

# The St. Paul Union Advocate

127th Year, No. 5, Issue 5472

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

November-December 2023

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## UAW STANDS UP TO BIG 3

**Jeff Schmidt**, a member of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 722, handed out picket signs during a rally at General Motors' parts-distribution plant in Hudson, Wis., on Sept. 29. An electrician in the facility, Schmidt is among 81 Hudson workers who were called out on strike by their international union Sept. 22. They remained on strike – along with 34,000 other UAW members nationwide – when this issue went to press. Talks between the union and the Big 3 automakers were ongoing, but UAW members were sticking to their demand for raises of 40% over the

next four years – equal to the raises that CEOs at GM, Ford and Stellantis gave themselves over the previous four years. “I want to work for a company that is competitive in loyalty, not just profits,” Local 722 President Steve Frisque said at the rally. “That is why we are out here and why we will continue to be on strike ... until those companies give us a contract that reflects the hard work and sacrifices that UAW employees have made to bring the Big 3 out of near-bankruptcy to where they are now, making record profits. **More strike coverage on Page 11.** Union Advocate photo


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

Labor Endorsed Candidates & Referendums   General Election Nov. 7, 2023	
<p><b>Saint Paul City Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ward 2:</b> Rebecca Noecker</li> <li>• <b>Ward 4:</b> Mitra Jalali</li> <li>• <b>Ward 5:</b> Hwa Jeong Kim</li> <li>• <b>Ward 6:</b> Nelsie Yang</li> <li>• <b>Ward 7:</b> Cheniqua Johnson</li> </ul>	<p><b>West Saint Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Schools (ISD 197)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Board:</b> Rowen Elsmore</li> <li>• <b>Operating and Technology Levy Referendum:</b> Yes on both questions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Saint Paul Public Schools (ISD 625)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Board:</b> Chauntyll Allen, Yusef Carrillo, Carlo Franco, Erica Valliant</li> </ul>	<p><b>Inver Grove Heights School District (ISD 199)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Operating Levy Referendum:</b> Yes on both questions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Schools (ISD 196)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Board:</b> Sachin Isaacs, Cory Johnson, Jackie Magnuson, Anna Williams</li> </ul>	<p><b>Hastings Public Schools (ISD 200)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Board:</b> Matt Bruns, Mariah Ring, Matt Seeger, Brandy Wentzler</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mounds View Schools (ISD 621)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Board:</b> Heidi Danielson, Jim DeMay, Alissa Daire Nelson, Jonathan Weinhagen</li> </ul>	<p><b>South Washington County School District (ISD 833)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Board:</b> Melinda Dois, Simi Patnaik</li> <li>• <b>Building Bond and Technology Levy Referendum:</b> Yes on all questions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stillwater Area Public Schools (ISD 834)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>School Board:</b> Chris Lauer</li> <li>• <b>Bond Referendum:</b> Vote Yes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Chisago Lakes School District (ISD 2144)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Levy and Bond Referendums:</b> Vote Yes</li> </ul>

Vote on or before November 7th. Find your polling place and information about registering to vote through Election Day at [mnvotes.org](http://mnvotes.org). A full list of labor endorsements is posted at [stpaulunions.org](http://stpaulunions.org).

## Go Figure

### \$20.997 million

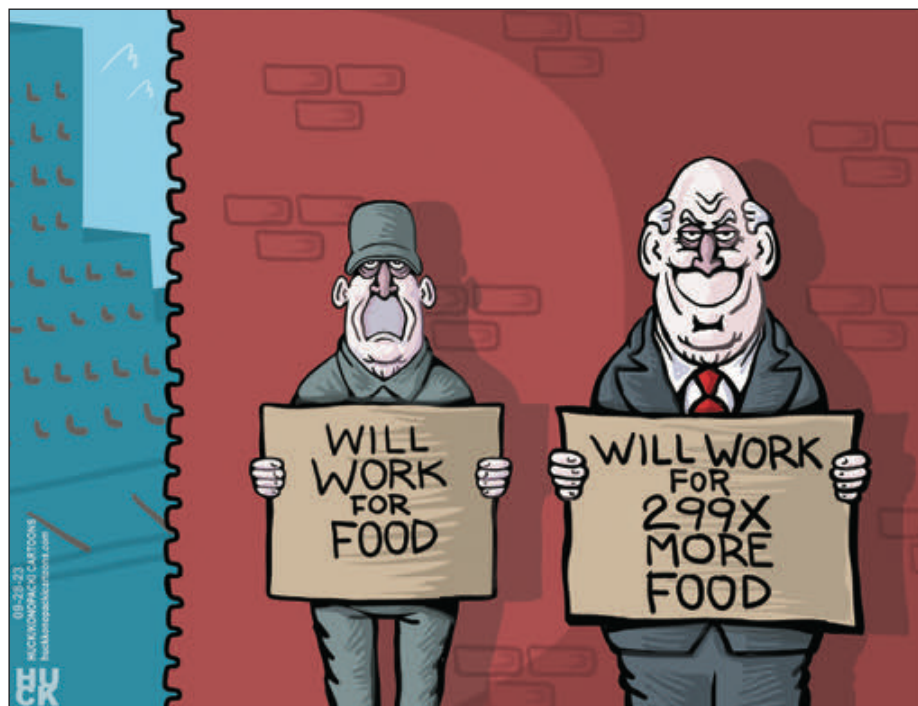
Ford CEO James Farley's total compensation in 2022. That's 281 times the median compensation of Ford workers.

### \$28.98 million

General Motors CEO Mary Barra's total compensation in 2022, a whopping 362 times the median compensation at GM.

### \$250 billion

Combined profits of the Big 3, automakers from 2013 to 2022, resulting in \$66 billion in stock buybacks and dividends.



