

The St. Paul Union Advocate

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

April 2023

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



Supporters cheered Gov. Tim Walz, who spoke during a Capitol rally for paid family leave last month.

FINAL PUSH FOR PAID LEAVE

Walz rallies with supporters of paid family leave bill, pledges action this session

Union members, retirees, small business owners and faith-based organizations rallied with Gov. Tim Walz and other lawmakers at the Capitol March 21 in a bid to get paid family and medical leave legislation across the finish line this session.

"Paid family and medical leave is one of the best policies we can pursue to support Minnesota's families and workers," Walz said during the rally. "Let's make it easier for Minnesota families to raise a child or care for a sick or aging relative without putting a paycheck at risk."

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UNITE HERE member Leah Riley traveled from Rochester for the paid leave rally with her 8-year-old son, Riley Altom. Union Advocate photos

Senate GOP blocks \$1.9 billion jobs proposal, DFL set to act alone

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

Before the Minnesota Senate voted March 16 on infrastructure jobs bills worth \$1.9 billion, union tradespeople pleaded with Republican members not to hold up the package of local public-works projects as leverage in a political fight with the DFL majority.

"Quit playing little games with my livelihood," Carpenters Local 1382 member Mandy Reese, from Zumbrota, told lawmakers. "Do your jobs, get back to work and get this bonding bill passed today."

Unfortunately for Reese and nearly 100 other union members who gathered outside the Senate chambers, most Republicans chose politics over jobs. The bonding proposal, which would see the state borrow \$1.5 billion for infrastructure projects, fell shy of a three-fifths majority needed to pass the Senate, despite gaining bipartisan support in the House earlier in the session.

The result prompted DFL leaders to scrap plans for a vote on a separate infrastructure package that would have tapped

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Organizing Report

Sun Country flight attendants near contract as union sues to reinstate fired fleet workers

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

Local Teamsters are standing together for better wages and benefits at the so-called "hometown airline."

Over 100 flight attendants who work at Sun Country Airlines, members of Teamsters Local 120, held informational picketing Feb. 22 outside Terminal 2 at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, demanding "industry-standard" wages in

contract negotiations covering more than 600 workers.

"It's time to give us a fair contract with wages that are comparable with flight attendants at similar airlines - to give back to the flight attendants who have helped grow the airline and make it successful," flight attendant and Local 120 member LaNeia Huberty said. "We know Sun Country can do better."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)



Sun Country flight attendants, members of Teamsters Local 120, held informational picketing at Terminal 2. Union Advocate photo

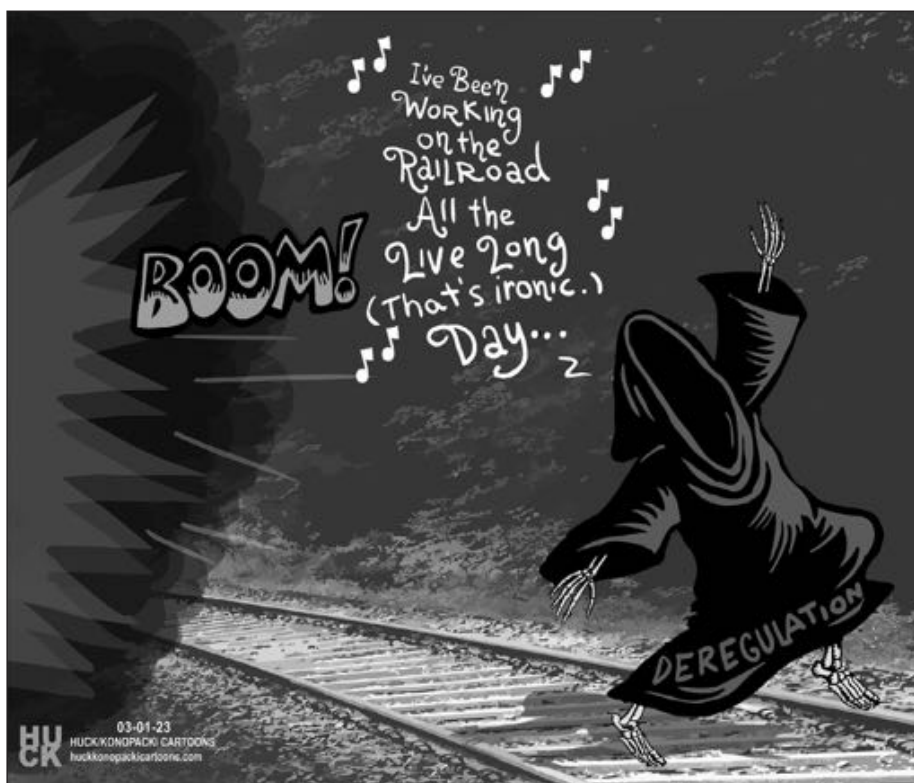
Go Figure

37% Increase in the number of minors employed in violation of U.S. child labor laws last year

283% Increase in the same number since 2015

102 Number of minors federal investigators found working at meat processing plants in eight states, including Minnesota

10 States where laws to weaken child labor standards have been passed or introduced in the last two years



Partner Voices: Jake Schwitzer

What we mean by prevailing wages, and why it's so important

I've been watching committee hearings over the past few weeks, and I'm beginning to suspect there are some legislators who don't understand what "prevailing wage" laws are, or why we have them. And if they don't, there's a good chance most of the general public doesn't either. But these laws are incredibly important protections for Minnesota's working people, and we need to protect and expand them.

Picture a government funded road construction project. The government opens bidding to find a contractor who can build the road. The simplest way to choose between two bids is to pick the contractor who will build the project for the cheapest price. If that's the sole point of competition, contractors are incentivized to make their wages as low as possible. And, given that governments are a huge buyer in the construction industry, that massive buying power can warp labor and pay standards for an entire sector.

Once the road project is finished, contractors will keep paying that lower wage for other projects, and now the entire construction industry in an area has had its wages depressed by one government-funded project.

Prevailing wage laws were created to prevent the government from using its buying power to undercut local wages. These laws require publicly funded projects to give workers at least the wages and benefits that the local market is paying for that same specific work. This is separate from minimum wage laws, because the policy recognizes that there are different wage standards for different jobs and skill requirements, and that these standards change among regions of the state and country.

Prevailing wage laws obviously protect workers, but they also protect responsible employers. Employers who do the right thing by their employees shouldn't lose out on government contracts and be driven out of business by unscrupulous contractors who exploit their workers. We know these contractors exist; the Minnesota Reformer broke the story of allegations of wage theft at the Viking Lakes project.

An in-depth study by the Midwest Economic Policy Institute looked at prevailing wage requirements in Minnesota. It found that Minnesota's prevailing wage law increases blue-collar construction worker incomes by 5.2%; expands health insurance coverage by 5 percentage points; increases the share of construction workers with pension plans by 5.3 percentage

"These laws are incredibly important protections for Minnesota's working people, and we need to protect and expand them."

– Jake Schwitzer



points; and reduces the share of construction workers who receive food stamp assistance by 2.1 percentage points.

