grew from 175 to more than 5,000 workers.

History rhymes

The solidarity theme remained center stage, but this year’s memorial was different.

On the sweltering, smoky Sunday afternoon, history’s rhymes sang loudly through the city as crowds paused for a bit longer to remember Renee Good and Alex Pretti – the two protesters shot and killed by immigration agents during Operation Metro Surge. They also memorialized Victor Manuel Díaz, a Nicaraguan man who died in ICE custody.

“The organizing of rapid response, mutual aid and the many ways people came out to defend their neighbors during Operation Metro Surge, it was like the way the community was responding to the Teamsters strike in 1934,” said event organizer Peter Rachleff.

Rachleff, a retired Macalester College historian whose work focused largely on immigration and labor, said there are echoes this winter of labor battles past. “It’s this idea that word would get out about a point of conflict, and a whole bunch of people would show up,” he said.

Rachleff said parallels to “Bloody Friday” include the two civilian deaths, frequent tear gas deployment, creative civil disobedience tactics and hundreds of thousands of people flooding the streets – for Ness’ funeral in 1934 and the ICE Out Day of Truth and Freedom rally in 2026.

‘Why work if you can’t make enough to live?’

Between growing up listening to his father’s stories and watching the Minneapolis labor movement evolve, Hanson said he has noticed a Great Depression-era mindset resurfacing: “Why work if you can’t make

enough to live anyway?”

“A lot of people, younger people, are coming into these industries, seeing the unfairness and wanting to do something about it,” he said, citing union drives spanning across sectors, from health care and higher education to the service industry.

Hanson said his father would be pleased to see how labor and allied groups coalesced during Operation Metro Surge.

The temporary political victory during Metro Surge comes at a difficult time for labor unions, however. President Donald Trump ended collective bargaining for more than 1 million federal workers, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported this year that the number of wage and salary workers belonging to unions was 14.7 million in 2025, or 10%, which was down from 17.7 million and 20% in 1983, the first year for which comparable data are available.

This year’s remembrance of 1934 closed with music from Brass Solidarity. The activist brass band marched the streets in a fashion reminiscent of the New Orleans second-line celebrations known for honoring the dead.

Carpenter and musician Emmett Doyle also performed an original song called “the 1934 Strike Song.” Doyle is among 15 Minnesotans who were indicted in June, charged with impeding the feds during their immigration operations.

“The (Trump) administration is terrified of the power of the general strike and the power of mass resistance,” Doyle said. “They think that by targeting a small number of radicals, they can cleanse the city of a tint of leftism.”



Activists gather in Minneapolis for the commemoration of “Bloody Friday.” The event drew parallels to the deadly ICE occupation earlier this year. photo courtesy Remember 1934

For now, local unions are focusing on the Faster Labor Contracts Act, according to Paul Slattery of Teamsters Local 120. The bipartisan bill would fast-track collective bargaining agreements between employers and newly formed unions. A common management tactic is to delay contract negotiations, hoping the new union will die on the vine.

“Whether it’s ICE, whether it’s more labor organizing, the fight continues for workers’ rights, and peoples’ rights,” Slattery said.

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New minimum wages for Minnesota nursing home workers to take effect this month

By Max Nesterak

minnesotareformer.com

New minimum wages for Minnesota nursing home workers received final federal approval and will take effect on Sept. 10, more than three years after the state Legislature created a nation-leading labor standards board to set pay and working standards for some of the state's lowest-paid workers.

Thousands of workers will receive raises with the new hourly wage floors across four job categories: \$22.50 for certified nursing assistants, \$23.50 for trained medication aides, \$27 for licensed practical nurses, and \$19 for all other nursing home workers. The hourly wages will increase another \$1.50 per hour across all job categories on Jan. 1.

The minimum wages are the culmination of a yearslong campaign by the Service Employees (SEIU) and other unions representing Minnesota nursing home employees to increase pay across the entire sector. It drew fierce resistance from industry leaders, who warn tight

margins keep them teetering on the brink of closure.

"These workers are a lifeline to our elders and most vulnerable residents, and they deserve financial peace of mind so they can provide the best care possible," said Dr. Rasha Ahmad Sharif, executive vice president of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa, in a statement celebrating federal approval of the new minimum wages.

Judge upholds Standards Board

Democrats created the Minnesota Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board in 2023 as part of a slew of pro-labor laws, giving it broad authority to regulate working conditions in nursing homes.

The nine-member board – made up of equal numbers of worker representatives, nursing home leaders and state officials – approved the wage floors in April 2024 and also mandated time-and-a-half pay for 11 holidays. The rules, which set wages far above the state's \$11.41-per-hour minimum wage for all workers, were

approved without the support of the industry representatives, who abstained from voting.

The nursing home industry, represented by LeadingAge Minnesota and Care Providers of Minnesota, unsuccessfully tried to block the holiday pay with a lawsuit.