## Labor Voices: Kera Peterson

### Students' freedom to learn is on the ballot this election year

Each year the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation and its local labor assemblies in Ramsey, Washington, Dakota and Chisago counties screen candidates for local offices. These conversations are an opportunity for local union members to hear directly from candidates about the issues that matter. Typically, for school board candidates, those issues include class sizes, student supports, allocation of school funds and collective bargaining rights. We might not see eye to eye with every candidate on those issues, and not every candidate we screen receives the labor endorsement. But our screenings give union members an opportunity to talk with candidates about labor's shared priorities for public education.

There are new issues at play this year. We've seen attacks on public education in school districts across Minnesota, including the east metro. Anti-public education groups are training and funding candidates who want to limit what educators can teach and roll back protections that allow students and educators to feel safe as their authentic selves. Many of these candidates support book bans and would restrict what students can learn about history, racism, and civil rights.

Many also openly attack measures taken by our schools to protect LGBTQ+ youth, and have advocated for limiting students' access to mental health supports. In perhaps the most extreme example of this disturbing trend, one school board candidate in Roseville is a Holocaust denier who has called for Jewish children to be forcibly removed from their parents.

Fortunately, school employees and their unions are sounding the alarm about this emerging threat to students' freedom to learn in safe, supportive environments. In a Capitol press conference last month, union leaders stood shoulder to shoulder with parents, LGBTQ+ advocates, Jewish community leaders and others to raise awareness of the well-funded, coordinated and hateful campaign. Denise Specht, president of Education Minnesota, warned of a "toxic, national movement trying to sneak into" about a dozen school boards, mostly in the suburbs. She identified right-wing, extremist groups that have been recruiting and training school board candidates over the last year - with an eye toward using the campaigns as a springboard to success in the 2024 legislative elections. "It's easy to dismiss this movement as a Florida thing, as an Oklahoma thing, as a Texas thing," Specht said. "But that would be a mistake because it is here."

What do these MAGA extremists hope to accomplish if elected to our school boards? In short, they hope to restrict

**"Anti-public education groups are recruiting and funding candidates who want to limit what educators can teach."**

- Kera Peterson



the freedom of Minnesota students to learn honest, age-appropriate lessons about racism, sexism and gender. They would ban books that offer a truthful accounting of our country's sometimes-imperfect history, including topics like slavery and the Civil Rights Movement. They would also ban children's books that acknowledge the humanity of our LGBTQ+ neighbors. In this year alone, Bloomington public schools have pulled over 30 titles off their library shelves, pending the outcome of challenges from MAGA extremists in the district.

Rather than providing educators with the support they need, these extreme candidates would further drive caring professionals out of the classroom by treating them as pawns in an overheated culture war. "This toxic ideology is in Minnesota, with its fantasy history, oppressive gender roles and hurtful conspiracies," President Specht said. "That fact is forcing a simple question on voters this fall. Will Minnesota schools keep striving to be more welcoming, evolving for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth, and supporting students in crisis, or not?"

The most effective way to reject these attacks on our public schools is to vote on or before Nov. 7 for labor-endorsed school board candidates. Our endorsed candidates have committed to tackling the real problems facing students and communities. They share our priorities, like adequate mental health resources for students, partnering with legislators to address school funding and addressing the achievement gap. They share our vision of inclusive, welcoming schools that respect all students and their differences, and will work so that our young learners can have the bright futures they all deserve. Find the list of our endorsed candidate for school boards across the east metro on the front cover of this issue, or go to Education Minnesota's website to find a statewide list of union-endorsed school board candidates.

- Kera Peterson is president of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, online at [stpaulunions.org](http://stpaulunions.org).

## Letters

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

## The Union Advocate

Official publication of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO. 353 W. 7th St. #201, St. Paul, MN 55102. Phone 651-222-3787 x112; fax 651-293-1989; e-mail: [mmoore@stpaulunions.org](mailto:mmoore@stpaulunions.org)

Editor: Michael Moore

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Erica Dalager Reed, Liaison



**This issue went to press Oct. 19  
It was scheduled to go in the mail Oct. 26  
Next news deadline: Dec. 5**

The Union Advocate will publish 10 issues in 2023. The remaining press runs is scheduled Dec. 7. Press deadlines for 2024 have yet to be determined.

Advertising deadlines precede our press dates by three days. To advertise, contact the Advocate office for display options and rate information, or download an ad flier online at [advocate.stpaulunions.org/advertise](http://advocate.stpaulunions.org/advertise).

Subscriptions are \$15 for calendar year 2024. Mail payment to Union Advocate, 353 W. 7th St., Suite 201, St. Paul, MN 55102.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Saint Paul Union Advocate, 353 W. 7th St., STE 201, St. Paul, MN 55102-2314. Published monthly except during July and December by the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation, 353 W. 7th St., STE 201, St. Paul, MN 55102-2314. (USPS 647820) (ISSN 24723320)

Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN.



# Carleton art exhibit inspired by 1934 Teamsters strikes

An art exhibit at Carleton College in Northfield casts the pivotal 1934 Teamsters strikes in Minneapolis as part of a larger struggle against fascism.

“Pedagogy and Propaganda: New and Recent Work by Brooks Turner” runs through Nov. 15 at the Perlman Teaching Museum, located in Carleton College’s Weitz Center for Creativity at 320 3rd St. in Northfield.

The exhibit comes with the 90th anniversary of the Teamsters strikes approaching next year. The strikes are widely credited for breaking the power of the anti-union Citizens Alliance and transforming Minneapolis into a union town.

The 1934 strikes included innovative tactics such as roving pickets to intercept delivery trucks, as well as pitched battles

in the streets between strikers and a private army fielded by the anti-union Citizens Alliance. Minneapolis police opened fire on strikers July 20, 1934, killing two men and injuring many more.

Turner’s exhibit at Carleton features a newly created series of over-sized tapes to tell the story of the 1934 strikes, using a mash-up images originating from photographs of the conflict and even headlines from the Minneapolis Labor Review.

Turner has focused on this era before. In 2020, Turner produced a newspaper-style publication, “Legends and Myths of Ancient Minnesota,” which he paid to distribute as an insert in about 36,000 copies of the Star Tribune newspaper.

