



The St. Paul Union Advocate

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

October 2026

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

A brush with solidarity at the Fair



Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) District Council 82 members and their families march through the Minnesota State Fairgrounds on Labor Day, joining the marching unit sponsored annually by the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO. The parade has become the Twin Cities' biggest Labor Day gathering of union members in recent years. Find more parade photos on Page 10 and at facebook.com/SaintPaulRLF.

Union Advocate photo

Two Allina Health bargaining units strike as officials weigh proposed merger

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

Two groups of Allina Health workers, both seeking first union contracts, went on strike last month as the Twin Cities health system and California-based Sutter Health pressed their case for a proposed merger, currently under scrutiny from Attorney General Keith Ellison.

Hospice nurses at Allina, members of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa, wrapped up a seven-day strike Sept. 17, the same day doctors at Allina's Mercy and Unity Hospitals, members of Doctors Council-SEIU, ended their four-day walkout.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

Unions, athletes bash bill to overhaul college sports, ban collective bargaining

By Mark Gruenberg
PAI Union News Service

Led by the AFL-CIO, its sports caucus and college athletes, unions and their allies are mounting a last-ditch drive to block a massive multi-billion-dollar giveaway to college sports leagues, the NCAA and particularly to football powers – all at the expense of athletes.

The Senate planned a final vote on the so-called "Protect College Sports Act" the week of Sept. 21, but opponents' prospects were not looking good at press time.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)



MY UNION, MY RIGHT, MY VOTE

AFL-CIO

Everything is on the line for workers and our unions this election.
Labor 2026 is your opportunity to make a difference.

Doorknock

Oct. 21, 2 to 6 p.m.

USW Local 11-418,
Cottage Grove

- Join other labor volunteers as we talk to union members in key legislative districts

Go to stpaulunions.org/volunteer for more information

Phone Banks

Tuesdays & Wednesdays
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Saint Paul Labor Center

- Phone bank with the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation afternoons and evenings

Events Near You

www.aflcio.mn/labor2026Find Labor 2026 events
happening across Minnesota

Voting Early?

Find a list of labor-endorsed
candidates on Page 11

Go Figure

\$1,100

Cost increase for the average Minnesota household as a result of tariffs imposed by President Trump in 2025

3,900

Manufacturing jobs lost in Minnesota due to 2025 tariffs

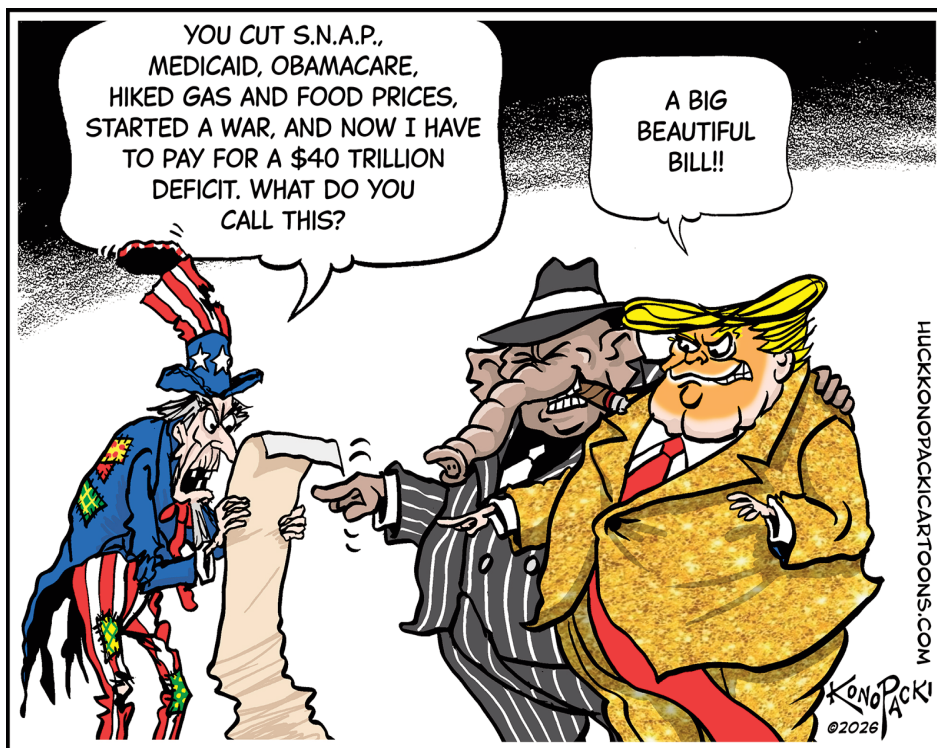
\$2 billion

Tariffs' impact on Minnesota's gross domestic product (GDP)

50%

Newly announced tariff rate on most goods from Canada

Source: Midwest Economic Policy Institute



Labor Voices: Nazra Ahmed and Phillip Cryan

A Somali home care worker's experience during Metro Surge

This is the Nazra Ahmed's experience during Operation Metro Surge. A home care worker and member of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa, Ahmed told her story to Phillip Cryan, the union's executive vice president.

When Operation Metro Surge first happened, I was talking with my family: "How are we going to get groceries?" We were scared. Somebody could kill us, because we're Somali. And President Trump is just spreading all this hate against us.

There were Somali people who wouldn't leave their houses because of their trauma from the Somali civil war. They were used to seeing dead bodies everywhere during the war. Because my people, we didn't even go to therapists to heal after the war, displacement and coming to the U.S. as refugees. We never sat down with someone to talk about it all. When Trump was reelected for a second term, I couldn't sleep for night after night. I was back in the civil war in Somalia in my mind. Fear had damaged me, too.

My son needs a special diet. He's non-verbal. "What's going to happen to him if ICE takes me?" It was a horrible feeling.