The industry also filed a lawsuit in federal court seeking to dissolve the labor standards board altogether. The suit argued the board is unconstitutional and violates federal labor and antitrust laws, calling it an unprecedented "experiment in workplace regulation."

U.S. District Judge Nancy Brasel issued a ruling last month dismissing the case, but the industry groups have signaled that an appeal could be coming.

Wage hikes approved after delay

Many workers, particularly licensed practical nurses, are already earning more than the minimum wages, according to a 2024 fiscal analysis by the Department of Labor and Industry. Those who are earning less than the new wage floors will receive about a \$2-per-hour raise.

The rules set by the board were approved by the Minnesota Legislature with bipartisan support last year. The Minnesota Legislature appropriated an

additional \$37 million to fund the raises in its 2024 health and human services budget bill, and the federal government will contribute a comparable amount.

The minimum wages were supposed to take effect on Jan. 1 but were delayed because the Minnesota Department of Human Services failed to complete the necessary steps to receive approval and funding from the federal government. The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services gave the necessary approval on Aug. 11.

The Department of Human Services plans to pay nursing homes the higher reimbursement rate retroactive to Jan. 1. SEIU expects nursing homes will then pay workers at the higher rate retroactively, though it would be voluntary.

The Long Term Care Imperative, an initiative from the two nursing home industry associations, said in a statement that the industry continues to face "chaos" and "uncertainty" from the state's delay in securing federal approval and that private pay residents could see retroactive charges.

"We remain hopeful that meaningful reform at DHS will be a priority for Minnesota's next governor," the Long Term Care Imperative said in a statement.

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The Labor Pavilion is located at the corner of Dan Patch and Cooper, near the Snelling Avenue entrance.

Programming at the pavilion typically includes demonstrations, contests, live music and giveaways. Members of affiliate unions host kiosks with opportunities to support their issue campaigns and learn about careers in their industries.

Find programming information at mnaflcio.org.

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UBTMN.COM

Video game workers ‘fighting tooth and nail’ for first contract with Microsoft

BLOOMINGTON – Video game workers rallied last month for a fair first contract with their Microsoft-owned publishing firm, while also standing in solidarity with workers across the country fighting layoffs and corporate greed in Microsoft’s gaming studios.

Members of Activision Quality Assurance United, an affiliate of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), held “Save Our Devs” rallies Aug. 18 at Activision worksites in Minnesota, Texas and California.

Union members called for a nationwide day of action after Microsoft announced in July that it would shutter some gaming studios and lay off over 3,200 workers in its XBOX division, which includes Activision. The first round of layoffs, scheduled this month, will impact 1,600 XBOX workers, including hundreds of union members.

So far, the layoffs have spared Activision Quality Assurance United members, but union steward Andrew Snell said the union wanted to join workers and gamers across the country voicing their anger over the unilateral path Microsoft has laid out for XBOX.

“It’s good for us to have a good relationship with our developers in order to have a quality game that goes out,” Snell said, add-

ing that labor law requires the company to engage workers’ union in bargaining over discretionary layoffs.

Quality assurance workers also want to keep the pressure on Microsoft to settle a first contract with their bargaining unit, which brings together about 450 workers across the three facilities, including roughly 300 members of CWA Local 7250 in Bloomington.

The unit won recognition of their union in March 2024 and opened negotiations with Microsoft five months later. The “Save Our Devs” rally came as those talks were poised to enter a third year.

Snell, a quality assurance specialist with six years of experience at Activision, said progress toward a contract has been steady, with the two sides meeting three days per month.

Outstanding issues include wages and job security. Union members also want to secure workplace accommodations for those who need them, pointing to a lack of transparency and consistency in Activision’s office policies.

“I’ll go to my manager with a question about a particular policy, and they’ll come back with something,” Snell said. “Then I’ll go ask two or three other managers for



Activision workers march from their office in Bloomington to demonstrate along Old Shakopee Road during the “Save Our Devs” national day of action. Union Advocate photo

someone else, and they’ll all have different answers. So it kind of depends on which manager you ask until you go and ask somebody higher up. It would be helpful if people were all on the same page.”

A union contract would accomplish just that, and nearly 50 union members joined the rally in Bloomington to let Microsoft know they are running out of

patience with the bargaining process.

“We’re all kind of feeling that pinch,” Snell said. “It’s taken two years. It’s taken a really long time. We’re fighting tooth and nail just to get this contract done, but we’re getting closer.”

Learn more about forming a union in the video game industry at uvw-cwa.org.

– Michael Moore, UA editor

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CEO pay soars as workers struggle with affordability

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

That marks “a new, shameful high,” AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond said at press conference to unveil the findings.

Redmond also noted that President Donald Trump has raked in \$2.2 billion in income – much of it from crypto deals that cash in on his influence – since returning to the White House last year.

“Meanwhile, working Americans are struggling to feed their kids and pay their electric bills,” Redmond said.

Indeed, workers’ share of U.S. national income has fallen to its lowest level since World War II, per to the report.