You don't typically find policy makers campaigning to cut wages. I can't remember seeing a TV ad in which an elected official brags that "I'll only support government funded projects if they undercut your pay and benefits. You make too much money."

Yet, prevailing wage laws continue to come under attack, and there are still some government programs that don't include these important protections. The Minnesota Legislature is currently debating whether or not to add prevailing wage requirements to projects funded by the Renewable Development Account. This should be an easy decision.

The clean energy transition is at a pivotal moment. Federal funds – and new requirements – are beginning to flow after the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act. The Legislature passed and Gov. Tim Walz signed into law a bill to move Minnesota to 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040.

Clean energy investments are going to take off, but we cannot allow this transition to leave workers behind. Thousands of workers have been employed at energy plants – like coal and natural gas – that will be phased out. We can ensure that those workers benefit from this transition, or we can allow out-of-state developers to ship in traveling workers at lower wages.

Prevailing wage laws and other protections will ensure that Minnesota's workers benefit from this clean energy transition. Minnesota's lawmakers need to understand these laws, and support them.

– Jake Schwitzer is executive director of North Star Policy Action. His column was originally published by the Minnesota Reformer, minnesotareformer.com.

Letters

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Hastings workers stick to demands, school board takes heat

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

As the strike by Hastings school food service workers stretched into a second month, pressure was mounting on district administrators and members of the school board to improve their offer to union members and end the work stoppage that began Feb. 7.

"We are ready to settle this strike, and we are ready to go back and feed the kids," said Laurie Potthoff, a high school cook with six years of experience in the district. "But the board won't meet with us."

Potthoff spoke Feb. 15 during an impromptu rally and press conference, staged after the board abruptly canceled its public meeting that afternoon, ducking a face-to-face encounter with Potthoff and other striking members of Service Employees (SEIU) Local 284.

"Come on, school board," Potthoff pleaded. "Bring us back to the table."

In the weeks that followed, several state and federal lawmakers would echo Potthoff's appeal to district leaders for continued talks.

A letter to members of the school board drew signatures from 39 members of the Legislature, both Republican and DFL. "It is past time to return to the negotiating table with your workers and their union, and come to an agreement," they wrote.

U.S. Rep. Angie Craig sent a similar letter, calling on board members to offer workers pay raises that keep up with inflation. She also walked alongside workers during rush-hour picketing along busy Highway 61. "I understand that the district has sent your last, best and final offer," Craig wrote to board members and Superintendent Bob McDowell. "These workers ... deserve better."

Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan offered support for striking workers on social media. "As Hastings food service workers continue to strike, I'm proud to be in solidarity as they fight for fair compensation," Flanagan wrote on Twitter. "Let's negotiate this in good faith for our kids and our schools."

But at their public meeting March 1, school board members appeared unmoved.

Striking workers, their family



Striking food service workers walked a picket line along Todd Field in Hastings.

members and supporters packed the meeting room but were not allowed an opportunity to speak during the meeting. As union members filed out of the space, they pledged to keep coming back until the district agreed to resume talks.

"I have a message for the Hastings School Board," Local 284 Executive Director Kelly Gibbons said. "Shame on you. Shame on you for not coming to the table and not coming to this meeting and talking to these workers."

Workers have refused to accept the district's offer to raise their wages by 2%, with a one-time bonus.

Union members want the wage scale increased by \$3 per hour, and they say one-



Local 284's Kelly Gibbons and Rep. Angie Craig joined picketing. Union Advocate photo

time bonuses won't do enough to keep Hastings' pay competitive with other districts in the area - let alone inflation.

Building Trades to honor fallen workers

Union tradespeople will observe Workers Memorial Day with a public ceremony Friday, April 28, in the Workers Memorial Garden on the grounds of the Minnesota State Capitol.

The 11 a.m. program is sponsored jointly by the St. Paul and Minneapolis Building and Construction Trades councils.

Workers Memorial Day is observed nationwide each year to honor the memory of workers who lost their lives on the job or died from workplace-related illnesses. The day also serves to strengthen calls for improvements in workplace safety standards.

ESFL plans panel on graduate organizing

In November 2022, some 48,000 graduate student employees went on strike across 10 campuses of the University of California system. Organized by the United Auto Workers, they stayed on strike for five weeks and reached a first contract in mid-December.

The UC strike was the largest in the history of U.S. higher education and is part of an upsurge in graduate employee organizing nationwide, including at the University of Minnesota.

St. Paul's East Side Freedom Library will present a free, online program exploring the campaign Tuesday, April 11, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

University of California graduate student employees will share their experiences, and a panel discussion with graduate student workers from campuses across the country will explore what lessons the California campaign offers for other workers. The panel will be moderated by labor scholar and activist Ruth Milkman, Professor of Sociology at the City University of New York's Graduate Center.

Find registration information - and details on other events at the ESFL - at eastsidefreedomlibrary.org/events.

Dinner to benefit Sportsmen's Alliance

The Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council will host a fundraising dinner to benefit the Union Sportsmen's Alliance and its conservation efforts April 13, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the St. Paul Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 110 hall, 1330 Conway St.

Individual tickets are \$75 per person and include a one-year membership in the Union Sportsmen's Alliance. Table sponsorships and other underwriting opportunities are available.

Individuals should RSVP by April 10 to Jennifer Hathaway, 651-287-9999, or



Let's get together, union members!

The St. Paul Regional Labor Federation's local labor assemblies bring working people and retirees together to exchange ideas and take action on issues that matter most in their communities. Assembly meetings are open to all union members who live or work in our four-county area.

Chisago County Assembly

April 25, 6 p.m.

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

Dakota County Assembly

April 13, 7 p.m.

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

Ramsey County Assembly

April 25, 6 p.m.

Saint Paul Labor Center, 353 7th Street West

Washington County Assembly

April 26, 6 p.m.

Washington County Gov't Center, Stillwater.



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Construction wage theft back on Minnesota lawmakers' agenda

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

Construction firms in Minnesota would bear greater legal responsibility for the labor practices of their subcontractors under legislation introduced by DFL lawmakers this session.

Building Trades unions and worker advocacy groups say the measure is necessary in the wake of reported abuses on non-union construction sites, most notably the Viking Lakes development in Eagan, where last year 40-plus workers alleged being cheated out of over \$100,000 in combined wages.

Under the proposed Construction Worker Wage Protection Act, tradespeople hired by a subcontractor or labor broker would be empowered to seek unpaid wages from the larger contractors responsible for bringing their boss onto the jobsite.

Advocates say holding so-called "upstream" contractors accountable will create a much-needed incentive to do business with responsible subcontractors. The measure would also give construction firms legal authority to request payroll information from their subcontractors, so they can avoid liability.

"Compliance would finally be incentivized," the Carpenters union's Adam Duinick told members of the House Labor Committee during a hearing on the bill March 2.