Adjacent exhibits include a 2020-2021 project by Turner blending archival, pri-

mary-source content from newspapers and Turner’s original drawings.

Carleton’s Perlman Teaching Museum admission and parking are free. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and noon to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

A supplemental display also is on view on the fourth floor of Carleton’s Laurence McKinley Gould Library, located nearby at 1 North College St.

The Gould Library display features artwork by Turner and others, as well as materials related to Minnesota strike history from the Carleton archives and the East Side Freedom Library archives.

Learn more online at [carleton.edu](http://carleton.edu).

– Minneapolis Labor Review

## National APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

NOVEMBER 13-19, 2023

### Apprenticeship Week runs Nov. 13 to 19

Building Trades unions, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry and job-training organizations statewide will celebrate National Apprenticeship Week Nov. 13 to 19 with events that highlight the earn-as-you-learn career opportunities available through registered apprenticeship.

The Labor Department will hold events in person and online throughout the week. Find an up-to-date listing at [www.dli.mn.gov/NAW](http://www.dli.mn.gov/NAW).

The agency also plans to celebrate an “Apprentice of the Day” throughout the week. Submit nominations to [dli.apprenticeship@state.mn.us](mailto:dli.apprenticeship@state.mn.us).

Apprenticeship Week webinars will explore topics ranging from the basics of apprenticeship to career-building opportunities in specific industries, including utilities, education and the construction trades. Other webinars will focus on opportunities for members of targeted communities, including military veterans and workers with disabilities.

In-person events include “speed networking” for community organizations and registered apprenticeship programs Wednesday, Nov. 15. Details will be posted on the agency’s website.

Minnesota has over 180 registered apprenticeship programs. Most of the state’s 12,000 apprentices are enrolled in programs sponsored by Building Trades unions and their employers. Unions and contractors tailor their apprenticeship programs to meet the unique demands of their crafts.

### Labor Center to host blood drive Nov. 28

Registration is open for the annual Labor-Red Cross blood drive Tuesday, Nov. 28 in St. Paul. The event will run from noon to 6 p.m. at Labor Center, located at 353 West 7th Street.



Make an appointment to donate blood online at [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) using the code SPRLF, or schedule a time to give directly with AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison Erica Dalager Reed, available at [edalager@stpaulunions.org](mailto:edalager@stpaulunions.org) or 651-222-3787 ext. 120.

Free, off-street parking is available to donors in the Labor Center lot.

The blood drive is co-sponsored by the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center (LSRC), Greater Twin Cities United Way and the American Red Cross. The LSRC is the nonprofit arm of the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation.

### Construct Tomorrow plans RiverCentre career expo Dec. 6-7



With college tuition on the rise, apprenticeships in the construction trades offer young workers an alternative career path that blends traditional coursework with paid, on-the-job training. To introduce Minnesota high schoolers to these career opportunities, Construct Tomorrow, a partnership of union contractors and apprenticeship training centers in Minnesota, holds events across the state. Apprenticeship programs set up interactive, hands-on activities to give participants a taste of work in their specific craft. Construct Tomorrow will hold an event at RiverCentre in St. Paul on Dec. 6 and 7, from 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each day. Register for the event in St. Paul and view other events happening across the state online at [constructtomorrow.org/trades-registration](http://constructtomorrow.org/trades-registration).

Union Advocate file photo



## 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**  
Nov. 28, 6 p.m.

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

**Dakota County Assembly**

Nov. 9 & Dec. 14, 7 p.m.

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

**Ramsey County Assembly**

November/December meeting

times and locations will be posted at [www.stpaulunions.org](http://www.stpaulunions.org) when scheduled.

**Washington County Assembly**

November/December meeting

times and locations will be posted at [www.stpaulunions.org](http://www.stpaulunions.org) when scheduled.



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

# As Minnesota's new nursing home board begins meeting, worker survey bolsters case for raising pay

By Michael Moore  
Union Advocate editor

A survey of over 1,300 Minnesota nursing home workers, released in October, offers a glimpse of the challenges ahead for a new state board charged with establishing minimum standards in the industry, which has seen crisis-level staffing shortfalls in recent years.

Two-thirds of survey respondents, who included workers from 100 of the state's 350 nursing homes, said they aren't paid enough to cover their basic needs. Nine of 10 said raising the minimum wage in their facilities to \$25 per hour would significantly improve staffing.

"You don't see many young girls or boys applying to be a (nursing home) worker," Lognye Adoo, a CNA at The Villas at Robbinsdale, said during a press conference called by her union, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa, to discuss the survey results.

"The money they are paying right now is not attractive," Adoo added. "So instead of coming here, they go to work in fast food or Walmart, where they make more money than they would being a health worker."

The crisis in nursing home staffing came into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic, as hospital patients ready for discharge struggled to find nursing homes that would accept

new residents.

Minnesota nursing homes last year reported the largest staffing shortages in the country, according to an analysis of data published by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. A December 2022 report from University of Minnesota's Center on Women, Gender and Public Policy tied the staffing shortfall to "the crushing working conditions, dismal wages, and physical risks of direct care work in the healthcare sector."

The crisis sparked action at the Capitol last spring, as state lawmakers established the nine-member Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board, with equal representation from the industry, labor and state regulators.

The board, which began meeting in September, is authorized to "conduct investigations into working conditions in the nursing home industry and adopt rules establishing minimum employment standards reasonably necessary and appropriate to protect the health and welfare of nursing home workers," according to the state.

The survey results bolster the case for a higher wage floor in the industry, which will be a priority for three worker representatives on the board, SEIU Healthcare President Jamie Gulley, United Steelworkers staff rep Michele Fredrickson and Michelle Armstrong, a member of

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1189.

"To address the crisis facing nursing homes across our state, we have to make sure the people doing the hard, essential work every day have the pay and benefits that allow them to care for their own families," said Armstrong, a LPN at The Estates at Lynnhurst in St. Paul.