Everybody in the Somali community was saying: How can this be happening here, in the United States? But it didn't go the way we'd feared. Minnesotans stood up and said: "No. You're not going to get my neighbor." We have people here who actually believe in us, who love us. The opposite thing to what we had feared happened. I'd go to the grocery store, and people would say, "We love Somalis." They would say, "We love you."

Then I felt power. We have power. We have people behind us. Trump thought people wouldn't have documents, but well over 90% of Somalis here are American citizens. And we're not a scared people. We stood up to him.

Once we realized they weren't going to be able to do much against us Somali-Americans, I started checking in on my neighbors. When I first bought this house a couple years ago, I met one of my neighbors. He had legal status, not citizenship

or a green card but political asylum. He has worked on my house, fixing things, doing my kitchen. He and his wife don't speak much English, so we use Google Translate to talk to each other. He has asylum and his kids are citizens, but his wife is undocumented. And they have a 9-month-old baby who was born premature and has special needs. I was scared for them.

"How can I help them?" I talked to another SEIU organizer and my son's therapist, and we figured out together how to pay their rent, and to go to the grocery store for them. But then ICE took his wife one day while she was on her way to work as a house cleaner. They have three other kids, and the baby. And he's looking after all of them.

He and his wife are very hard-working. They don't ask anyone for help. They're proud. I could see that he was feeling shame about accepting help. But I told him: We're family. He started crying, and he was saying he will never forget us. I told him: That's why we're here. We're here for each other. We are all God's children. We paid his rent from December to March. Now he feels safe enough that he can go back to work, so we aren't paying his rent anymore. And he has a pro-bono lawyer helping his wife.

I never thought I would see ICE come out to the suburbs. But one day, all of a sudden, they stopped me in my car. And that was my nightmare.

My son had therapy that day. We had been carrying our identification everywhere because we never knew what was going to happen. We had just finished his therapy and were coming home. I saw this big SUV behind me. Right away, I felt like, "Uh oh. Is that them?" But then I thought, "Maybe I'm overthinking this, it's nothing." But they just kept coming coming behind me. And then I saw: There's no license plate. That's when I knew for sure. That's when I slowed down and stopped.

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Letters

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

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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

And the masked people came out. How could I know if they were even real agents? There's no license plate, no name badge. Just a number on their chest. So you don't know who you're even talking to. Oh my God. I didn't show them, but my heart was sinking. And I started shaking. One of them approached the car.

"Are you an American citizen?"

"Yes, I am. Why are you guys doing this?"

"We're just doing our job, you know."

"What would you think if this happened to you? Or your sister? Or your wife? If someone harassed them like this?"

"We're just doing our jobs."

"Okay. But why are you covering your face to do your jobs? I want to see you... Have you ever heard of Al Qaeda? Al Shabab?"

"Yes."

"That's exactly how they look. They look like you. That's why I'm scared now."

"No, no. You're doing great. You can just go ahead and go."

I couldn't go. I was stopped there, shaking in my car, for about 10 minutes. When you have that kind of anxiety, you can't drive a car. Every time bad things like that happen, you flash back: back home, the civil war. It's all in there somewhere – the memory of people attacking you. So I had to breathe and say to myself, "It's okay, it's okay."

When he pulled me over, he had been thinking that maybe I would yell at him or call him names. But I never call people names. You're not going to win by calling people names. The only way you can win, with the cowards, is by showing them strength. If they see that you're scared, they will come after you. That's the way I've always done it: Anyone who's coming after me, attacking me, I will smile at them and talk to them. I'll attack them, but in the nicest way: Hit them in their heart.

When I asked what he'd do if something like this happened to his sister or his wife, I could see his eyes – that was the only part of him I could see – tear up. That got him in his heart. It's what people who are cowards try to do: they try to scare you.

But we're not going to stop for fear. We're going to go vote. We're going to knock doors and make calls. We won't be scared. Minnesotans are warriors. On Jan. 23, the day of the general strike and march, it was like -30 degrees with wind-chill, but Minnesotans didn't care! I wish I could have been there, but I couldn't bring my son with me and I didn't have a caregiver for him that day. I wish I could have been there that day with everyone. I would have brought so many sambusas.

– This essay was originally published at minnesotareformer.com.



U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum joins AFGE Local 899's commemoration of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Union Advocate photo

Commemoration comes with warning against privatization

As Transportation Security Administration agents at Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport commemorated the 25th anniversary of 9/11 last month, union leaders made a point of warning against new attempts by the Trump administration to privatize U.S. airport security.

American Federation of Government Employees Local 899 held its observance on the mezzanine level of Terminal 1, perched above the ticketing counters. Two members of Minnesota's congressional delegation, Reps. Betty McCollum and Kelly Morrison, joined the event, as did a representative of the Metropolitan Airports Commission.

Speakers mourned the lives lost on Sept. 11, 2001, and they reflected on the role TSA workers have played in protecting the nation's airways from other attacks since then.

Local 899 Secretary Emily Woods was a child when the attacks took place, but she now works as a transportation security officer at MSP, serving in the agency created by Congress after 9/11 to standardize passenger screenings in the nation's commercial airports.

"I may have been too young to understand Sept. 11 as it happened, but I understand its significance today," Woods said. "Every time I put on my TSA

uniform, I carry forward the responsibility that came from that day."

"Every day, transportation security officers carry out that important mission," Local 899 President Sharif Mehanna said. "They identify prohibited items, they respond to evolving threats and they protect millions of passengers – often under difficult conditions and without receiving the recognition they deserve."

Difficult conditions have been all too common for TSA workers during the second Trump administration. They were forced to work without pay during extended Department of Homeland Security shutdowns, and Trump's DHS appointees have sought to strip TSA officers of their union contract – a move AFGE has challenged in federal court.