Minnesota Building Trades unions lobbied to pass the nation's strongest wage theft legislation four years ago, but Duinick and other labor leaders say the new law has not deterred developers and general contractors, like the Wilf family's MV Ventures, from turning a



Alvaro Chavez (L), a member of CTUL, testifies in support of the Construction Worker Wage Protection Act, authored by Rep. Sandra Feist (R). Union Advocate photo

blind eye to wage theft on their projects.

A report approved by Ramsey and Hennepin county attorneys last year found "rampant wage theft" in the non-union construction industry, estimating that employers in those two counties steal over \$3 million in wages each year and divert over \$11 million from Social Security and Medicare funds by misclassifying employees as independent contractors or paying in cash.

During the committee hearing March 2, Alvaro Chavez, with assistance from a Spanish language interpreter, explained to lawmakers how he witnessed the wage-theft model firsthand. After working for several weeks framing the bottom floor of

a multifamily development in St. Paul, Chavez said, he and his crew abruptly learned they were being replaced for the project's next phase.

"They never paid us for the work we had already done," Chavez said. "When the supervisor of our group called the owner of the company, Strong Framing, who was a subcontractor on this project, he wouldn't answer the phone."

Chavez and other members of the crew approached the local worker center CTUL for assistance recovering their lost wages. Their first call was to the project's developer, Yellow Tree.

"They told us they had contracted with U.S. Framing to do the work and we

should call them," Chavez said. "When we called U.S. Framing, they told us they contracted with Strong Framing, the company of the person who was no longer taking our calls."

"None of these companies wanted to take responsibility for paying our wages."

Dan McConnell, president of the Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council, said that responsibility rightly belongs to those with most control over the construction site. "Managing a project and making sure everybody gets paid is literally what owners pay a general contractor to do," he said.

But too often, by the time workers like Chavez discover they have been cheated out of their wages, it's too late to hold their immediate employer accountable, Simon Trautmann, a labor attorney and member of the Richfield City Council, told lawmakers.

"You'll have the subcontractor who has an LLC with zero assets," Trautmann said. "That creates a policy problem where there is literally no money and literally nobody (to hold) accountable. This is a business model."

Members of the House Labor Committee voted to advance the measure, House File 1859. Its companion bill, Senate File 1988, has so far passed through two committees.

"The bottom line is if you control the worksite, then you can prevent wage theft," said Rep. Sandra Feist (D-New Brighton), the bill's lead author in the House. "We want to level the playing field so ethical business practices can win the day, and they're not going to be underbid by unethical subcontractors."

Union members, chide GOP legislators for playing politics with infrastructure jobs

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

nearly \$400 million from the state's projected budget surplus.

Sen. Sandy Pappas (D-St. Paul), chair of the Senate Capital Investment Committee, said during a press conference before the vote that if the borrowing bill failed, DFLers in both chambers would begin crafting a new all-cash package, which they could pass with simple majorities.

But that bill may not be as robust as the two bills they had hoped to approve last month, Pappas warned. And because it won't need a three-fifths margin, the cash bill may also not be as inclusive of Republican spending proposals.

Pappas called the proposal rejected by Republicans "the fairest and the largest" bonding bill in state history. She touted a 50-50 split between projects funded in metro and rural areas, and singled out proposed transportation, water-treatment and public-safety projects in GOP-represented districts.

"Frankly, it's embarrassing for me to go back to these communities time after time, year after year, and



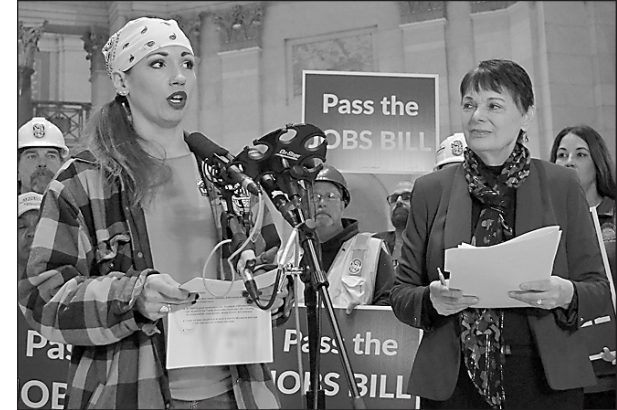
IUPAT members (L to R) Tadd Tratar, David Kroger, Jordan Fry and Zach Thoemke rallied for the bonding will with Tim Stender (R) from the Carpenters union.

they're still waiting" for lawmakers to fund local capital projects, Pappas said.

As for an all-cash bill, she added, "I don't know if it can be as balanced" as the borrowing proposal.

On the Senate floor, Minority Leader Mark Johnson (R-East Grand Forks) recognized the strong support from organized labor for the infrastructure jobs bill, calling out several unions by name. But he said support from Republican leaders hinged on inclusion of tax relief.

"We wanted to help you," Johnson said. "We Republicans wanted to get these projects done in the state of Minnesota. We have one simple request. Let's



LIUNA Local 563 member Carolyn Wood and Sen. Sandy Pappas spoke with media before the infrastructure vote.

Union Advocate photos

get this done, but let's ensure Minnesotans are taken care of as well, make sure that they have tax relief, make sure that we know what's happening in our fiscal policy."

The construction season is approaching quickly, and Minnesota's asset upkeep falls further behind schedule - and costs continue to increase - each time lawmakers fail to act on a bonding bill, as they have since October 2020.

"We shouldn't be talking about these projects," said Bradley Peterson, director of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities. "We should be talking about the next round of projects."

'Bill of Rights' would fund \$25 minimum wage, health benefits for hourly school staff

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

As striking food service workers in Hastings put a spotlight on hardships faced by some of the lowest-paid school employees, state lawmakers last month debated bold, new legislation to lift standards for all hourly school workers.

The "Education Support Professionals' Bill of Rights," introduced by DFLers in both the House and Senate, would establish a minimum wage of \$25 for paraprofessionals, bus drivers, clerical workers and other hourly employees.

It would also require schools to offer affordable, year-round health coverage and to sustain hourly workers' pay during e-learning days, among other provisions.

To cover schools' increased costs, the measure would provide new state funding - beyond increases to the per-pupil formula - determined by a district's ESP staffing needs.

Rep. Brad Tabke of Shakopee, lead author in the House, touted the bill as a matter of fairness for the trusted adults who work in their communities' school systems.

"All throughout the summer (while) talking to folks, I ran into dozens and dozens of paras, janitors, bus drivers, lunch workers that are really struggling," he told members of the House Education Finance Committee on Tuesday. "As a state we should be valuing that work."

Senate author Alice Mann (D-Edina) said school districts need new, dedicated funding to make their hourly positions competitive with other employers.

"You can walk down the street to McDonald's and get paid more to work there than in our schools taking care of our children, feeding our children, transporting our children and helping to educate them," Mann said during a Senate committee hearing Tuesday.

Labor market data shows the job vacancy rate at school districts across the nation has been rising for a decade. In Minnesota, where overall workforce participation is higher than the national average, employment in school districts has dropped by 6.4% since October 2019, according to data compiled by the Economic Policy Institute's Economic Analysis and Research Network (EARN).