"Right now, too many of these front-line workers aren't getting the respect and pay they deserve from their employers, and that is hurting residents who are bearing the brunt of the lack of workers willing to do this critical work."

Nursing home worker advocates are pushing a \$25 minimum wage to ensure care workers can meet their basic needs. About 80% of survey respondents reported earning less than that.

At a meeting last month sponsored by SEIU, nursing home workers across Minnesota voted to approve several demands of the new board, including a \$25 minimum wage, the right to form a union, a retirement plan and safe staffing for workers and residents.

"I don't care who the person is, they need care when they are older or they get sick," Adoo said. "No matter who you are, you will need a caregiver, so they are very important people, and I think they should do something to make sure we aren't working short, that we don't lack."

## Sexual assault nurses unionize with MNA

Nurses in Allina Health's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) unit, based at the Mercy-Unity hospital in Fridley, voted Sept. 21 to form a union with the Minnesota Nurses Association in an election overseen by the National Labor Relations Board.

Stephanie Gunderson, a member of the bargaining unit, said SANE nurses looked to unionize because their working conditions have become "unsustainable" due to chronic short staffing and, predictably, high turnover.

"This means we can't always respond to victims of violence, leaving them to either go to another hospital system or wait hours for a specialized nurse to respond," Gunderson said. "We want to be there for our patients who need our services, which is why we voted to have a collective voice in our workplace by unionizing with MNA."

Despite providing care to people in vulnerable moments, SANE nurses endure low pay and long, unstable hours, which compound the stress of their position. Mary Turner, MNA's president, said Allina executives are driving caring, compassionate and competent nurses away from this vital work.

"MNA members welcome Allina SANE nurses to our union family," she said. "We are excited to assist them as they take their seat at the table and have a say in their workplace."

**CONTINUE THE FIGHT FOR WORKER'S RIGHTS. VOTE.**

**STEAMFITTERS PIPEFITTERS LOCAL 455**  
ESTABLISHED NOVEMBER 5, 1964  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

**November 7, 2023**

## Metro Transit contract talks continue, but ATU balks at new language

As negotiations continued last month over a new contract covering 2,000 Metro Transit workers, management "introduced contract language that we will NOT accept," Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 reported to members Oct. 10.

Metro Transit, according to the union, seeks "discretion to place a new employee at any step in a wage progression."

The union's update shared that management has increased the economic package to wage increases totaling 8% over the length of the three-year deal, with positive movement on shift differentials. But for base wages, "there's got to be more movement," ATU Local 1005 president Ryan Timlin said.

In the last legislative session, DFL majorities and Gov. Tim Walz established a new metro-wide sales tax that will provide Metro Transit with new dollars, Timlin noted.

"They have a dedicated source of funding now," he added. "They've got to start moving on wages to make these desirable jobs."

With current pay levels, Timlin said, Metro Transit has had difficulty hiring to fill open positions - particularly for mechanics - although hiring for operators has improved somewhat.

Members of Local 1005 voted in September to authorize a strike, with 94% voting in favor.

Another negotiation session was planned for October 27.

- Minneapolis Labor Review

## Nurses renew call for hospital staffing legislation after troubling Health Department report

The Minnesota Department of Health issued a report Sept. 27 confirming what union nurses in the state have been telling anyone who will listen for over a decade: hospital staffing levels are putting patients at risk.

The annual MDH report documents adverse events in Minnesota hospitals, which increased for the second consecutive year in 2022. Hospitals reported 572 adverse events, 21 of which resulted in patient deaths - the highest death total since 2006.

MDH acknowledges in the report that the COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt health systems in 2022, but the agency also cites workforce shortages as a factor that likely contributed to negative patient outcomes.

"Staffing shortages both limit the number of hands available to assist with patient care needs, such as repositioning and mobility, and create backups in transfers of care across facilities," an MDH press release announcing the report reads.

The Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA), the union representing 22,000 nurses in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and North Dakota, was more blunt in its analysis of the data.



Mary Turner

"As long as the corporatization of healthcare is allowed to run rampant in Minnesota, we will continue to see an increase in adverse events for Minnesota patients and nurses leaving the bedside in droves," MNA president Mary Turner, an ICU nurse at North Memorial in Robbinsdale, said in a statement. "It's time for our elected leaders to act, for the sake of all Minnesotans."

The timing of the report was particularly disturbing for nurses in the Allina Health system, which recently proposed further reductions to the number of nurses caring for patients at local hospitals, according to MNA. Allina nurses planned informational picketing around the issue Oct. 26 at Allina's United, Abbott Northwestern and Mercy hospitals.

There are more than 130,000 registered nurses in Minnesota, up 8,000 from last year. But thousands have left the bedside in recent years. MNA members say that's because of unsafe and unsustainable conditions in hospitals, citing surveys that say unsafe staffing is the No. 1 issue driving nurses away.

MNA has been collecting information from its members for over 25 years on how short staffing risks patient safety, and the union has fought for staffing minimums at the bargaining table and at the Capitol.

In the most recent legislative session, union nurses championed the bipartisan Keeping Nurses at the Bedside Act, which would have established committees of direct-care workers and management at Minnesota hospitals to discuss what works best for staffing for their patients on a hospital-by-hospital, unit-by-unit level.

But a threat from the Mayo Clinic to withdraw from planned investments in its Rochester campus killed the bill in the session's final days.



**"We need leaders who share our values and priorities."**

**Monica S.,  
Minneapolis resident and  
LIUNA Local 363 Laborer**

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**WORKDAY**  
MAGAZINE

# After striking last home match, MN United video technicians seek fan support

By Michael Moore  
Union Advocate editor

Video board and broadcast technicians picketed Allianz Field in St. Paul before and during Minnesota United's last home game of the regular season Oct. 7, and their strike kept the soccer match from appearing as scheduled on Apple TV.