Recent surveys show workers are increasingly concerned about affordability and economic uncertainty: 16% of U.S. adults cannot pay all their bills in full, 26% have skipped medical care due to cost and 37% do not have enough cash to cover a \$400 emergency expense.

The AFL-CIO’s report takes aim at several companies on the S&P 500 where CEO pay continues to soar as an outsized share of their employees rely on public assistance, like Medicaid and SNAP, to make ends meet, including Amazon, Dollar Tree, FedEx, McDonald’s and Walmart.

Last summer, as part of the “Big, Beautiful Bill,” Trump and Republican majorities slashed federal support programs to pay for tax cuts that overwhelmingly benefit the wealthiest Americans – a sign of misplaced priorities in Washington, Redmond said.

“There’s a better economy we can build for working people,” he added. “That’s why the labor movement will continue to fight for every worker to have a union contract that begins to level the playing field and ensures they take home the share of the profit they create.”

Find the report online at paywatch.org.

Hometown hoarders

Nationwide, the average ratio for CEO-to-worker pay last year was 312-to-1. But at six Minnesota-based, publicly traded firms, that ratio was even greater:

- **Life Time Group Holdings:** 1,814-to-1 (\$15.2 million)
- **Target:** 794-to-1 (\$21.8 million)
- **UnitedHealth Group:** 748-to-1 (\$60.9 million)
- **Best Buy:** 542-to-1 (\$16.1 million)
- **Ecolab:** 326-to-1 (\$17.4 million)
- **3M:** 316-to-1 (\$21 million)



Cement Masons mark 15 years of partnering with tribal communities

Cement Masons Local 633 continues to partner with area tribal communities on a summer pre-apprenticeship training program, now in its 15th year, sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The union held a graduation ceremony July 31 at its training center in New Brighton at the conclusion of the 10-week program. Twelve Native American teenagers from tribes in Minnesota, all recent high-school graduates, completed the program. So did three from Wisconsin tribes. MnDOT included participants from Wisconsin this year because of the agreement between the two states for the soon-to-be-started Blatnik Bridge construction project connecting Duluth and Superior. The graduates came from several tribes, including Red Lake, Leech Lake,

White Earth, Fon du Lac, Bois Forte, Mil Lacs and the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in Wisconsin. Graduates learned the basics of what cement masons do on the job, like pouring and etching concrete for roads and sidewalks and residential work on curbs and gutters. The graduation ceremony featured traditional drumming, speeches from graduates and instructors, and a showcase of work done over the course of the program by participants like Dehlin Sam and Virgil Benjamin, members of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe who are pictured above etching their tribal nation’s logo into cement.

–Photos by Vince Muzik courtesy of Fair Contracting Foundation of Minnesota

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Court filing: Undercover agents sent to churches, parks, union halls to gather intel on 'vast and irrational conspiracy'

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The filings also unearthed a diagram produced by DHS to show 18 organizations allegedly leading "The Conspiracy." They include the Minnesota AFL-CIO, the Service Employees, the Minneapolis Federation of Educators and the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE).

Attorney Kevin Riach, who filed the motion, said DHS investigators "conjured up a vast and irrational conspiracy" without any criminal predicate.

Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bernie Burnham and other labor leaders called it an attempt to criminalize dissent.

"The Minnesota AFL-CIO and several of our affiliated unions are being targeted simply because our state's labor movement stood in solidarity with our immigrant union members and neighbors when our state was under siege this past winter," Burnham said.

"Minnesotans and most people across our country have rejected this administration's attempts to demonize immigrants. They are now bringing back McCarthyism to paint unions and organizations that advocate for workers and families as threats to the nation."

The motion for discovery exposing the surveillance measures used here last winter seeks to compel DHS to provide a fuller picture of how its agents spied on Minnesota unions, nonprofits and activists.

Riach filed the motion on behalf of Isaac Sant, one of 15 Minnesotans, including some union members, charged in June with conspiracy to impede or injure a federal officer as part of a coordinated Justice Department operation. Sant also faces interstate stalking charges for allegedly following an ICE vehicle to Hudson, Wis.

Unions and civil rights groups roundly condemned the charges.

In a public statement, 50 organizations accused the Trump administration of weaponizing the Justice Department to punish a few activists for a historic campaign of popular resistance to Metro Surge.

The statement, signed by the Minnesota AFL-CIO, Education



Communications Workers (CWA) Local 7250 President Kieran Knutson speaks during a public demonstration outside Target's corporate offices in Minneapolis. As part of its surveillance campaign during Operation Metro Surge, federal agents issued administrative summons to obtain information on the union's recent political spending.

Union Advocate photos



Minneapolis Federation of Educators President Marcia Howard calls on Target to "make good" by the community and denounce the surveillance of unions and other groups.

Minnesota, the Minnesota Nurses Association and 13 other union groups, decries that the charges come from "the

very same (agency) that refuses to investigate or press charges in the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti."