Now, the administration is acting on a secretly devised plan, TSA Gold+, to privatize passenger screening at some airports. The agency recently informed AFGE of its intention to launch the program, which puts private contractors in charge of passenger screening and the screening technology itself, at three airports next year: Tampa, Fla.; Charleston, S.C.; and Des Moines, Iowa.

At MSP Airport, union leaders and federal lawmakers called the privatiza-

tion scheme a dangerous departure from the system that has worked to protect travelers in the 25 years since 9/11.

Morrison said she opposes any effort to "change airport security that does not include input from the real experts, TSA employees." McCollum agreed.

"I fly in and out of a lot of airports, and every airport is different," McCollum said. "But the one thing I know is consistent is the professionalism and the training (of TSA officers). If this starts being privatized, it's going to be scattered all over. You can come in with the lowest contract? That's not who I want watching out for my constituents when they fly."

Local 899 Treasurer Neal Gosman said privatization threatens to undermine TSA officers' healthcare and pension benefits and their wage standards. But it would also come at a price to accountability, which officers take seriously.

"It takes years to get someone trained up fully; to replace us all with a privatized workforce would be a tremendous loss to federal security," Gosman said. "The message that we learned after 9/11 is that we aren't just here to do airport security, we're here to do national security. That is the oath that we take as federal employees, and we do that work every day."

– Michael Moore, UA editor

Resident physicians call on U of M to get serious in first-contract talks

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

Residents at the University of Minnesota Medical Center are fed up with their employer's "antagonistic" approach to bargaining a first union contract, and they are asking for public support in pressuring the U of M to settle a fair deal.

Resident physicians and fellows formed their union with the Committee of Interns and Residents, a Service Employees (SEIU) affiliate, in March 2025. The bargaining unit brings together nearly 1,000 medical-school graduates who treat patients under the supervision of a senior physician while training in specialized care.

Contract negotiations with the university began over a year ago, and union members' demands include fair wages, better health and dental benefits, and a matching contribution to their retirement savings, as well as language that codifies protections for immigrant and LGBTQ staff members.

But during a press conference Aug. 24 outside the U's East Bank hospital, union members said the employer has failed to match their sense of urgency at the bargaining table – slow-walking the process "to the point where they have been union-busting," CIR bargaining team member Schuyler Gaillard said.

The third-year resident, training in internal medicine and dermatology,



Dr. Schuyler Gaillard, a resident in the U of M Medical Center's internal medicine and dermatology programs, sits on the Committee of Interns and Residents-SEIU bargaining team. She described first-contract talks as "antagonistic."

Union Advocate photo

offered several examples of bad-faith bargaining by the university, including an attempt to schedule sessions in the middle of the workday without allowing members of the bargaining team paid time off to attend.

The U also has flatly refused to discuss some union proposals, while its own have

often been insulting. Supriya Reddy, a resident in the pediatrics program, recalled being among 100 CIR members who showed up to a session where university administrators made their initial wage offer.

"They sat in front of over 100 of us and offered a 1% raise, less than the cost of

Show some solidarity!

- Resident physicians and fellows at the U of M Medical Center are asking members of the public to sign onto their petition for a fair first contract at act.seiu.org/a/umn-cir-community-petition.

inflation," Reddy said. "Moreover, they proposed broad fiscal emergency language that would allow them to get rid of the raises entirely under any circumstances they choose."

As the university drags its feet at the bargaining table, Reddy said, she and other resident physicians continue to struggle with widespread burnout, understaffing, workweeks that sometimes exceed 80 hours and the rising cost of living – not to mention the burden of a debt load that averages \$250,000 for medical school graduates.

"We are proud of the care that we provide to our patients, but it is increasingly harder to be the best version of ourselves," Reddy said.

A first contract that improves residents' working conditions, Gaillard added, will improve patient care, too.

"We took an oath to protect our patients, and that starts at the bargaining table," she said. "We won't settle for anything less than what we need to continue to provide quality care for our patients."

'Protect College Sports Act' would cap athletes' share of revenues, stifle worker voice

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The House already has approved it, and two preliminary Senate votes, clearing the way for debate, passed by ratios exceeding 3-to-1.

The Senate legislation, crafted by the unlikely duo of Texas Republican Ted Cruz and Democrat Maria Cantwell of Washington, delivers on demands long sought by big-moneyed athletic departments, including a complete exemption from U.S. antitrust laws.

The bill also would shift power away from college athletes and back to athletic departments, limiting the amount athletes at any one school can collect in name, images and likenesses (NIL) fees and banning athletes from forming unions.

That provision in the bill would blow a permanent referee's whistle on the latest organizing drive among college athletes, by the women's basketball players at Oregon State University in Corvallis.

In a virtual press conference organized by the nation's largest labor federation, the AFL-CIO, last month, Sen. Chris Murphy

(D-Conn.) said the bill would protect "a system of exploitation" that is enriching colleges, administrators and coaches.

Athletes have seen their share of the \$14 to \$16 billion generated annually by the college-sports industry increase since in 2021, when the Supreme Court ruled that the NCAA's rules against paying athletes violated anti-trust laws, opening the door to NIL and other forms of compensation.

"For decades, a group of employers worked together to stop hundreds of thousands of workers from getting paid for work that generated billions of dollars every year," AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said before the press call. "As soon as those workers won the right to compensation, it became a five-alarm fire from the Capitol to the White House."

The Protect College Sports Act, supported by President Trump, would give the NCAA and the conferences complete anti-trust exemption as a "sport," not a business. "It's making illegal behavior legal," Murphy said.

Athletes in college sports "need a seat

at the bargaining table," just like the pro athletes have, Meghan Burke, executive director of the National Women's Soccer League Players Association, said.