Now, the technicians are asking Loons fans to help put pressure on the club and owner Dr. Bill McGuire to settle a fair contract with their union, IATSE Local 745.

"If you've attended a game this season you may have received a survey asking about your gameday experience," members of the bargaining unit said in a social media post. "Let them know you'd like the in-house crew to get a contract.

"If you're a season ticket holder, let your ticket rep know that you want the in-house crew to get a contract. Just be respectful and polite of course."

IATSE members informed the club that they were going on strike about 8 hours before its match against the San Jose Quakes was scheduled to kick off. But technicians also made clear they would call off the



Members of IATSE Local 745 picketed outside the employee gate at Allianz Field after calling a strike before Minnesota United's last home game of the regular season Oct. 7. Union Advocate photo

strike if Minnesota United agreed to their contract demands.

In bargaining that began last March, Local 745 has sought annual raises and a health care contribution of \$50 per game, as well as retirement

contributions, safety language and parking accommodations at the stadium.

On the picket line, technicians characterized their demands as modest, noting the health care contribution would amount to about \$12,000

annually. But so far the club would rather pay a union-busting law firm than put money on the table, video board technician Josiah Wollan said.

"We've just been hit with stalling tactics," Wollan said. "They're not trying to meet in the

middle at all, so we will not be walking onto the concourse today until a contract is agreed to. But if they decide they want to be serious, the show will go on."

When fellow IATSE members who work on the television broadcast refused to cross the video board crew's picket line, it meant fans at home could not stream the game on Apple TV. Minnesota United responded with a statement apologizing to fans and viewers for the inconvenience, claiming the workers behind the strike were "non-MNUFC employees."

But video board technicians are, in fact, employees of the club. That's according to the National Labor Relations Board, which rejected the club's arguments that the technicians were independent contractors when it certified their successful union election last year.

Wollan and other union members said they were disappointed the club did not agree to their contract, but "overwhelmed by the support and solidarity" they received on the picket line.

Follow the technicians on X, formerly know as Twitter, at @MnufcUnion.

## Labor Board reports 3% increase in petitions for union recognition

Data released last month by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) confirmed that American workers are increasingly turning to the agency for support in forming unions and defending their legally protected rights on the job.

The NLRB received 22,448 case filings in fiscal year 2023, which ended Sept. 30. It marked an increase of 10% over the previous year and the highest number of cases filed since 2016.

The overall increase stemmed from both unfair labor practice (ULP) charges and representation-related activity.

ULP charges increased 10% in the last fiscal year. Union petitions were up 3%, with a total of 2,594 election petitions in all. That's the highest number of filings since the 2015 fiscal year.

The uptick in election petitions last year builds on the dramatic, post-pandemic surge in organizing activity reported by the NLRB a year ago - a 53% increase from 2021 to 2022.

The increased workload has posed challenges for the agency, which has seen funding and staffing shortages, NLRB Chair Lauren McFerran said. In December 2022, Congress gave the NLRB a \$25 million increase for FY 2023, ending a hiring moratorium, preventing furloughs, and allowing the NLRB to backfill some critical staff vacancies.

However, the Agency remains understaffed after almost a decade of flat funding. In the past two decades, staffing in NLRB field offices has shrunk by 50%.

## Correctional officers hope new AFSCME contract helps ease staffing crisis in state facilities

Correctional officers with the Minnesota Department of Corrections voted last month to ratify a new contract with the State of Minnesota. Their union, AFSCME Council 5, celebrated the "landmark" agreement that will raise pay dramatically for nearly 2,000 workers across the corrections system.

Council 5 Interim Executive Director Bart Andersen said the new contract "places historic and transformational investments in our corrections workforce in order to better recruit and retain the best talent in our corrections system and enhance public safety."

For officers currently working in the

Department of Corrections, that means pay increases ranging from 18% to 34% over a period of just 10 months, according to AFSCME. It's the largest wage increase ever won by the union – and a reflection of the staffing crisis that has plagued many facilities in the system in recent years.

"AFSCME Council 5 and local union leaders are constantly in our correctional facilities all across our state, and we heard very clear solutions from our members on how to fix the corrections staffing crisis," Andersen said. "Higher wages are necessary in order to recruit and retain talented workers.

"This landmark new contract will ensure that being a Correctional Officer is not just a job, but a lifelong career in public service that is filled with opportunities for personal and professional growth, safety on the job, union protections and economic security, reaffirming the essential role these workers have in our society."

Council 5 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees represents about 43,000 workers statewide, including about 18,000 State of Minnesota employees who negotiated contracts separately from the corrections unit.

## Labor holiday drive seeks donations

No family should go without food on the table. That goes double during the holidays.

The Labor of Love fundraising drive will help get food to families in need throughout the east metro this holiday season. Contributions from unions and their members will be accepted through Nov. 30.

All donations are used to purchase gift cards from union grocery stores. Local agencies distribute the gift cards to area families in December.

Participating agencies include Catholic Charities in St. Paul, Jewish Community Center and Neighbors Inc. in South St. Paul. The St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center Emergency Fund, which assists union members facing financial hardship, distributes 30 percent of proceeds from Labor of Love.

To contribute, mail a check payable to Labor Studies and Resource Center to LSRC; Labor of Love; Attn: Laura; 353 West 7th St., Suite 201; Saint Paul, MN 55102.

Labor of Love is co-sponsored by Greater Twin Cities United Way, the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation, the LSRC and the AFL-CIO Community Services program.

## After authorizing strike, Seward Co-op workers win new contract

Workers at Seward Community Co-op in Minneapolis, members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 663, voted unanimously Oct. 2 to ratify a new contract with the employer that will provide industry-leading wages, pay equity and improved benefits, according to the union.

A week before ratifying their contract, Seward workers had voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike, citing charges of unfair labor practices that the union agreed to drop after reaching a tentative agreement with the co-op.

Under the three-year contract, the co-op grocery's starting wage will rise to \$17.65 per hour – "among the highest starting wage for co-ops nationwide," according to Local 663.