The 15 protesters charged were among thousands of Minnesotans who rose up to defend their neighbors – tracking ICE agents, alerting communities to their presence, documenting their actions and demonstrating in the streets.

Organized labor lent critical support to those efforts – and federal agents clearly took notice, MAPE member Alec Stewart, one of the activists facing charges, said.

Stewart, a forestry worker for the State of Minnesota, joined a press conference last month outside Target headquarters in downtown Minneapolis, where labor, faith and immigrant organizations called on Minnesota's large companies to publicly reject political surveillance and retaliation.

"The revelation of Operation Puppet Master exposes that while the government was targeting immigrant communities, tearing families apart, abducting children and murdering folks in the street, they were also attempting to disrupt and dismantle one of the facets of Minnesota that makes us so unique," Stewart said. "That is our strong and unified labor movement."

"They were doing this simply because our connections and our community solidarity were so effective."

Postal Workers union warns against privatization, threats to mail-in voting

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Board of Governors and the president's increasingly aggressive attempts to curb mail-in voting.

"This is a critical time for the USPS, and we need leaders at the top who understand this important institution and are committed to public service," Dave Cook, president of the APWU's St. Paul local, said.

The Senate is likely to vote soon on four nominees to the Board of Governors who, union members say, are unqualified to oversee the agency, particularly at a time when it is under financial pressure and attempting to modernize.

Not only do the nominees lack experience with the post office or the logistics and delivery industry, but all four are Republicans, prompting concerns from Senate Democrats that Trump may be looking to consolidate his power over a historically bipartisan board.

Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.) aired those concerns in a letter to GOP leadership earlier this month, warning that an "imbalance in representation would be unprecedented and would undermine public confidence in the Board's ability to serve the public interest above any partisan political aims."

At the rally, APWU members urged Minnesota's senators, Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith, to vote against Trump's nominees. Cook said he worries that the administration's ultimate aim is greater privatization of the Postal Service.

"The deck is being stacked against us politically," Cook said. "If we keep getting leaders who want to privatize it, then that's the way it's going to go. They will take the services that we provide, jack up the prices and make big profits."

Supporters of privatization point to the Postal Service's financial woes, and the agency - which operates without taxpayer support - recently leveraged its retiree-benefit funds to cover operating costs.



Members of the American Postal Workers Union march with community supporters outside the Eagan post office. Union Advocate photo

Workers say a better approach would be to allow the USPS to diversify its pension investments, limited by law to U.S. Treasury securities, to seek higher yields. The alternative, Cook said, is cutting hours and services at postal counters, raising prices for mail and packages and closing post offices.

"We are not a business," he said. "We are not designed to run as a business. And trying to run us as a business is a big part of what's gone wrong."

Workers also blasted efforts by Trump and some congressional Republicans to

undermine public trust in voting by mail. Despite voting by mail himself, Trump has long spread misinformation and debunked conspiracy theories that connect voting by mail to election fraud.

Passing the SAVE America Act, which would limit mail-in voting, has become the administration's top legislative priority. And Trump signed an executive order in March - since tied up in a legal challenge - that creates roadblocks for mail-in voters and seeks to expand federal access to states' voter information.

Cook said USPS employees consider

mail-in balloting a "core service that we provide" and one that is growing in popularity locally and nationally.

"Every postal worker takes pride in serving postal customers and we clearly have a stake in protecting the USPS, but we're not in this alone, everyone has a stake in what happens to the USPS in coming weeks," said Cook. "We need people to reach out to their members of Congress, regardless of what side of the aisle they are on."

The APWU represents about 200,000 postal employees nationwide.



**Labor Day
greetings
to all union
families!**

**Iron Workers
Local 512**



**On Labor Day let us
remember the men
and women that have
fought tirelessly for
Workers Rights.**

United we Stand.

Happy Labor Day!

— A message from the Saint Paul Building & Construction Trades Council.

Guest Commentary

New Labor Commissioner aims to increase awareness of workplace rights, responsibilities

By Kate Perushek

As we celebrate Labor Day, I am honored to begin a new role as commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI). For seven years, I have served at DLI, and this new role is a continuation of the same commitment that has guided me throughout my career: protecting worker rights, strengthening worker safety and ensuring that Minnesotans can live and work in environments that are equitable, healthy and safe.

My commitment to workers was shaped early in my career, long before I came to DLI. Working as a Spanish interpreter in a public middle school, I learned how much trust matters – how important it is to communicate clearly, listen carefully and make sure that people understand their rights and receive excellent service. Those lessons stayed with me and guide how I think about public service today.

Over the past seven years at DLI, I've had the privilege of working closely with Minnesota's labor community in several roles, including deputy commissioner, assistant commissioner and director of legislative affairs. Before joining DLI, I worked in leadership positions at the Legislature, including serving as legislative director to the Speaker of the House, where I helped pass the minimum-wage increase and the Women's Economic Security Act.

In each of those positions, one thing has remained constant: this work is about the people. It is about the worker who deserves a safe job site, the parent who needs time to care for a sick child, the family that depends on a fair wage, and the employee who wants to do right by the people they employ.