"There's a lot of reasons why this could be, but the most simple and obvious one is compensation," EARN policy coordinator Dave Kamper said. "Workers are leaving ESP jobs for higher-paying gigs elsewhere."

Hourly school workers who want to continue serving students have found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet, as several ESPs - including one food service worker on strike for higher wages - testified at the Capitol.

Sara Rapp, a cook at Hastings High School, earns just \$15.05 per hour in her



Sara Rapp, a school cook on strike in Hastings, testified at the Capitol in support of the ESP Bill of Rights. Union Advocate photo



Rep. Brad Tabke (D-Shakopee), the lead House author of the ESP Bill of Rights, spoke during a press conference on the measure. "All throughout the summer (while) talking to folks, I ran into dozens and dozens of paras, janitors, bus drivers, lunch workers that are really struggling," he said.

fourth year with the district. A \$10-per-hour raise, she said, "would mean we could take care of ourselves and our families with the same care and compassion we take care of our students."

Staffing shortfalls in her district have gotten so bad, Rapp told lawmakers, that three employees recently were tasked with doing the work of eight.

"And we know it's not just us," said Rapp, a member of Service Employees Local 284. "Our strike shows the crisis facing school workers because of the low

wages and disrespect we are facing. We need to fix this before the staffing crisis gets worse, so we can do what we do best - caring for our students."

Caroline Long, a special-ed teacher in the Minneapolis Public Schools and member of Education Minnesota, said most hourly school employees work multiple jobs to cover rising costs. Health care costs, in particular, have risen faster than ESPs' wages, she said.

"I believe everyone who works with children should have access to affordable health care," Long said. "Due to the low wages, some ESPs will work all their hours in one pay period and not have anything to show for it because every dime they made went to pay for health insurance offered by their employer."

In addition to a \$25 minimum wage and affordable health care, the ESP Bill of Rights would require schools to dedicate two days of paid training to all school staff members who work with students, and to build time into special education teachers' schedule for managing their students' individualized education program (IEP).

Annie Gibson, a paraprofessional in the South Washington County Schools, said steps to recruit, retain and treat ESPs like professionals will ultimately benefit students.

"Our children with IEPs are so much more successful when they have consistency in staffing," Gibson said. "I take pride in building my relationships with each child, and I love being a part of a child's growth, education, and social and emotional wellbeing."

"We need to make this a profession people seek out and stay in for a long time. This legislation would be a great start."

New report explores why MN nurses have left the bedside

Members of the Minnesota Nurses Association issued a report last month that identifies chronic under-staffing, hospital management and other working conditions as the top issues driving nurses away from bedside care.

To assemble the report - "Why We Left: 2023 Nursing Workforce Report" - the MNA surveyed more than 2,400 nurses who left a bedside nursing position within the past year and did not take a new position in an MNA-represented hospital.

The survey found that the No. 1 issue identified by nurses that has driven them from the bedside was insufficient staffing, followed by stress or "burnout," management issues and other working conditions.

"Burnout," as defined in the 2020 "Deadly Shame" report from National Nurses United, refers to the moral distress and moral injury nurses experience from working with insufficient nurse staffing, rationing and crisis standards of care, and limited resources including support staff, beds, medications or supplies.

The new study, union leaders said, underscores the need for political action to address the staffing crisis in Minnesota hospitals.

MNA members have been lobbying in support of the Keeping Nurses at the Bedside Act, which would establish committees at Minnesota hospitals to set safe staffing levels, including a limit on the number of patients that any one nurse should safely care for, to ensure patients receive the care they expect and deserve.

This flexible approach, nurses say, will allow hospitals to set and adjust staffing levels that work on a local level, based on the expertise of bedside nurses at that hospital. The bill would also require hospital executives to post emergency department waiting times and to inform patients of staffing levels when they arrive and throughout their stay.

Nurses who responded to the MNA survey identified improved staffing as the No. 1 change needed for them to return to the bedside. Approximately 2,000 Minnesota nurses are ready to return to the bedside, according to the report, if conditions improve.

One nurse who left the bedside reported feeling "sick and tired of being understaffed all the time and management/CEOs did not care."

"I was constantly told to do more with less resources," the nurse wrote. "I don't mind hard work, actually love it, but when you don't have the support and are forced to do more than you can handle it wears on you."



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Informational picketing at MSP International Airport drew over 100 Sun Country flight attendants, as well as supporters from other airline bargaining units and the labor community. Union Advocate photo

As Sun Country sees revenue take off, union members demand their fair share

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Flight attendants and Sun Country announced March 3 that they had reached an agreement in principle on a new contract in subsequent bargaining, and would “work together to finalize the language” over the next 30 days before sending it to union members for a ratification vote.

“We are pleased with the progress we have made to reach an agreement that significantly improves our members’ wages and working conditions,” members of the union’s negotiating committee said in a statement included in the press release.

Bargaining units at Sun Country are looking to lock in wages and benefits at a time when the 41-year-old airline – which went through bankruptcy in 2008, changed ownership in 2017 and went public in 2021 – appears to be on sound financial footing.

“Many of us have been through so many ups and downs with Sun Country,” Huberty said. “We love the job, we love the passengers, we love the employees and we love the company. We’ve stuck with it because we were told once we start making money, we would share in that.”

But flight attendants are still working under the terms of a contract that took effect in 2014, when the airline was struggling to gain a foothold in the industry.

That’s no longer the case. Sun Country raised \$214 million in an initial public offering two years ago and reported record revenue in 2022. The airline also recently expanded its fleet and added new routes.

Sun Country settled a contract with its pilots’ union in December 2021. That contract, according to the Air Line Pilots Association, lifted Sun Country pilots’ “pay rates, retirement contributions, commuter policies and work rules in line with their peers” at leisure airlines like Frontier and Spirit.

The airline’s 600 flight attendants had been pushing for the same in monthly bargaining sessions since October 2021, when talks resumed after a 19-month pause during the height of the pandemic.

Huberty, who has been with Sun Country for 25

years, said Local 120 members have long worked with management to grow the airline. She pointed to concessions accepted by flight attendants after the pandemic hit that helped Sun Country weather the economic crisis.

“We felt like at the time we weren’t going to make industry-standard wages because the company wasn’t making money,” she said. “Now that they are making money, they need to give us industry-standard wages and a fair contract.”

Meanwhile, a week after the picketing, the Star Tribune reported that Sun Country had fired several fleet employees who were vocal supporters of a recent, successful organizing drive with Teamsters Local 970.

The Teamsters have since filed a lawsuit seeking reinstatement and damages for 12 Minneapolis-based fleet workers who, the union claims, were unlawfully fired by the airline in retaliation for voting to unionize in January.

“Sun Country says it was for other reasons, but we have our suspicions, of course,” Local 970 officer Chad Reichow said.

Sun Country’s attendance policy, according to Reichow, says employees may be fired after accruing nine points against their record, but some people in the bargaining unit have racked up three times as many points without losing their jobs, he said.