Additionally, full-time and part-time workers at the top or above scales will receive \$5 per hour more in pay over the life of the contract. Other workers will see their wages increase by \$6.50 to \$8 per hour over the next three years.

"These are life changing raises that make a real difference in peoples' daily lives," said Anthony Taylor-Gouge, a

grocery shift lead at Seward's store on Franklin Avenue. "It gives us as workers a real future at the co-op."

Seward employs about 180 workers at its two natural foods grocery stores in south Minneapolis.

Whitney Peterson, a multi-department clerk, said the new contract "works to benefit all of our workers in significant ways."

"This wasn't accomplished by a couple, a few, or even a dozen union members," she said. "It was everyone's effort for everyone's benefit. We won together."

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## Allina Health clinicians vote by overwhelming margin to unionize in historic election

By Max Nesterak

[www.minnesotareformer.com](http://www.minnesotareformer.com)

Allina Health doctors, physician assistants and nurse practitioners voted to form the nation's largest private-sector union of advanced care practitioners.

Federal labor officials tallied ballots Oct. 6 from clinicians at 60 Allina primary and urgent care clinics in Minnesota plus one in Wisconsin, with 325 votes for and 200 against unionizing with Doctors Council SEIU.

The election results could prove a watershed moment in the increasingly consolidated health care industry, as doctors look to unions to claw back power over their practices usurped in recent years by sprawling health conglomerates.

Doctors' unions are rare — just 7% of physicians are unionized, mostly in public hospitals. But the vote shows organizing highly paid professionals is possible in the private sector and could inspire a surge of unionization efforts like that seen among low-wage workers at universities and national chains like Starbucks, Trader Joe's and REI.

Allina clinicians complain of unrealistic productivity demands and increasing bureaucratic tasks that force them to churn through patients with few support staff. One recent study found family medicine physicians spend more than half their time on paperwork — six hours out of their average 11-hour day.

Allina clinicians say burnout is high, and a union will give them a collective voice to advocate for working conditions that will improve care for patients.

In the leadup to the election, Allina executives urged doctors, physician assistants and nurse practitioners to vote against unionizing. They promised to address worker complaints but don't want a third party preventing a direct working relationship.

Doctors in white coats and nurse practitioners in scrubs cheered and embraced one another after the ballots were counted in the federal office building in downtown Minneapolis by officials with the National Labor Relations Board, which oversees private-sector unions.

"We ask that Allina accept our union. We're ready to get to the bargaining table. We want to make health care better," said Dr. Matt Hoffman, a family physician at Allina Vadnais Heights Clinic north of St. Paul. "Unionizing is viable. This is a start to fix health care."

In a statement, Allina said it was disappointed that some providers voted to be represented by a union and noted that the organization has been nationally recognized as one of the top places to work in health care.

"We remain committed to our ongoing work to create a culture where all employees feel supported and valued. Our focus now is on moving forward to ensure the best interests of our employees, patients and the communities we serve," the statement said.

Allina did not say if it would challenge the results of the election.

The vote deals another blow to Allina's fight against unions; physicians at its Mercy Hospital — with campuses in Coon Rapids and Fridley — are also seeking to unionize.

Over 100 doctors at Mercy voted by a margin of 2-to-1 to unionize in March. Allina challenged the results of the election, but a federal hearing officer sided with the union. Allina is appealing the decision.

Much of Allina's hospital workforce is already unionized, including hospital nurses, nursing assistants, lab technicians, mental health workers, dietitians and other staff. Yet the vote by clinicians marks a significant expansion of organized labor into Allina's primary and urgent care clinics, where far fewer workers are organized.



Doctors active in efforts to unionize at Allina Health — (L to R) Nick VenOsdel, Matt Hoffman and Renee Koronkowski — spoke to delegates at the Saint Paul labor federation meeting in September.

Union Advocate photo

Allina is one of the state's largest health systems, with 6 million clinic and urgent care visits in 2022 and revenues topping \$5 billion. But the organization has also recently shown signs of financial strain. In July, Allina announced it would lay off around 350 workers, including at Mercy Hospital.

Allina has also faced national scrutiny after the New York Times revealed in June an Allina policy to cut off non-critical care to patients behind on medical bills. Following the story and public outcry, Allina stopped the practice.

The unionization drive reflects a consequence of rapid health care consolidation of the past decade. Years ago, unhappy doctors could start their own practices and have a great deal of control over their work. Today, doctors say they have little choice but to work within the system because the costs of running a primary care practice and complying with complex regulatory and insurance demands are simply too great.

Joining a physician-owned practice is an increasingly unrealistic alternative, too, as they are bought up by ever-larger health systems.

Over the past decade, the share of physicians who work in private practices dropped 13 percentage points, from 60% to 47%, according to the American Medical Association. At the same time, the share of physicians who work for hospitals and or health systems has ballooned from 26% to 52%, according to surveys sponsored by the Physicians Advocacy Institute.

That rise in consolidation has been a boon for health care administrators, who saw their ranks swell by 3,200% between 1975 and 2010, by one estimate. The number of physicians in the U.S., meanwhile, increased by 150% over the same period, roughly keeping up with population growth.

Jennifer Mehmel, a recently retired Allina pediatrician, was part-owner of a physician-managed practice, Aspen Medical Group, that merged with Allina about 15 years ago. She said many of her colleagues felt incredible pressure to be bought out because of the high cost of electronic medical records.

"We had to go somewhere. We couldn't afford to do it on our own," Mehmel said.

She said one person floated the idea of unionizing if Allina took over, but it never took hold.

"Most people thought, we're not going to need that," Mehmel said. "We were wrong."

— This article originally appeared on the Minnesota Reformer website and is reprinted with permission.