"The Protect College Sports Act would deny them the basic right to organize," Burke added. "When the institutions responsible for setting working conditions are also responsible for policing them, something is not right. If athletes can organize, they can protect themselves."

Jada Williams, a star on the Louisiana State University, said the perennial powerhouse in women's basketball often draws capacity crowds to home games in Baton Rouge, and the team generates revenue from alumni and corporate sponsorships, too. Players are treated like professionals – and deserve a union like their peers in the pro-ranks, she said.

"I've seen my teammates forced to play through injuries," Williams said. "They get kicked off their scholarships if they're unable to play."

Meanwhile, Detroit native Jackson Pruitt, a senior football player at Temple

University in Philadelphia, said, "These schools choose to pay coaching staffs millions."

Williams and Pruitt are Black, and as NAACP Executive Director Derrick Johnson noted on the press call, most of the college presidents, coaches and boosters pushing the bill are not.

"This bill has nothing to do with protecting college athletes," Johnson said. "What makes this so offensive is to make Black athletes surrender their rights and a voice on the job for a promise" from the NCAA "that a billion dollars over several years would go to Historically Black Colleges and Universities."

"In the labor movement, we're all too familiar with what's going on when workers begin to demand a say over how they are treated, anti-union interests respond by trying to snuff out that effort," Shuler said.

She called on Congress to devote its energy to "tackling the growing problems facing working Americans, not shoring up the power of wealthy sports conferences."

Hospice nurses, doctors strike: 'We cannot pour from an empty cup any longer'

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

One day earlier, nurses and doctors formed a joint picket line outside Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis – a show of solidarity just two blocks away from Allina's corporate offices.

Healthcare workers on the picket line said their bargaining units are in similar fights with Allina negotiators, who have balked at union demands for contract provisions that would address burnout and improve caregivers' work-life balance – like paid sick days, holiday pay and overtime.

Workers were also quick to point out they would rather be caring for their patients.

"Allina forced this," Amy Rich, a hospice case manager, said. "We feel we are not being heard, that we are being taken advantage of. We work long hours to be with our patients at the most vulnerable time in their lives. But we cannot pour from an empty cup any longer."

Salaried but without the perks

The bargaining unit of about 65 hospice nurses has been in negotiations with Allina for over a year. Members voted in August with 100% approval to authorize their seven-day strike over unfair labor practices – their second strike this year, having staged a one-day walkout in July.

Nurses organized their union with SEIU Healthcare to address staffing levels, caseloads, and working conditions that, they say, impact their ability to provide high-quality hospice care.

While the two sides have reached agreement on most non-economic issues, SEIU officer Phillip Cryan said, "as soon as we get to the things that cost money, we kind of run aground."

The union says Allina has opposed changes to hospice nurses' compensation model, which affords management the perks of a salaried workforce, but not workers. Managers can demand nurses work long, irregular hours without paying a premium for excessive workloads or even working on holidays. But hospice nurses are not allowed to flex their schedules, a key piece of how salaried employment is supposed to work.

Allina's refusal to budge in last-ditch negotiations in the days before the seven-day strike left Dawn Sloneker, a hospice case manager and bargaining team member, feeling "frustrated, dismissed and disrespected."

"We are fighting for extra compensation for all the extra hours we are required to work," she said. "We are fighting for holiday pay. We are fighting for reasonable schedules that allow us to live our lives, plus much more. Our membership is united around not settling for a contract that leaves these critical priorities out."

Docs in fourth year of talks

Mercy and Unity doctors, meanwhile,



Allina hospice nurses and doctors at Unity and Mercy Hospitals combined picket lines in Minneapolis on Sept. 16. Union Advocate photos

made the decision to go on strike after three years of bargaining their first contract with Allina.

The unit of 150 hospitalists, OBGYNs, psychiatrists and critical-care physicians is holding firm for an agreement that gives members a greater say in patient care – and access to the paid-sick time they need to care for themselves and their families.

Dr. Alia Sharif, an internal medical physician, said the decision to strike "came with great trepidation," but Allina's posture at the bargaining table left members with few options.

"We are so disappointed in Allina," Sharif said. "We have come to the table repeatedly in good faith to get a contract that provides us with protections and basic rights like paid sick days, yet we have bargained for 3 years without feeling like we are making significant movement. We have been left with no choice but to strike."

'She called us angels'

What, if any, effect the strikes have on healthcare executives' public-relations campaign to win approval for Sutter's acquisition of Allina remains to be seen.

Ellison's office is currently reviewing the proposal to determine whether it is in the public interest of the people of Minnesota. Public hearings on the acquisition have seen workers, patients and



On the solidarity strike line, nurses and doctors emphasized that they are bargaining for many of the same things, like paid sick time, holiday pay and time with their families.

community members raise concerns.

But hospice nurse Suzie Smerz said she's hopeful Allina executives want to reach a deal soon.

Smerz testified at a Capitol hearing, calling the disrespect Allina has shown

hospice nurses during the bargaining process a "moral injury to us." Afterward, Allina CEO Lisa Shannon approached Smerz and apologized, Smerz said.

"She called us angels," Smerz added. "That brings me hope."



Third-year apprentice Dawn Plaisted of Roofers Local 96 is one of three women who competed in the Year 3/4 division of the regional competition. Union Advocate photos

'BEST OF THE MIDWEST'

Minnesota-based Roofers Local 96 sweeps all three divisions of regional apprenticeship competition

Roofers Local 96 hosted the "Best of the Midwest" regional apprenticeship competition at its training center in Ham Lake this year, and the local union's apprentices made good use of the home-site advantage.

Local 96 members placed first in all three divisions of the Aug. 22 competition, and seven Local 96 apprentices finished in the top four among competitors in their group.

First-place finishers in each division – Local 96's Connor Engholm in Year 1, Ethan Block in Year 2 and Luke Selander in Year 3/4 – will advance to the United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers' national apprenticeship contest in Boston next May.