The firings came just weeks before Local 970’s bargaining team held its first meeting with Sun Country since ramp workers voted to form a union, an election certified by the National Mediation Board on Jan. 5. Negotiations will determine a first union contract for over 200 fleet employees.

“The first step of negotiations is to return our members back to service,” Angel Cantu, international representative with the Teamsters Airline Division, said.

“Every Sun Country worker can see the company is trying to divide us ahead of contract negotiations,” Cantu added. “Thanks to the employer showing its true colors, our members are more united than ever.”



SAINT PAUL REGIONAL LABOR FEDERATION
AFL-CIO



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MN Historical Society staff wins parental leave, longevity pay in first union contract

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

Union members and the Minnesota Historical Society reached a tentative agreement March 7 on a first contract that would raise wages across the board, provide six weeks of paid parental leave and compensate staff members for their longevity with the statewide organization.

The Historical Society's 250-plus workers voted overwhelmingly to form their union in November 2021, and the three-year contract – reached in the 40th week of bargaining – would deliver progress on several concerns behind the union drive, AFSCME Local 3173 President Molly Jessup said.

"It was really important for us to be very conscientious of what we were trying to do, keeping our membership's best interests in mind, making decisions with a high level of integrity and getting the things we needed right," said Jessup, who works at the Mill City Museum in Minneapolis.

Parental leave and higher pay were among workers' top demands.

MNHS staff members currently do not have access to paid family leave, and an overwhelming majority of employees are earning wages in the lowest quadrant of the pay scale for their positions, regardless of their tenure with the organization.

New longevity-based pay scales in the tentative agreement, Jessup said, would compensate a "significant portion" of the bargaining unit "for their work ethic and for their institutional knowledge."

"We're just tremendously proud of our members for pushing for these things that they really deserve," she said. "And we are so grateful to our friends and family and community members and employees past and present."



MNHS workers and supporters rallied for a fair contract at the Minnesota History Center in December 2022.

Union Advocate photo

AFSCME Council 5, which represents over 43,000 public service workers statewide, announced the tentative agreement in a press release. Executive Director Julie Bleyhl said the contract demonstrates the power of collective bargaining.

"These workers' hard-fought campaign for a fair and equitable first union contract proves the Union Difference and shows the incredible power of solidarity and direct action while fighting for the dignity and respect that all workers deserve," Bleyhl said.

MNHS union members staged workplace demonstrations, a public petition drive and rallies throughout the bargaining process to pressure the employer to

move closer to workers' demands. Members also collaborated on a social media campaign, offering up personal stories about why they supported their union's contract demands.

Over 100 community members turned out for a rally at the History Center in St. Paul last December, but Jessup said support from the local labor community has been critical at every step of their union journey.

Workers at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, who organized a union with AFSCME in 2020, "gave us a lot of encouragement" during the organizing process, she said, while union members from Starbucks, the Teamsters and the newly organized AFSCME unit at the Science Museum of Minnesota joined their contract rally in December.

"Without that community support, we wouldn't be where we are now," Jessup said. "And we hope we will be able to pay that forward."

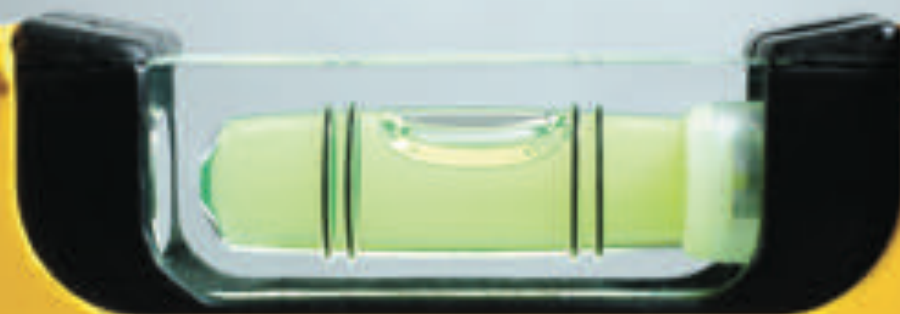
Workers will take a ratification vote on the tentative agreement in the next three to four weeks, after union leaders hold informational meetings with MNHS workers across the state.

Jessup said she expected union members would find time to celebrate their first contract, too.

Members of the bargaining team briefly shared "happy tears and joy and a lot of gratification" after reaching the tentative agreement, she said, before several had to hurry off to judge History Day competitions in the area.

"This wasn't just contract negotiations for us, this was building our local union from the ground up," Jessup said. "Knowing how much energy and passion and sacrifice have gone into this, both from our members who are here and from some of our colleagues who have moved on from the organization, it's been very powerful and emotional for us."

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For Mia workers, fresh approach to bargaining delivers big gains

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

After their first public contract campaign in recent memory, union members who work at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) ratified a new agreement last month that will raise wages by \$4 per hour across the board over the next two and a half years.

The contract covers about 120 members of Office and Professional Employees (OPEIU) Local 12 who work in a variety of roles throughout the museum. Their previous contract expired in January.

Negotiators reached a tentative agreement on the new pact Friday, March 3, and union members called off informational picketing planned each of the following two days – opening weekend of a new ticketed exhibit at the Mia.

Local 12 steward Aaron Barger, an IT systems administrator and member of the union’s bargaining team, said the scheduled action put pressure on management to reach a deal.

“It’s not something you want to have at the beginning of a new show,” he said of the picketing.

In addition to wage increases, union

members won new language enshrining progressive discipline in the contract. They held the line on the existing health care split with management, added new curator positions to the bargaining unit and gained flexibility with regard to certain paid holidays when the museum is open to the public.

“It treats Black Friday, New Year’s Day and Juneteenth as optional holidays,” Barger said. “So if you want to come in and work those days you can, but if you observe Eid or a Jewish high holiday or something else of more significance to you, then you can do that.”

Union members made a strategic decision as talks began in November 2022 not to prioritize paid family leave, Barger said. DFL lawmakers had won a “trifecta” of control over the state House, Senate and governor’s office, improving the chances that legislation creating a state-wide insurance pool to extend family and medical leave to workers statewide will pass this legislative session.

Instead, Local 12’s bargaining team made wage increases its top priority, and they became the biggest sticking point as talks progressed.

Management came to the table

expecting “bargaining as usual,” Barger said. But Mia workers had watched as workers at other museums in the Twin Cities and across the country joined together in the wake of the pandemic, creating unions and fighting for improved wages, benefits and working conditions.

“We are one of the oldest art museum unions in the country, at least 40 years old,” said Barger, who has worked at the Mia for four-plus years. “I think this is the first time we’ve held a picket since this union was founded.

“It’s almost like the union had become a formality or just a legal entity. But after COVID hit and there was a change in (Mia) leadership, people kind of woke up to the fact that we have to adopt more activist tactics.”

That meant informational picketing in February, a button campaign, an online petition and a switch from closed to open bargaining, which allowed union negotiators to share management’s proposals with fellow members.

“We could report back and say, ‘Here’s what the boss is saying. Here’s what they think of you,’” Barger said. “Your best organizer really becomes the boss.”