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-Jim Gleb, President-



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Dignitaries on hand for the inaugural Yellow Ribbon Ribfest at the Minnesota National Guard's headquarters in Arden Hills included (L to R) Gov. Tim Walz, JACK-FM radio host Remy Maxwell, Maj. Gen. Shawn Manke, Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, Arden Hills Mayor David Grant and Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council President Dan McConnell.

photos by Vince Muzik, Fair Contracting Foundation of MN

## Building Trades host inaugural Yellow Ribbon Ribfest

The Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council's inaugural Yellow Ribbon Ribfest drew 24 competitors, who combined to smoke over 400 racks of ribs at the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division Headquarters in Arden Hills on Sept. 16.

Proceeds from the event went toward the Building Strong Communities initiative, a nonprofit that introduces military veterans, women and people of color to career opportunities in the unionized construction trades.

The event also featured live music and a program with Gov. Tim Walz and Maj. Gen. Shawn Manke of the Minnesota National Guard, as well as a career fair featuring Building Trades unions' registered apprenticeship programs.

"We were told by some of the competitors who do this quite regularly that it was one of the most well organized barbecue competitions that they've ever been a part of," said LIUNA Local 563 Business Manager Joe Fowler, a lead organizer of the event. "So I'll take that in our first year as a win."

Judges voted to determine winners in the Chicken and Pork Ribs categories, as well as a grand champion. Members of the public were able to sample pork ribs and vote for winners of the People's Choice award.

The Grand Champion award went to "Porklift Certified," an entry sponsored by Ryan Companies. "Gr8 BBQ Route Hogs," a Laborers union (LIUNA) entry, won the Reserve Grand Champion award.

"Porklift Certified" finished first in the Ribs category. "Smokin' Returns," sponsored by Building Trades Credit Union, was second, and "Beer Wolf BBQ," a LIUNA entry, finished third.

Sprinkler Fitters Local 417 finished first in the Chicken category. "Red Bulls," an entry from the Minnesota National Guard, won second place, and



Jim McNamara served up a helping of ribs from Heat and Frost Insulators Local 34's entry at the Yellow Ribbon Ribfest Sept. 16.

"Gr8 BBQ Route Hogs" took third.

In the People's Choice category, LECET finished first, Heat and Frost Insulators Local 34 second and Sprinkler Fitters Local 417 third.

## SUPPORT YOUR LABOR FRIENDLY CANDIDATES

Heat and Frost Insulators & Allied Workers, Local #34  
 95 Empire Drive \* St. Paul, MN 55103  
[www.insulators34.org](http://www.insulators34.org)

# UAW members picketing around the clock in Plymouth, Hudson

By Michael Moore  
 Union Advocate editor

A week after rolling out their “stand-up strike” at Big 3 facilities across the U.S. Sept. 15, the United Auto Workers expanded their picket lines to two parts-distribution facilities in the Twin Cities area, a Stellantis shop in Plymouth and a General Motors shop in Hudson, Wis.

At press time, over 34,000 workers at 44 facilities were on strike, and union leaders were threatening more picket lines if executives did not agree to give workers their fair share of the \$251 billion in profits raked in over the last decade by Ford, GM and Stellantis.

On the picket line in Hudson, members of UAW Local 722 said the contract fight was long overdue, pointing to concessions – like a two-tier wage system – that their union made during the Great Recession to help the automakers avoid bankruptcy. Now that the companies have recovered, autoworkers say, they deserve to be rewarded just as executives and shareholders have been.

“It’s refreshing to see that the lower class and the middle class are putting their foot down,” Local 722 member Luke Cloutier said. “It’s awesome to be a part of.”

Matthew Dupre, a millwright at the Hudson facility, said many UAW members’ wages are so low that “we can’t afford to buy the cars that we build.” That’s especially true for workers hired since the concessionary agreements. In Hudson, new hires start at just \$17 per hour, down from \$19 in 2007.

“We’re standing up for what’s right, for the people coming into these companies,” Dupre added. “The UAW built the middle class.”

Auto workers aren’t standing alone, either. Dupre walked the picket line Oct. 6 with U.S. Sen. Tina Smith, just days after President Joe Biden made history as the first sitting president to support workers on the picket line.

Smith praised striking workers for taking a stand for fairness, and she said the “dramatic imbalance in wealth between working people and the billionaires that run these companies” is bad for the U.S. economy.

“When labor unions are strong, and when more people are getting a fair wage, our economy is stronger as well,” Smith said. “There is a clear connection.”

An Associated Press poll of registered voters found just 9% sided with the car company bosses in the dispute. The pro-union sentiment has been a lift for workers on the picket line, Local 722 member Tyler Rentz said, from cars honking as they drive by to supporters stopping to donate food, drinks and firewood.

Workers in Plymouth and Hudson are picketing around the clock, seven days a week.

“It’s tremendous to see the support for our local,” Rentz said. “It’s usually just six of us here holding down the line, so to see this support is amazing.”



Labor and community supporters – and elected officials like U.S. Sen. Tina Smith (bottom-left) – have walked the lines in solidarity with UAW members in Plymouth and Hudson, Wis., since they joined the strike Sept. 22. At top, Local 722 members (L to R) Matt Ferris, Jordan Thompson and Brett Carey chat with fellow workers on the line at the Hudson parts facility. At bottom-right, Gabriel Stang, 2-year-old daughter of Local 125 member Michael Stang, on strike in Plymouth, gets into the spirit during a rally. Union Advocate photos

Rallies on the picket lines in Plymouth and Hudson saw overwhelming support from the labor community. During a rally in Hudson on Sept. 29, St. Paul Regional Labor Federation President Kera Peterson listed off over 10 unions that she saw represented in the crowd.

“We are unified in this struggle, and we will be with you as long as it takes,” she said.

“Being on strike is not easy,” Wisconsin AFL-CIO President Stephanie Bloomingdale told workers. “It is a sacrifice for yourselves and your families. So I want to say thank you, Local 722, for staying out here 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“What you are doing is not only going to better yourselves, but better all of us. Your fight is our fight.”