Gov. Tim Walz understands that. Under his leadership, Minnesota has made historic progress for workers, pass-



Perushek

ing the largest set of workplace protections enacted in a generation. These provisions have strengthened working families, expanded worker knowledge and given Minnesotans a greater voice on the job. Minnesotans now have earned sick and safe time, Paid Leave and increased minimum wages – by more than 20% – to better provide for themselves and their families.

Workers in meat and poultry have stronger protections. Construction workers have greater wage protections. The progress under Gov. Walz reflects a simple but powerful belief: when workers are protected, Minnesota is stronger.

But laws alone don't change lives. People must know what those rights mean, how to use them and where to turn when they need help. That's why our DLI staff members have focused so deeply on education and outreach. We know that when workers understand their rights, workplaces become safer, families become stronger and communities become more stable.

From Sept. 13-19, DLI will host its third annual Workplace Rights Week to educate Minnesotans about their rights and responsibilities in the workplace. We invite employees and employers alike to learn more and take part in scheduled events at dli.mn.gov/rights-week.

I am proud to lead an agency and team that works together to serve Minnesotans with fairness, safety and opportunity. As we celebrate Labor Day, I look ahead with confidence and purpose, committed to helping make Minnesota the best place to live, work and raise a family.



This Labor Day, MNA thanks the thousands of union members who stand with nurses.

SOLIDARITY!



MNA
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Wishing a happy and safe Labor Day to all workers!



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Happy Labor Day to
our union family!

We are proud to be part of our diverse and powerful Union Family. We stand in solidarity with ALL workers as we build the public schools we all deserve.

St. Paul Federation of Educators Local 28 is affiliated with Education Minnesota, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and the AFL-CIO.



Minutes of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation

JUNE 10, 2026

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, Butts, Cook, Gibbons, Guertin, Hoerth, Madden, Michelson, Peterson, Roth, Sansom, Schmidt, Seath, Tastad-Damer and Varco. Excused were Engeldorf, Gale, Hill, Hunt, Luneburg, Markham-Kocurek, Mullin, and Ryan. Absent: Edwards, Slattery, Strom and Vanderport.

President Peterson read the Code of Conduct. The RLF 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 Bernadine Engeldorf, Secretary-Treasurer, and Perry Schmidt, Vice President.

CREDENTIALS

Credentials were received from Saint Paul Federation of Educators Local 28. President Peterson administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates in attendance.

COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES JUNE 10, 2026

COPE met in regular session on the above date and was called to order by President Peterson at 5 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beedle, Beissel, Butts, Cook, Gibbons, Guertin, Hoerth, Madden, Michelson, Peterson, Roth, Sansom, Schmidt, Seath, Tastad-Damer and Varco. Excused were Engeldorf, Gale, Hill, Hunt, Luneburg, Markham-Kocurek, Mullin, and Ryan. Absent: Edwards, Lohmann, Mayer, Slattery, Strom and Vanderport.

Items to come before this committee included:

- The Ramsey and Washington County Labor Assemblies support the SPRLF recommending that the MN AFL-CIO grant labor endorsement to the following legislative candidates: Angela Thompson, House District 33A; Aisha Elmquist, HD 40A; Cole Birkeland, HD 41A; Jen Fox, HD 41B; Sebastian Ellefson, HD 65B; Nat Smith, Senate District 33; and Sam Rosemark, SD 44.

The Chisago and Dakota County Labor Assemblies support the SPRLF recommending that the MN AFL-CIO grant labor endorsement to the following legislative candidates: Tim Dummer, HD 28A; Daniel Schmidt, HD 28B; Hunter Cantrell, HD 55B; Jenaro Delgado, HD 57A; Ed

Fellows, HD 58B; Max Glenna, SD 28; and Mark Legvold, SD 58.

The Ramsey and Dakota County Labor Assemblies support the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation recommending that the MN AFL-CIO grant labor endorsement to the following legislative candidates: Meg Luger-Nikolai, HD 64A; Leigh Finke, HD 66A; Liz Reyer, SD 52; and Erin Maye Quade, SD 56.

The Dakota County Labor Assembly supports the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation recommending that the MN AFL-CIO grant labor endorsement to Steven Schroer, SD 57.

The following candidates are eligible for the MN AFL-CIO friendly incumbent process and completed a candidate questionnaire: Josiah Hill, HD 33B; Brion Curran, HD 36B; David Gottfried, HD 40B; Peter Fisher, HD 44A; Bianca Virnig, HD 52B; Mary Frances Clardy, HD 53A; Rick Hansen, HD 53B; Robert Bierman, HD 56A; John Huot, HD 56B; Dave Pinto, HD 64B; Athena Hollins, HD 66B; Heather Gustafson, SD 36; John Marty, SD 40; Lindsey Port, SD 55; Erin Murphy, SD 64; Clare Oumou Verbeten, SD 66; and Fong Hawj, SD 67.