Other Local 96 award placewinners included:

- Montana Scepaniak-Eisenschenk, third place in Year 1
 - Jordan Angove, second place in Year 2
 - Dawn Plaisted, second place in Year 3/4
 - Evan Bloom, fourth place in Year 3/4
- For Local 96, it was the union's first time hosting "Best of the Midwest,"

although the Ham Lake facility did host the national apprenticeship competition last year.

The Midwest region includes 17 local unions, and 10 participated in this year's competition. Local 96's training facility, which opened in 2019, left an impression on staff from visiting unions.

"When I walked in, I was astonished," Joshua Cavazos, business representative for Indiana-based Roofers Local 26, said. "It's big, it's immaculate. This is way more than any Roofers union could ask for."

Cavazos and other local leaders from the Midwest region gathered with competitors and their families for dinner in the training center the night before the competition. For many in the room, the camaraderie was what they looked forward to most about the annual event.

"The most important thing is the brotherhood – all the locals getting together for the greater good of the industry," Local 20 organizer Pedro Parra, based in Kansas City, said. "It's what sets us apart as a union – most roofers don't

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

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Roofers apprentices compete in "Best of the Midwest" at Local 96's training center.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

get any of the training and support that we get as union members. That's why it's so important for these guys to come in and show off their skills."

Parra might call it a brotherhood, but the number of female apprentices competing in "Best of the Midwest" has increased steadily in recent years.

Year 3/4 competitors included three

women this year, with Local 96's Plaisted among them. Plaisted took second in the region this year after advancing to the national competition last year – and winning it.

"Meeting all the new contestants, that's really what I look forward to," Plaisted said. "You always hope to win, but it's just fun to see how you stack up."

– Michael Moore, UA editor



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Labor-Endorsed for House 41B

Prepared and Paid for by the Jen Fox for House Committee PO Box 492 Hastings, MN 55033

Bargaining moves slowly for Macalester's newly organized unions

By Joel Haskard

Special to The Union Advocate

First, it was the undergraduates at Macalester who unionized with the United Auto Workers (UAW). Then the non-faculty staff followed suit, unionizing with the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE).

So why is Macalester dragging their feet on hammering out the needed contracts?

Undergraduate cafeteria workers get fed up

"It started with a group of cafeteria workers," student Luca Schira explained. "That was the place with the most issues for student employees. It was unsafe, and students weren't trained on most things. And then the demand (for unionization) quickly spread to all the student workers."

After connecting with students from as far as Oregon and as close as the U of M graduate students, the Macalester students decided to unionize with the United Auto Workers (UAW). They formed Macalester Undergraduate Workers Union (MUWU), the first union of undergraduate workers in Minnesota.

"UAW had the reputation for being a progressive, fighting union, and they had a high-profile strike at the time," student Xavier Honer said. "Also, we looked at

Grinnell as a model: A small liberal arts college that also started as cafeteria workers and branched out."

The hard part

The successful vote to unionize the student workers took place Feb. 25 and 26. After the initial relief and celebration came the hard part: Negotiating a contract.

Said Honer: "It started slowly, and the ICE invasion forced us to cancel one or two of our meetings. The bargaining sessions were scheduled for every other week. Beyond scheduling, there is a lot of resistance. We joke that their favorite phrase is 'the employer is not interested in hearing this proposal,' and they would only put into writing that they would follow the current law, basically doing the bare minimum already required of them."

In the meantime, MAPE at Mac was born, representing non-faculty, non-supervisory staff. They also began negotiating with the college administration over benefit and wage disputes.

How a storied liberal arts college responds

The ball was in Macalester's court. This is Macalester, the storied liberal arts college, whose mission reads: "Macalester is committed to being a preeminent liberal arts college with an educational program known for its

high standards for scholarship and its special emphasis on internationalism, multiculturalism, and service to society."

Macalester's response? They hired Felhaber Larson, which has a reputation for advising corporate clients on how to fight unionization. They have provided counsel with companies like Starbucks, for example, and are often viewed as legal defenders of anti-union policies.

Next steps

Now that summer is over, there is a break in the action as school gets rolling into the fall semester. The negotiations are expected to begin again in earnest. What will happen next?

"We need people in the community aware of what's going on and how slow Macalester is making the bargaining process," Honer said. "Joining our mailing list to keep up with our events and bargaining updates is the best place to start."

"We always appreciate anybody showing up to our events whether they're students, alumni, or just community members wanting to support us."

Show your solidarity

Find links to support student workers and their union at region4.uaw.org/local5105.

Hutchinson Health nurses vote to join MNA, look to bargain contract that protects rural care

Nurses at Hutchinson Health, part of the HealthPartners system, overwhelmingly voted last month to join the Minnesota Nurses Association.

The bargaining unit brings together more than 120 nurses who serve the birth center, emergency depart-

ment, acute care units, primary care clinic and specialty medical clinics – and are seeking a meaningful say in decisions that impact patients and their profession.

"We want to have a strong voice to continue to advocate and take care of families in our rural community," reg-

istered nurse Janelle Beilke said. "This is about standing up for our patients and community who rely on nurses delivering high-quality care at a regional hub close to home."

Hutchinson nurses also said their organizing efforts are about keeping care local for the unique patient population they serve. In 2018, Hutchinson Health was acquired by HealthPartners. In the years since then, nurses report, the acquisition has come with changes in corporate priorities that don't always put patient care first, as hospital executives make decisions without frontline nurses and patients in mind.

"The people who walk through our doors are our neighbors, friends, family members, and the people we see in our everyday lives," RN Sunnie Borth said, adding that nurses look forward to first-contract negotiations, where they plan to advocate for staffing, support and resources their patients and community depend on.