With a newly active and engaged membership, Barger added, the Mia bargaining unit is in a better position to build on its gains in future negotiations.

“The union is not a separate entity from you,” he said. “You are your union, and the people at the table are there to represent you. The work doesn’t happen without the workers.”

After strike vote, city workers win raises up to 26%

After threatening to strike earlier last month, members of three unions representing workers in the City of St. Paul’s parks, public works, and water and sewer departments were, as this edition went to press, taking a ratification vote on a tentative agreement that would raise wages by up to 26% over three years.

The St. Paul Tri-Council, which represents about 280 city employees, reached the tentative agreement with the city in an extended bargaining session that began March 20, at the end of a mandatory, 10-day “cooling-off period” triggered by union members’ strike-authorization vote.

The bargaining committee for the Tri-Council, which unites members of LIUNA Laborers Local 363, Teamsters Local 120 and Operating Engineers Local 49, recommended ratification in a vote planned March 23, according to a statement issued by Local 363.

“Our members’ voices were heard,” Local 363 Business Manager AJ Lange said. “Tri-Council workers deserve a fair contract acknowledging St. Paul works because they work.”

After several rounds of contract bargaining in which wages remained relatively flat, the tentative agreement would make all Tri-Council workers eligible for raises between 18% and 26% over three years. It also would increase vacation benefits and paid parental leave.

“This new proposal is a good economic contract for our members and puts us on the right track,” Lange said. “We are committed to building from here. We look forward to working with the City to develop policies and procedures to keep our members safe.”

Several other bargaining units, including firefighters and AFSCME clerical and technical workers, remained in mediated talks with the city.

Register your team now!

12th ANNUAL LABOR BOWL

Our annual fundraiser benefits the Labor Studies and Resource Center, a nonprofit that assists and advocates for union members in the East Metro.

Thursday, May 4 | Sun Ray Lanes

Bowlers are asked to raise \$100 in pledges for LSRC. (Teams of four bowlers = \$400, teams of five = \$500.) To register as a team or individual, call 651-222-3787. All donations are tax-deductible. Print pledge forms at:

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		Arbitration for Union Activists	June 11-12:00-6:00 pm & June 12-15, 5:30-8:30 pm

For more information, contact rgulley@newbrookwood.org.

No contract? No coffee



Union members shut down the Starbucks at 300 Snelling Ave. in St. Paul during a nationwide strike March 22. Over 100 stores joined in the action, including unionized shops in Minneapolis and St. Anthony. St. Paul workers say the company walked out of their first bargaining session after five minutes – and has refused to meet since. Union Advocate photo

Union-backed coalition urges lawmakers to get paid leave across the finish line

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Walz has pledged to sign legislation, advancing through committees in both the House and Senate, that would create a state-administered leave program. Minnesotans would be able to access the program and receive up to 12 weeks of partial wage replacement while recovering from a medical issue, caring for a family member or welcoming a new child.

The paid-leave fund would operate similar to the state's unemployment insurance system. Employers and employees would share equally in the cost, each contributing 35 cents per \$100 of earnings.

Sarah Piepenburg, co-owner of Vinaigrette in Minneapolis, was among small business owners who showed support for the bill, calling it an investment in small businesses.

"I have looked into plans available on the private market, and the best option would cost 50% more than this proposal, offer only 6 weeks off, exclude coverage for cancer and require a health screening," she said. "In other words, the private market provides unaffordable, substandard options."

Several labor organizations, including the Minnesota AFL-CIO, are part of a broad coalition of groups that has been fighting for statewide paid leave for nearly a decade, and union colors could be spotted throughout the rotunda during the rally.

Steve Miltich, a retired school custodian and member of the Service Employees (SEIU) Local 284 Executive Board, said many union members are among the 83% of American workers who do not receive paid family leave as a benefit of employment.

"I saw the importance of this firsthand as a union steward," Miltich said. "Custodians I worked with, for one reason or another, had medical issues with themselves or their families - or with newborn children - and could not afford to take the time they needed."

Even some workers with access to paid family leave said the state should do better by all workers. Ashlie Kennedy, a state employee from St. Paul, shared a wrenching story of giving birth to a child with a fatal health condition, who died within hours.



Steve Miltich (R), a retired custodian in the Orono school district, said many unionized workers would benefit from the proposed paid family and medical leave law. "I saw the importance of this firsthand as a union steward," he said.

"Even though I was expressly told that I met all of the eligibility requirements for paid parental leave, the Judicial Branch denied my request for paid leave stating that the unwritten intent of the policy is for parents to bond with their baby," she said. "HR confirmed that because my child died, I no longer qualified for paid parental leave.

"Minnesotans should not have to sacrifice their

livelihood and financial security in order to care for themselves and the people they love. Minnesota can do better. Minnesotans deserve better."

After the rally, advocates fanned out across the Capitol campus, meeting with lawmakers and delivering postcards signed by supporters from their districts.

Learn more about the Minnesotans for Paid Family Leave Coalition at paidleavemn.org.

Cloquet City Council overturns private PLA ordinance

By Catherine Conlan

Labor World editor

CLOQUET - Around 200 members of the Building Trades and their allies came out to rally at the Cloquet City Council meeting on March 21, but even that wasn't enough to convince the council to keep the city's private PLA ordinance. It overturned the ordinance on a 5-2 vote.

"Elections have consequences," said Dan Olson, business manager and secretary-treasurer at Laborers 1091, outside the council chambers after the meeting. "This isn't over."

The vote came after the motion had been tabled at the city council meeting two weeks ago and members of the council and Holly Hansen, community development director for the City of Cloquet, agreed to meet with the Building Trades.

Before Tuesday's meeting, there was a listening session where council members could ask questions. Andrew Campeau, Duluth Building and Construction Trades Council president, outlined the data the Building Trades had brought to that meeting, data that consistently shows that PLA projects finish on time and under budget, and follow industry best-practices for construction and safety.

Tim Watkins, education and policy coordinator at the Fair Contracting Foundation of Minnesota stressed that PLAs do not reduce competition.

"We're here to defend what we think is a good agreement," Olson told the chamber. "We're here as your partner. We're trying to get you to protect language that is advantageous to Cloquet; we think leaving the language in there helps you protect your investments."

Councilors implied the Building Trades had been spreading misinformation about overturning the ordinance and accused union leaders of not driving enough private development in Cloquet.

Campeau acknowledged that there is a concern that if the language mandating PLAs for private projects over a certain amount, the public PLA could also come under scrutiny by the chamber.

Cloquet Mayor Roger Maki said it was "disingenuous" to pretend that union leaders were "looking out for Cloquet. Don't try to act like Cloquet is more important than the union."

Campeau said earlier in the meeting that there were more than 600 Building Trades members who lived in Cloquet; about 5% of the population supporting themselves and their households on union work.

Attorneys for both sides clashed at the end of the listening session, as Hansen had said statements from business owners supporting overturning the ordinance were under an NDA because they did not want to speak publicly on the issue. The Building Trades filed a data request to get that information.