President Peterson stated that there are additional legislative candidates to be screened, as well as county commissioners.

M/S/C TO RECOMMEND TO THE DELEGATE BODY TO SUPPORT THE SAINT PAUL REGIONAL LABOR FEDERATION RECOMMENDATIONS THAT THE MINNESOTA AFL-CIO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO THE ABOVE CANDIDATES LISTED.

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES JUNE 10, 2026

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 updated the committee on the National AFL-CIO Convention that ended today, the Greater Twin Cities United Way Action Day being held July 30 at Allianz Field, and participation in the Minnesota State Fair Labor Day Parade.

- ORGANIZING: UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS: AFSCME, ATU Local 1005, Minnesota Nurses Association, NALC Branch 28, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa, and SEIU Local 284, gave updates on their organizing activities.

M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2026 MINNESOTA STATE FAIR LABOR DAY PARADE.

M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO THE SHEET METAL WORKERS LOCAL 10 GOLF TOURNAMENT BEING HELD JULY 11 AT OAK MARSH GOLF COURSE.

M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO THE IUPAT DISTRICT 82 23RD ANNUAL PATCH GOLF FUNDRAISER BEING HELD JULY 28.

M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO THE LABORERS' FAMILY FUN-RAISER AND

PICNIC BEING HELD ON AUG. 16.

M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO THE NINTH ANNUAL HOMES FOR OUR TROOPS GOLF TOURNAMENT TO BE HELD ON AUG 16.

M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO BECOME A BRONZE SPONSOR AT A COST OF \$500 TO THE MINNESOTA BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL'S FOURTH ANNUAL YELLOW RIBBON RIBFEST TO BE HELD ON SEPT 19.

• THANK YOU NOTES received from NALC Branch 9 for the RLF's \$200 contribution to their annual MDA Bowl-A-Thon, NALC Branch 28 for their annual MDA Bowl-A-Thon and winners of the History Day Prize Labor Award for the RLF's continued sponsorship through the Union Advocate newspaper.

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

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Acting Secretary-Treasurer Mary Sansom reported on the financial status of the Federation as of May 2026. The report was accepted as read.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Peterson gave a report on the National AFL-CIO Convention and will be submitting the Minnesota State Fair marching unit application.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- Michael Madden reported on behalf of the Chisago County Labor Assembly. Union actions were discussed. Next meeting will be on the fourth Tuesday of the month via zoom at 6 p.m.

- Brian Beedle reported on behalf of the Washington County Labor Assembly. Legislative screenings were discussed. We supported the State Retirees fundraiser. Planning has started on the Retiree picnic being held in August. AFSCME affiliation was discussed. If you are interested in participating, please contact the RLF with your email information. We will be continuing our Washington County Labor Assembly Scholarship for 2026. Next meeting will be on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m.

- Martin Hoerth reported on behalf of the Ramsey County Labor Assembly. We will be doing more screenings. Next meeting will be on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m.

- Connie Beissel reported on behalf of the Dakota County Labor Assembly. We will have screenings for County Commissioner, School Board, City Council and Mayors. If you have a union member running for office and would like them to be endorsed, please contact Kera or Colleen. Next meeting will be on the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Delegate Peter Weber, Carpenters Local 322 made a motion to have the U of MN golf course sale money go to infrastructure instead of general fund. Motion was ruled out of order by the chair.

NEW BUSINESS

President Peterson called for a floor vote on the COPE Committee's recommendation that the MN AFL-CIO grant Labor Endorsement to: Tim Dummer, HD 28A; Daniel Schmidt, HD 28B; Angela Thompson, HD 33A; Josiah Hill, HD 33B; Brion Curran, HD 36B; Aisha Elmquist, HD 40A; David Gottfried, HD 40B; Cole Birkeland, HD 41A; Jen Fox, HD 41B; Peter Fisher, HD 44A; Bianca Virnig, HD 52B; Mary Frances Clardy, HD 53A; Rick Hansen, HD 53B; Hunter Cantrell, HD 55B; Robert Bierman, HD 56A; John Huot, HD 56B; Jenaro Delgado, HD 57A; Brian Cohn, HD 57B; Ed Fellows, HD 58B; Meg Luger-Nikolai, HD 64A; Dave Pinto, HD 64B; Sebastian Ellefson, HD 65B; Leigh Finke, HD 66A; Athena Hollins, HD 66B; Max Glenna, SD 28; Nat Smith, SD 33; Heather Gustafson, SD 36; John Marty, SD 40; Sam Rosemark, SD 44; Liz Reyer, SD 52; Lindsey Port, SD 55; Erin Maye Quade, SD 56; Steven Schroer, SD 57; Mark Legvold, SD 58; Erin Murphy, SD 64; Clare Oumou Verbeten, SD 66; Fong Hawj, SD 67.

M/S/C TO RECOMMEND THAT THE MINNESOTA AFL-CIO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO THE ABOVE CANDIDATES LISTED.