"Nurses need a seat at the table when it comes to things that affect how patients receive their care. We see firsthand what works, what does not, and what our patients need. Being part of the conversations that shape patient care means we can advocate not only for ourselves, but for the patients, families, and community we are here to serve."



Thank you, volunteers, for making
a difference in our community!

Heat's On 2026



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Labor in the Community

Heat's On volunteers ready local homeowners in need for winter

Members of St. Paul Steamfitters Pipefitters Local 455 teamed up with Minneapolis-based Local 539 and local union contractors Sept. 19 to provide no-cost heating repairs for low-income, elderly and disabled homeowners across the Twin Cities.

The annual day of service, known as Heat's On, sent two-person crews to make minor furnace repairs, check for dangerous heat-related health conditions and replace smoke detectors for homeowners identified by two area non-profit agencies, Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington County and CAP of Hennepin County.

At a home in St. Paul's Como Park neighborhood, third-year apprentices Olivia Braund of Stillwater and Jacob Michel of Carver, both members of Local 455, ran the furnace through a series of service tests. They checked the heat exchanger, tested the environment for natural gas leaks and ran a combustion analysis.

Michel also checked the gas pressure after hearing from the homeowner that a different technician had replaced a valve

on the furnace earlier that week. Michel wasn't surprised to discover the pressure was well below the recommended 3.5 inches of water column.

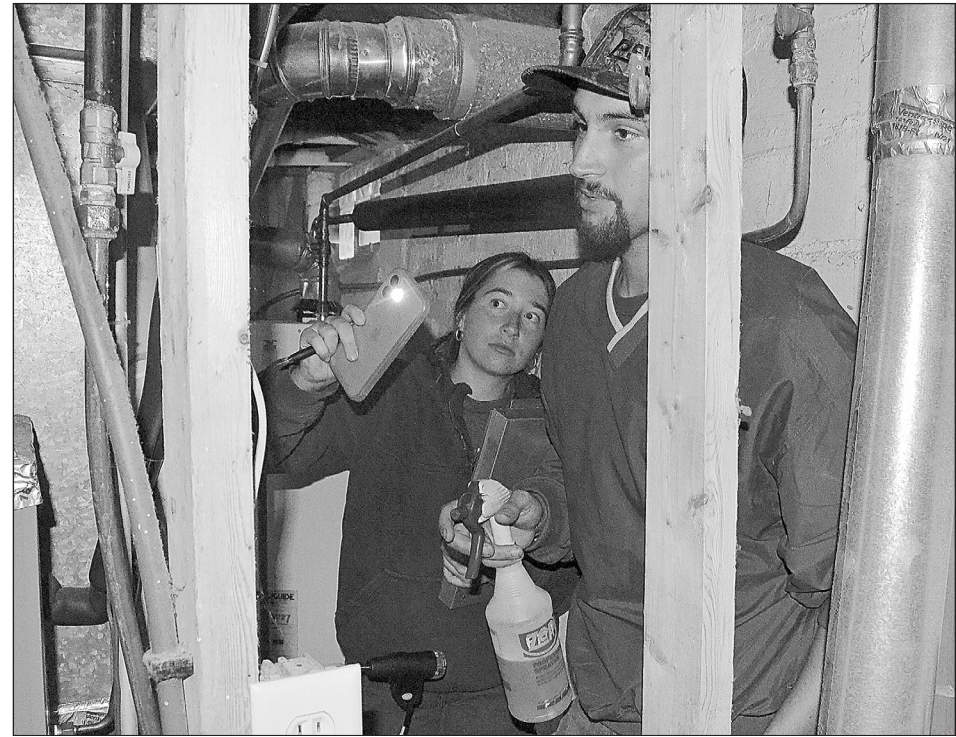
"They just slapped it in and called it good without adjusting the pressure," Michel said of the other technicians. "That causes the flame to burn dirty, and it's a really easy thing to do, too."

Situations like that are what keep Braund, a Heat's On volunteer for the last three years, coming back.

"It's always interesting," she laughed. "And it's good just to know these homeowners are safe and ready for winter. They're always super nice, too."

Before union members picked up their call sheets for Heat's On this year, they gathered for a 7 a.m. breakfast at St. Paul Local 455's union hall, where several lawmakers, including U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, thanked union members for volunteering their time and expertise.

Since its launch in 1986, Heat's On volunteers have provided over \$4 million in services and repairs to 8,606 households in the Twin Cities, logging nearly 40,000 hours of volunteer service.



Olivia Braund and Jacob Michel, third-year apprentices with St. Paul Steamfitters Pipefitters Local 455, inspect the furnace of a disabled homeowner in St. Paul during the Heat's On 2026 day of service. Union Advocate photo

Union fundraisers help local schools restock supplies



Young shooters show off their targets at the .22 range at Get Youth Outdoors Day. submitted photo

'Get Youth Outdoors Day' follows Roofers' annual shoot

Twenty union volunteers helped introduce some 70 kids from 9 to 17 to archery, sporting clays and .22 rifle shooting Sept. 13 at Get Youth Outdoors Day.

Hosted by the Roofers Union and the Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) at Wild Marsh Sporting Clays in Clear Lake, the 14th annual event sent each participant home with a free rod and reel - and, hopefully, a newfound passion for the outdoors.

The youth event came a day after Roofers Local 96 drew over 260 union members to its 15th annual shooting competition, which set new records for overall event revenue and day-of fundraising.