McConnell succeeds Fowler as State Building Trades president

The Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council's executive board has elected IBEW Local 292 member Dan McConnell as president. Since 2011, McConnell has served as business manager of the Minneapolis Building and Construction Trades Council. He now will serve in both positions.

McConnell succeeded Joe Fowler as president of the Minnesota Building Trades, effective February 14, following Fowler's resignation.

Fowler, who remains business manager of Laborers Local 563, had been elected to a four-year term to lead the Minnesota Building Trades as president in July 2021. McConnell will serve out the remainder of Fowler's term.

"I'm really grateful for the support from the business managers," McConnell said.

Moving forward in his new leadership role at the Minnesota Building Trades Council, "I'm excited about the opportunity to think about things differently and to operate more efficiently and be more effective," McConnell said.

McConnell said he wants to see the Minnesota Building Trades "not just do things because we've done them that way - but do things because they make sense."

- Steve Share, Labor Review editor



The fish were biting on East Rush Lake during Take Kids Ice Fishing Day, hosted by local unions March 4.

Record turnout for BuildingTrades' youth ice fishing event

Warm winter weather drew more than 100 youngsters and their families to East Rush Lake in Rush City for the annual Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) Minneapolis Area Take Kids Ice Fishing Day on Saturday, March 4.

Hosted by Elevator Constructors (IUEC) Local 9, the Minneapolis Building and Construction Trades Council and a coalition of additional labor unions and supporting organizations, the free event aimed to introduce the next generation of anglers and conservationists to the joys of ice fishing.

"It was a great day on the lake - by far, the best event we've had," said Dave Morin, an executive board member with Local 9 who organized the event. "Every other year, we've had freezing rain, negative digits, six inches of snow - every condition except optimal. This year, we had beautiful weather, the kids caught lots of fish, everyone won a prize and there were tons of smiles."

A crew of 15 union volunteers introduced participating kids, each of whom received a free fishing rod and reel, to their gear, and helped them set lines, replace hooks, drill new holes and more.

"My family and I have always had a passion for the outdoors, especially fishing, and to be able to share that with young kids at the event was unbelievable," Local 9 volunteer Isaac Stoe said. "The outdoors is becoming secondary for a lot of people, so the more we can get youth outside enjoying Minnesota's outdoor resources, the better."

Morin's favorite part of the event was seeing a young girl's pride in catching her first fish. "She was showing the perch off to everyone, kissing it, and telling everyone she wanted to put it on the wall," he said.

Stoe enjoyed teaching participants how to use electronics. "Most of the kids are used to just using a bobber, so to be able to see what was going on below the ice was a really cool experience for them," he said.

The event was part of the Take Kids Fishing Day series, organized through the USA's Work Boots on the Ground (WBG) conservation program.



Dave Morin, an Elevator Constructors Local 9 Executive Board member who helped organize the ice fishing clinic, paused for a picture with his son John.

submitted photos

Workday Minnesota labor news website expands focus as Workday Magazine

By Steve Share

Minneapolis Labor Review editor

When the Workday Minnesota website launched in 2000 with the support of Minnesota unions, it became one of the first-ever online news sources focused on labor news.



What became an award-winning labor news website, produced by the Labor Education Service at the University of Minnesota, has expanded its focus and relaunched with a new look and a new name: Workday Magazine.

The new site is workdaymagazine.org, but the old address will redirect you to the new site.

"We're very much still a Minnesota-based organization," assured Sarah Lazare, who became Workday Magazine's new editor last October. "Two of our three staff are based in Minnesota."

Lazare works remotely, from her home in Chicago, while senior associate editor Isabela Escalona and associate editor Amie Stager work out of the Labor Education Service offices at the U of M in Minneapolis.

Lazare came to the Workday Magazine editor's job from Chicago-based *In These Times*, an independent monthly magazine where she worked five years as a web editor and reporter. Her experience includes 10 years working full-time in journalism, including at independent media centers.

"I learned a lot about how to do labor reporting and labor editing," she said.

With a renewed wave of labor organizing nationwide, "there's a resurgence of labor journalism," Lazare noted, "but a lot of the journalists are focused on the coasts."

"There's a need to have more solid coverage in the midwest," Lazare said. In her vision for the new Workday, "it felt like an opportunity to have a contribution from the midwest to this resurgence of labor journalism."

So far, Lazare said, reaction to the new Workday Magazine has been positive. "There have been stories that have had a positive impact," she said, and Workday Magazine is starting to get a national audience for Minnesota-based stories.

"We always want more feedback and input," Lazare added.

The new Workday also is publishing stories jointly with partners including *In These Times* and *The American Prospect*, an online and print magazine based in Washington, D.C.

Lazare succeeds Filiberto Nolasco Gomez as editor. He left the position in 2022.

"I've long been a fan of the Labor Education Service," Lazare said, including how LES views union organizing in relation to broader movements for social and economic justice.

"I'm really excited about Workday Magazine being a place where you can dive in deep and shine a light or expose injustice," Lazare said. "The ultimate gold standard is making an impact and making the exploiters feel the heat."

"I want to be really sure people know we're still dedicated to Minnesota," Lazare added. "We're adding, not subtracting."



Minutes of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation

FEBRUARY 8, 2023

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 Beissel, Engeldorf, Gale, Gibbons, Guertin, Hill, Hoerth, Luneburg, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Ryan, Schmidt, Slattery, Tastad-Damer, VanDassor, Vanderport and Varco. Excused were Beedle, Edwards, Hoppe, Sansom, Seath and Wynn.

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

MINUTES

M/S/C TO APPROVE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9 AND DECEMBER 14, 2022, AS PUBLISHED IN THE UNION ADVOCATE NEWSPAPER AFTER THE SECRETARY-TREASURER NOTES THERE ARE NO ADDITIONS OR CHANGES CALLED FOR.

CREDENTIALS

Credentials were received from AFSCME Local 1129, Boilermakers Local 617, Cement Masons Local 633, Construction and General Laborers Local 563, ED MN South Washington County Schools Local 1125, IATSE Local 13, IUPAT Local 61, IUPAT Local 1324, SMART TD Local 0911 and Sprinkler Fitters Local 417. President Peterson administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates in attendance.

COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES FEBRUARY 8, 2023

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

President Peterson gave an update on legislative bills at the Capitol including paid family and medical leave, unemployment, warehouse protect and refinery safety.

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

FEBRUARY 8, 2023

The Executive Board met with those same members present who are duly elected to this board.

Items to come before this board included:

• PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Peterson reported on SEIU Local 284 and TCMU Local 30-73 strike sanctions, resignation of COPE board member Josh Wise, the Saint Paul RLF 2023 Budget, the Winter Carnival Grande Day Parade, and the Twelfth Annual Labor Bowl event to be held at Sun Ray Lanes on Thursday, May 4, 2023. Shift times available are 2:00, 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. Contact Laura at ltestor@stpaul-unions.org or 651-222-3787 ext. 117 to schedule at time to bowl.