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

Submitted by,
MARY SANSOM
Acting Secretary-Treasurer

JULY 8, 2026

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, Butts, Cook, Engeldorf, Fridgen, Gale, Gibbons, Guertin, Hill, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, Michelson, Mullin, Peterson, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Slattery, Tastad-Damer and Varco. Excused were Edwards, Hoerth, Hunt, Luneburg, Roth, Seath. Absent: Strom.

President Peterson read the Code of Conduct as printed above in the June 10, 2026, minutes.

GUEST SPEAKER

John Ewaldt, Minnesota Nurses Association, spoke to the delegation regarding the union's upcoming strike against Hazelden Betty Ford. This is members' first contract negotiation, and the strike vote was overwhelming. Please join MNA on the picket line starting Wednesday, July 15. The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation, as well as the Minnesota AFL-CIO, granted strike sanctions.

CREDENTIALS

Credentials were received from APWU Saint Paul Local 65. President Peterson administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates in attendance.

COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES JULY 8, 2026

COPE met in regular session on the above date and was called to order by President Peterson at 5 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beedle, Beissel, Butts, Cook, Engeldorf, Fridgen, Gale, Gibbons, Guertin, Hill, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, Michelson, Mullin, Peterson, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Slattery, Tastad-Damer and Varco. Excused were Edwards, Hoerth, Hunt, Luneburg, Roth, Seath. Absent: Lohmann, Mayer and Strom.

Items to come before this committee included:

- The Ramsey and Washington County Labor Assemblies support the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation recommending that the Minnesota AFL-CIO grant labor endorsement to the following candidates for State Legislature: Liz Lee, House District 67A; Judy Seeberger, Senate District 41; and Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger, SD 47.

M/S/C TO RECOMMEND TO THE DELEGATE BODY TO SUPPORT THE SAINT PAUL REGIONAL LABOR FEDERATION RECOMMENDATIONS THAT THE MINNESOTA AFL-CIO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO LIZ LEE, HD 67A; JUDY SEEBERGER, SD 41; AND AMANADA HEMMINGSEN-JAEGER, SD 47.

- Board members requested the Saint Paul RLF to screen in various communities. Staff will begin to schedule screening for Ramsey and Washington County Commissioners.

- THANK YOU NOTES received from the Minnesota DFL for the RLF's \$1,500 contribution in support of the Minnesota DFL's 14th Annual Humphrey-Mondale dinner.

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES JULY 8, 2026

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 updated the committee on the resignations of Bob Ryan, Leah VanDassor and Stacey Vanderport from the Executive Board and the appointments of Marty Fridgen and Justin Recla as replacements. Peterson also gave updates on the Minnesota AFL-CIO Geographical Representative and Trustee nominations and elections; the Minnesota Nurses Association requesting strike sanctions; attendance capped at 10 participants per union in the Minnesota State Fair Labor Day Parade; and the reduction of funding to the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's AFL-CIO Community Services Programing from Greater Twin Cities United Way.
- ORGANIZING UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS: ATU Local 1005 and SEIU

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 19)

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18)

Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa gave updates on their organizing activities.

• **M/S/C TO APPOINT MARTY FRIDGEN, EDUCATION MN SOUTH WASHINGTON COUNTY LOCAL 1125, AND JUSTIN RECLA, USW LOCAL 11-418, AS MINNESOTA AFL-CIO GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIVES.**

• **M/S/C FOR THE SAINT PAUL RLF TO GRANT STRIKE SANCTIONS TO THE MINNESOTA NURSES ASSOCIATION.**

• **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$300 CONTRIBUTION TO THE NINTH ANNUAL MINNESOTA SHOOT FOR A CURE.**

• **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$400 CONTRIBUTION TO THE MINNEAPOLIS BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL'S 30TH ANNUAL DOLLARS AGAINST DIABETES.**

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 June 2026. The report was accepted as read.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Peterson reported that Leah VanDassor and Stacey Vanderport are resigning off the Executive Board. Rick Varco has accepted a position at Ramsey County and will also be resigning off the board, and union brother Bob Ryan will be retiring and he will be resigning off the board. Other updates included: the Saint Paul RLF has granted strike sanctions to the Minnesota Nurses Association; sign-up sheets are available at the meeting for those interested in participating in the Labor Day Parade at the Minnesota State Fair, with attendance capped at 10 participants per union; the Minnesota AFL-CIO Geographical representative, trustee nominations and elections will begin next month, with the Saint Paul RLF allowed nine seats.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

• Michael Madden reported on behalf of the Chisago County Labor

Assembly. Thanks and appreciation go out to the Minnesota Nurses Association requesting attendance to the Hazelden Betty Ford strike. The assembly meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month via zoom at 6 p.m.