Fall school supply drives coordinated by the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation and its labor assemblies in Dakota and Chisago counties came up big for local students and educators this year. At top-left, SPRLF President Kera Peterson delivers proceeds from the non-profit St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's annual fundraising drive to Heather Alden in the Saint Paul Public Schools' Project REACH office, which supports students and families struggling to find permanent housing. The Dakota County Labor Assembly's deliver to Black Hawk Middle School in Eagan is pictured top-right: (L to R) Assembly Chair Connie Beissel, Amelia Dolloff, Dianne Richardson, Jill Heydt, Kristine Shelby and Aaron Burdette. At Deerwood Elementary in Eagan, Beissel and Richardson are pictured with school social worker Abby Chmiel and assistant administrator Ryan Lyrek.

submitted photo



Minutes of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation

AUGUST 12, 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, Engledorf, Fridgen, Gibbons, Guertin, Hoerth, Hunt, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, Peterson, Relca, Roth, Sansom, Schmidt, and Tastad-Damer. Excused were Edwards, Gale, Hill, Luneburg, Michelson, Mullin, Seath and Slattery. Absent Strom.

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 AFGE Local 899, AFSCME Local 1465, APWU Twin Cities Postal Data Center Local 7019, Cement Masons Local 633, Elevators Local 9, Heat and Frost Insulators Local 34, IAMAW District 77, MN Newspaper Guild TNG-CWA Local 37002, Roofers Local 96, Sprinkler Fitters Local 417, Teamsters Local 120 and UAW Local 722. President Peterson administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates in attendance.

MINUTES

M/S/C TO APPROVE MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2026, 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 AUGUST 12, 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, Engledorf, Fridgen, Gibbons, Guertin, Hoerth, Hunt, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, Peterson, Relca, Roth, Sansom, Schmidt, and Tastad-Damer. Excused were Edwards, Gale, Hill, Luneburg, Michelson, Mullin, Seath and Slattery. Absent: Lohmann, Mayer and Strom.

Items to come before this committee included:

- Requests to recommend granting

Songs of solidarity on Labor Day



labor endorsement to the following candidates:

- From the Dakota County Labor Assembly: Joe Atkins, Dakota County Commissioner District 2; Laurie Halverson, Dakota County Commissioner District 3; Mike Slavik, Dakota County Commissioner District 1; and Mike Supina, Eagan mayor.
- From the Ramsey County Labor Assembly: John Choi, Ramsey County Attorney; Garrison McMurtrey, Ramsey County Commissioner District 3; Rena Moran, Ramsey County Commissioner District 4; Mai Chong Xiong, Ramsey County Commissioner District 6; and Amanda McFarlane, Chris Streiff Oji, Amy Puschinsk and Ryan Vernosh for White Bear Lake School Board.
- From the Washington County Labor Assembly: Jill Christenson, Andi Courneya and Claire Luger for Forest Lake School Board; Stan Karwoski, Washington County

Commissioner District 2; Karla Bigham, Washington County Commissioner District 4; and Kevin Magnuson, Washington County Attorney.

M/S/C TO RECOMMEND THE DELEGATE BODY GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO JOE ATKINS, DAKOTA COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2; LAURIE HALVERSON, DAKOTA COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 3; MIKE SLAVIK, DAKOTA COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1; MIKE SUPINA, EAGAN MAYOR; JOHN CHOI, RAMSEY COUNTY ATTORNEY; GARRISON MCMURTREY, RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 3; RENA MORAN, RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 4; MAI CHONG XIONG, RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 6; AMANDA MCFARLANE, CHRIS STREIFF OJI, AMY PUSCHINSK AND

A fixture of the Regional Labor Federation's Labor Day marching unit in the State Fair parade is the Dixieland band playing renditions of traditional labor anthems. The instrumentalists are members of Twin Cities Musicians Union, AFM Local 30-73. The marching unit this year, led by SPRLF President Kera Peterson and Vice President Perry Schmidt, included nearly 200 union and family members from over a dozen local unions. Find more photos online: facebook.com/SaintPaulRLF.

RYAN VERNOSH FOR WHITE BEAR LAKE SCHOOL BOARD; JILL CHRISTENSON, ANDI COURNEYA AND CLAIRE LUGER FOR FOREST LAKE SCHOOL BOARD; STAN KARWOSKI, WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2; KARLA BIGHAM, WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 4; AND KEVIN MAGNUSON, WASHINGTON COUNTY ATTORNEY.

- The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation and the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation screened for CD2 today and no recommendation was made.
- President Peterson announced the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation's Labor 2026 Kick Off door knock will be Sept. 12, hosted at the Sheet Metal Worker's Local 10 Union Hall. The USW in Cottage Grove will

host doorknocks Sept. 26 and Oct. 21. The MN AFL-CIO will be having trainings for member-to-member program volunteer recruitment.

• M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$1,250 CONTRIBUTION TO THE MINNESOTA DFL PARTY FOR THE DFL'S FARMER LABOR PICNIC.

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES AUGUST 12, 2026

The Executive Board met with those same members present who are duly elected to this board. Items to come before this board included:

- Discussion of nominations for two trustees, and nominations for nine Executive Board members who will also serve as the SPRLF's Geographical Representatives on the Minnesota AFL-CIO General Board. Six of the SPRLF's Geographical Representatives must represent the six largest international unions; the three others may be from any affiliated union.

• PRESIDENT'S REPORT: President Peterson reported on the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation's participation in the 2026 Minnesota State Fair Labor Day Parade. "Wear your union colors and bring union banners."

• ORGANIZING UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS: AFSCME Local 844, ATU Local 1005, Minnesota Nurses Association, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa, and UNITE HERE Local 17 gave updates on their organizing activities.

• THANK YOU NOTES: Received from Homes For Our Troops for the RLF's \$500 contribution to their 9th annual golf tournament.