• M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO GRANT STRIKE SANCTIONS TO SEIU LOCAL 284 AND TCMU LOCAL 30-73.

• M/S/C TO APPROVE THE 2023 SAINT PAUL REGIONAL LABOR FEDERATION OPERATING BUDGET AS PRESENTED.

• M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$1,000 CONTRIBUTION TO SEIU LOCAL 284 STRIKE FUND.

• M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO PURCHASE TWO TICKETS TO THE SAINT PAUL BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL'S GOLD PLATE DINNER AT A COST OF \$150 PER TICKET.

• M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO THE MN STATE RETIREE'S 18TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER.

• M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$600 CONTRIBUTION TO THE ST. PAUL LABOR STUDIES AND RESOURCE CENTER'S TWELFTH ANNUAL LABOR BOWL.

ORGANIZING: UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS: ATU Local 1005, SEIU Healthcare MN & IA, SEIU Local 284 and TCMU Local 30-73, gave updates on their organizing activities.

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

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Secretary-Treasurer Engeldorf reported on the financial status of the Federation as of January 2023. The report was accepted as read.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Michael Madden reported on behalf of the Chisago County Labor Assembly. Your attendance at our meeting helps build our labor unit as a group that builds stronger relationships with local elected leaders. Our next meeting will be the fourth Tuesday of the month via zoom at 6:00 p.m.

Connie Beissel reported on behalf of the Dakota County Labor Assembly. We will be inviting labor endorsed elected officials to speak. Our next meeting will be the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in person. Contact Colleen Nocerinini or Kera Peterson if you would like to be included.

Kera Peterson reported on behalf of the Washington County Labor Assembly. We met in person to discuss different strategies to bring elected officials into meetings to hear information face-to-face and build relationships. Our next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

Martin Hoerth reported on

behalf of the Ramsey County Labor Assembly. We gathered information and discussed Civil Service in Saint Paul. Representatives from four different national unions will attend next month as we determine next steps. Our next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday of the month via zoom at 6:00 p.m.

PRESIDENT REPORT

President Peterson reported on hosting the Energy bill signing by Governor Walz here at the Labor Center and other bills moving through the legislation. She thanked everyone for getting labor endorsed people elected and supporting bills as well as their communication with their elected leaders. We have been out on the line for SEIU Local 284, and I invite all of you to join us. Solidarity on the strike lines for SEIU Local 284 and the TCMU Local 30-73 is very important.

STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS

Erica Dalager Reed, AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison, reported on Prepare and Prosper offering tax preparations and software available to families. To qualify your income must be under \$73,000 and to qualify for free services your income must be under \$35,000.

Michael Moore, Union Advocate newspaper editor, asked the delegation to call or email him if they have any news to report in the newspaper.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Thanks to the unions that participated in the Winter Carnival Grande Day Parade marching unit. We had approximately fifty people attend our annual warm-up party.

The St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center will be holding their Twelfth Annual Labor Bowl on Thursday, May 4, 2023, at Sun Ray Lanes. Shift times are 2:00, 4:00 and 6:00 p.m.

The Minnesota State Retiree Council, AFL-CIO is holding its 18th Annual Fundraiser on Saturday, May 6, 2023, from 3:00 - 7:00 p.m., at the Sheet Metal Workers Local 10 Hall. For raffle tickets call 651-227-7647 ext. 121.

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

Submitted by,
BERNADINE ENGELDORF
Secretary-Treasurer

MARCH 8, 2023

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

President Peterson read the Code of Conduct, as printed in the Feb. 8, 2023, minutes.

MINUTES

M/S/C TO APPROVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2023, AS PUBLISHED IN THE UNION ADVOCATE NEWSPAPER AFTER THE SECRETARY-TREASURER NOTES THERE ARE NO ADDITIONS OR CHANGES CALLED FOR.

CREDENTIALS

Credentials were received from AFSCME Local 8, AFSCME Local 151 and Plumbers Local 34. President Peterson administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates in attendance.

COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES MARCH 8, 2023

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

President Peterson gave an update on events going on at the Minnesota Legislature and St. Paul precinct caucuses and conventions. The RLF has not started to screen candidates.

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES MARCH 8, 2023

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 gave an update on staff contract negotiations, and affiliation was discussed. The National AFL-CIO is investing in six staff positions in Minnesota. The National AFL-CIO will have a site visit with the MN AFL-CIO on Friday and President Peterson has been asked to participate in panels.

THANK YOU NOTE received from St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's AFL-CIO Community Services Program for the RLF's \$600 contribution to the Twelfth Annual Labor Bowl.

ORGANIZING: UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS: AFSCME Council 5, ATU Local 1005, OPEIU Local 12, SAG-AFTRA, SEIU Local 284 and TCMU Local 30-73, gave updates on their organizing activities.

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

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Acting Secretary-Treasurer Sansom reported on the financial status of the Federation as of February 2023. The report was accepted as read.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Michael Madden reported on behalf of the Chisago County Labor Assembly. Our next meeting will be the fourth Tuesday of the month via zoom at 6:00 p.m.

Official notice

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation may consider recommendations for endorsement in upcoming municipal, school board and school referenda elections at its April 12 meeting.

For more information, call 651-222-3787.

Connie Beissel reported on behalf of the Dakota County Labor Assembly. We invited labor endorsed elected officials to speak. Our next meeting will be the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in person. Contact Colleen Nocerinini or Kera Peterson if you would like to be included.

Brian Beedle reported on behalf of the Washington County Labor Assembly. Our next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

Martin Hoerth reported on behalf of the Ramsey County Labor Assembly. Our next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday of the month via zoom at 6:00 p.m.

PRESIDENT REPORT

President Peterson reported on the SEIU strike in Hastings and her participation on a panel about Minnesota's Trifecta win when the National AFL-CIO comes to St. Paul this week, the bills passed by the Minnesota Legislature and Governor Walz signed into law, and the PRO ACT being reintroduced.

STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS

Colleen Nocerinini, Political Organizer, gave an update on Legislative Issues

Michael Moore, Union Advocate Newspaper Editor, shared that the Saint Paul Union Advocate received two awards in International Labor Communications Association's 2022 Labor Media Contest.

Erica Dalager Reed, AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison, reported on the Twelfth Annual Labor Bowl being held on Thursday, May 4, 2023. Please contact Laura to set up a time to bowl at 651-222-3787 ext. 117. Dalager Reed also reported on the Union Job and Resource Fair, being held on Thursday, May 18, 2023, at IBEW Local 110.

NEW BUSINESS

Jen Guertin, AFSCME, reported that they are looking for volunteers for the St. Paul caucuses and conventions that are coming up in March and April.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Bill Wessinger, NALC retiree, announced the Minnesota State Retiree Council, AFL-CIO is holding its 18th Annual Fundraiser on Saturday, May 6, 2023, from 3:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Sheet Metal Workers Local 10 Hall in Maplewood, and he has raffle tickets to sell.

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


Submitted by,
MARY SANSON

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