• Brian Beedle reported on behalf of the Washington County Labor Assembly. The assembly participated in joint political screening at its last meeting. Applications will be processed for the Washington County Labor Assembly Scholarship for 2026, and the results should be available next month. Planning continues for the St. Croix Valley Retirees Annual Picnic. The assembly meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

• Connie Beissel reported on behalf of the Dakota County Labor Assembly. The assembly will have screenings for county commissioner and probably the mayor of Eagan. Requests have been issued for donations for the assembly's annual school supply drive. As the AFL-CIO passed a resolution to boycott Target for school supplies, the assembly will be utilizing other stores this year. Its meetings are held the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

President Peterson called for floor votes on the COPE Committee's recommendation that the MN AFL-CIO grant Labor Endorsement to: Liz Lee, HD 67A; Judy Seeberger, SD 41; and Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger, SD 47.

• **M/S/C TO RECOMMEND THAT THE MINNESOTA AFL-CIO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO LIZ LEE.**

• **MOTION TO RECOMMEND THAT THE MINNESOTA AFL-CIO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO JUDY SEEBERGER. MOTION SECONDED BUT FAILED TO PASS THE DELEGATE BODY BY 2/3 MAJORITY REQUIRED TO CARRY.**

• **M/S/C TO RECOMMEND THAT THE MINNESOTA AFL-CIO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO AMANDA HEMMINGSEN-JAEGER**

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

Submitted by,
BERNADINE ENGELDRF
Secretary-Treasurer

Retirees to meet Sept. 16

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation Retirees will meet Sept. 16 at noon at the Saint Paul Labor Center, 353 West 7th St.

Meetings are open to retired members of unions

affiliated with the SPRLF. Retirees interested in learning more about the group are always welcome to attend.

For more information, call or text Jeanne Surdo, president, at 651-283-8896.

Notice of endorsements, nominations

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation may consider recommendations for granting labor endorsement in congressional, state legis-

lative and local races at its delegates' meeting Sept. 9.

For more information on the SPRLF endorsement process, call 651-222-3787.

LABOR ENDORSED

GENERAL ELECTION • NOVEMBER 3, 2026

STATE OFFICERS

Governor: Amy Klobuchar
Lt. Governor: Ben Schierer
Attorney General: Keith Ellison
Secretary of State: Steve Simon
Auditor: Zack Filipovich

U.S. HOUSE

District 4: Betty McCollum
District 5: Ilhan Omar

RAMSEY COUNTY

County Board of Commissioners:

- **District 3: Garrison McMurtrey**
- **District 4: Rena Moran**
- **District 6: Mai Chong Xiong**

County Attorney: John Choi

Saint Paul School Board (ISD 625):
Stephanie Anderson, Omar Syed, Uriah Ward

White Bear Lake School Board (ISD 624): **Amanda McFarlane, Chris Streiff Oji, Amy Puschinsky, Ryan Vernosh**

DAKOTA COUNTY

County Board of Commissioners:

- **District 1: Mike Slavik**
- **District 2: Laurie Halverson**
- **District 3: Joe Atkins**

Eagan Mayor: Mike Supina

WASHINGTON COUNTY

County Board of Commissioners:

- **District 2: Stan Karwoski**
- **District 4: Karla Bigham**

County Attorney: Kevin Magnuson

Forest Lake School Board (ISD 831):
Jill Christenson, Andi Courneya, Claire Luger

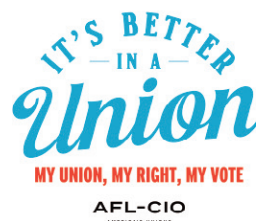
MN SENATE

District 20: Jason Lohmann
District 28: Maxwell Glenna
District 33: Nat Smith
District 36: Heather Gustafson
District 39: Mary Kunesch
District 40: John Marty
District 44: Sam Rosemark
District 52: Liz Reyer
District 53: Paul Cumings
District 55: Lindsey Port
District 56: Erin Maye Quade
District 57: Steven Schroer
District 58: Mark Legvold
District 64: Erin Murphy
District 65: Robyn Gulley
District 66: Clare Oumou Verbeten
District 67: Fong Hawj

MN HOUSE

District 28A: Tim Dummer
District 28B: Dan Schmidt
District 33A: Angela Thompson
District 33B: Josiah Hill
District 36A: Jim DeMay
District 36B: Brion Curran
District 40A: Aisha Elmquist
District 40B: David Gottfried
District 41A: Cole Birkeland
District 41B: Jen Fox
District 44A: Peter Fischer
District 52A: Christos Jensen
District 52B: Bianca Virnig
District 53A: Mary Frances Clardy
District 53B: Rick Hansen
District 55A: Jess Hanson
District 55B: Hunter Cantrell
District 56A: Robert Bierman
District 56B: John Huot
District 57A: Jenaro "JD" Delgado
District 57B: Brian Cohn
District 58A: Kristi Pursell
District 58B: Ed Fellows
District 64A: Meg Luger Nikolai
District 64B: Dave Pinto
District 65B: Sebastian Ellefson
District 66A: Leigh Finke
District 66B: Athena Hollins

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