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

• M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$850 CONTRIBUTION TO WORKING PARTNERSHIPS 12TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Secretary-Treasurer Engeldorf reported on the financial status of the Federation as of July 2026. The report was accepted as read.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Peterson reported that the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation, through its Chisago, Dakota, Ramsey and Washington County Labor Assemblies, completed multiple screenings. There are five legislative seats in the four-county area where labor-endorsed candidates won contested primary elections. The SPRLF's Kick Off to the Labor 2026 Program begins on Sept. 12, 2026, at the Sheet Metal Workers Local 10 hall, with other opportunities on Sept. 26 and Oct. 21 at the Steelworkers Hall in Cottage Grove. The Labor Day Parade at the Minnesota State Fair is coming up; anyone who would like to sign up, please contact Kera. The Minnesota AFL-CIO Convention begins Sunday,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

STAFF REPORTS

Michael Moore, Union Advocate editor, spoke to delegates about having their unions consider placing a Labor Day ad in the Advocate to support our Labor newspaper.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- Michael Madden reported on behalf of the Chisago County Labor Assembly. The Minnesota Nurses Association negotiated and ratified a fair contract with Hazelden Betty Ford. Teamsters Local 320 is still on strike. 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. Multiple screenings have been completed. We will be requesting union members to door knock and phone bank. 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, which screened three Ramsey County Commissioners and for the White Bear Lake School Board. 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. Last month the assembly screened for County Commissioners and the Mayor of Eagan. This month it will screen for Farmington City Council. Thank you to all unions who donated to the annual school supply drive. Next meeting will be on the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- The Minnesota State Retiree Council's Convention will be held Sept. 12, 2026, prior to the Minnesota AFL-CIO Convention.

NEW BUSINESS

- President Peterson called for a floor vote on the COPE Committee's recommendations to grant labor endorsement to Joe Atkins, Dakota County Commissioner District 2; Laurie Halverson, Dakota County Commissioner District 3; Mike Slavik, Dakota County Commissioner District 1; Mike Supina, Eagan mayor; John Choi, Ramsey County Attorney; Garrison McMurtrey, Ramsey County Commissioner District 3; Rena Moran, Ramsey County Commissioner District 4; Mai Chong Xiong, Ramsey County Commissioner District 6; Amanda McFarlane, Chris Streiff Oji, Amy Puschinsk and Ryan Vernosh for White Bear Lake School Board; Jill Christenson, Andi Courneya and Claire Luger for Forest Lake School Board; Stan Karwoski, Washington County Commissioner District 2; Karla Bigham, Washington County Commissioner District 4; AND Kevin Magnuson, Washington County Attorney.

M/S/C TO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO THE ABOVE CANDIDATES LISTED.

- President Peterson announced and opened the floor for nominations for the two open Trustee positions. Floor nominations resulted in the following candidates: Don Mullin, St. Paul Building and Construction Trades Council; and Diana Tastad-Damer, UFCW Local 1189. Both accepted their nominations. With no further nominations

being made, nominations were closed.

It is noted that there are two positions open and only two nominated candidates. Therefore:

M/S/C TO ELECT DON MULLIN, ST. PAUL BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL, AND DIANA TASTAD-DAMER, UFCW LOCAL 1189, AS TRUSTEES BY UNANIMOUS BALLOT.

- President Peterson announced and opened the floor for nominations for nine Geographical Representative Seats on the Minnesota AFL-CIO General Board. They will ultimately be nominated for election to the Minnesota AFL-CIO General Board at the upcoming Minnesota AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention in September 2026.

Floor nominations resulted in the following candidates for six seats dedicated to the six largest international unions: Dave Cook, APWU St. Paul Local 65; Marty Fridgen, Education Minnesota: South Washington County Local 1125; Kelly Gibbons, SEIU Local 284; Jennifer Guertin, AFSCME Local 2508; Kyle Hunt, IBEW Local 110; and Jennifer Michelson, Minnesota Nurses Association. Floor nominations resulted in three additional candidates: Art Hill, IUPAT Local 61; Justin Recla, USW Local 11-418; and Carrie Roth, LIUNA Local 563. All candidates accepted their nominations. With no further nominations being made, nominations were closed.

It is noted that there are nine positions open and only nine nominated candidates. Therefore:

M/S/C TO ELECT THESE CANDIDATES AS THE SAINT PAUL REGIONAL LABOR FEDERATION'S GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE MINNESOTA AFL-CIO GENERAL BOARD BY VOICE ACCLAMATION.

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

Submitted by,
BERNADINE ENGELDORF
Secretary-Treasurer

Retirees meet Oct. 21

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation Retirees will meet Oct. 21 at noon at the Saint Paul Labor Center, 353 West 7th St. Meetings are open to all retired members of unions affiliated with the SPRLF.

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

Endorsement notice

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation may consider recommendations for granting labor endorsement in local elections at its delegates' meeting Oct. 14.

For more information, call 651-222-3787.

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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

FEDERAL OFFICES

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U.S. House District 2: Matt Little
U.S. House District 4: Betty McCollum
U.S. House District 5: Ilhan Omar
U.S. House District 6: Doug Chapin
U.S. House District 8: Trina Swanson

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: Joe Atkins**
• **District 3: Laurie Halverson**
• **District 6: Jacob Borealis**
Eagan Mayor: Mike Supina
Farmington Mayor: Nicholas Gessel
Farmington City Council: Christopher Pierce, Philip Windschitl

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

CHISAGO COUNTY

County Board of Commissioners:
• **District 3: Cyle Cramer**
Chisago Lakes School Board (ISD 2144): Sarah Aadland, Amy Forkner, Jen Penzenstadler
Wyoming City Council: Jessica Bergan, Dennis Schilling

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District 33: Nat Smith
District 36: Heather Gustafson
District 39: Mary Kunesh
District 40: John Marty
District 44: Sam Rosemark
District 47: Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger
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: Foungh Hawj

MINNESOTA 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 39B: Amáda Márquez Simula
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
District 67A: Liz Lee

Find a full list at stpaulunions.org/endorsements

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