## Join a picket line!

- Members of UAW Locals 722 and 125 intend to picket 24/7 until the Big 3 strike is over.
- Hudson, Wis., GM parts facility: 2200 Willis Miller Drive.
- Plymouth Stellantis parts facility: 13005 State Highway 55.



Members of the MSCF, which brings together instructors at two-year colleges, rallied at Hennepin Technical College in Brooklyn Park last month. MSCF photo

## Minnesota State faculty union rallies at chancellor's address

The union of faculty members at Minnesota's two-year colleges staged a contract rally before Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Chancellor Scott Olson's inaugural address last month, demanding fair compensation and a resolution to bargaining that has dragged on for over five months.

"We've waited long enough," said Kevin Lindstrom, president of the Minnesota State College Faculty union (MSCF). "While the system has received historic levels of state funding and raised wages for nearly every other employee group, many instructors in the two-year colleges can't afford housing and health care for their families."

Lindstrom said a faulty payroll system, which has delayed paychecks for several union members, "hasn't helped" ease faculty frustrations.

Dozens of MSCF members - and members of other unions across the state college system - demonstrated on the Hennepin Technical College campus in Brooklyn Park before Olson's remarks Oct. 16. The action came four

days after the two sides' most recent bargaining session.

"Chancellor Olson talks about developing the state's workforce, but we say he needs to show respect for his own workforce first," Lindstrom said. "It's past time for the system to bring to the table a serious offer to improve compensation for the faculty who educate Minnesota's college students every day."

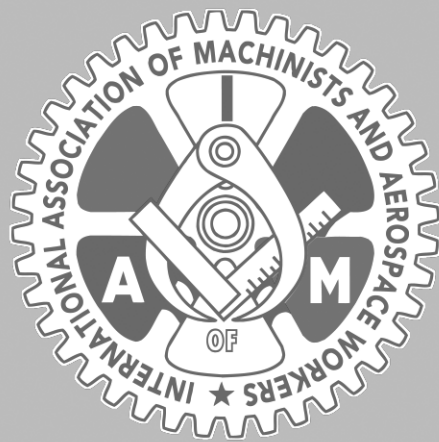
MSCF, an affiliate of Education Minnesota, represents the faculty in the two-year colleges of the Minnesota State system.

Nearly 900 members of Teamsters Local 320 who work at Minnesota State schools as administrative and service faculty voted earlier this year to authorize a strike.

The Teamsters' bargaining unit later filed its intent to strike - which triggered a mandatory cooling off period - before settling a contract with the system that provides the highest raises members have seen in over a decade, according to the union.

## Vote UNION on Nov. 7th

Machinists Local Lodge 459 urges you to support labor-endorsed candidates.



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Support your labor-endorsed candidates in the November 7th general election!

## Iron Workers Local 512

Guest Commentary

# MN AFL-CIO joins labor groups calling for more oversight of Medicare Advantage plans

By Rose Roach

Special to The Union Advocate

Medicare is being robbed of financial resources through profiteering privatizers, and we can't let that happen. Privatization of Medicare isn't just an issue for those of us over 65 or disabled. Health care privatization goes directly to the heart of the problems we're all facing, active or retired, because Wall Street is literally buying our health care system – and that's not good for patients or providers.

Consider these recent headlines:

- “Government Watchdogs Attack Medicare Advantage for Denying Care and Overcharging.”
- “Major Insurers Are Scamming Billions from Medicare, Whistleblowers Say.”
- “Brokers Earn More to Steer New Beneficiaries to Medicare Advantage.”

Medicare and Medicaid were enacted in 1965 because insurance companies didn't want to insure old and sick people. Clearly, they've had a change of heart. When Willie Sutton, a bank robber from the early 1900s was asked why he robs banks, he said, “It's because that's where the money is.” It would seem private equity, billionaires and Wall Street view our health care system the same way.

To be clear, Medicare Advantage (MA) is not Medicare. These are private insurance companies that get reimbursed from our Medicare fund to provide seniors with a private insurance plan.

A report issued last month by the Physicians for a National Health Program lays out the threat MA poses to Medicare:

“Proponents of managed care have long maintained that programs like MA reduce expenditures, improve quality of care and enable consumer choice. The reality is just the opposite. The data show that privatized Medicare has not once yielded savings for the program; conservative estimates by the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC), an independent agency created to advise Congress on the Medicare program, show that payments to MA plans over the past two decades have always been higher than they would have been for patients in Traditional Medicare.

“Despite this additional spending, MedPAC could not say conclusively whether care outcomes fared better under MA. And while patients in Traditional Medicare have access to nearly all doctors and hospitals across the country, those in MA must contend with heavily limited networks and

arcane prior authorization procedures, calling into question which ‘choices’ consumers are ultimately able to make.”

Further, the PNHP report found that Medicare Advantage plans are being overpaid between \$88 and \$140 billion per year through outright fraud and abuse. The most prevalent scheme they use to make huge profits off our tax dollars is called upcoding – a clever way to make a patient look sicker than they are by inflating patient diagnosis codes for the sole purpose of receiving a much higher reimbursement. Upcoding, prior authorizations, denials of claims are all business tactics used by private MA plans to protect profits.

As trade unionists, we must recognize that accessing health care has become one of the largest transfers of workers' wealth to the corporate bosses. The employer-based model allows those bosses to bludgeon us with this “benefit,” which comes at the expense of our wage increases at the bargaining table, where an increasing share of what money is available goes toward our insurance premiums. And if we exercise our right to strike for a better deal, we run the risk of needing access to care without access to our insurance. This is no way to structure a health care

system, and what's happening inside Medicare is just the tip of the iceberg.

Inside the house of labor, we know many retirees are on Medicare Advantage plans. Simply demanding an end to those plans is, therefore, unrealistic. But we can push to recapture the dollars fraudulently going into corporate bank accounts and use that money to improve Traditional Medicare, making Traditional Medicare a better financial option when comparing it to Medicare Advantage plans. That means capping out-of-pocket costs and striving toward 100% coverage of costs, not just the 80% that forces seniors to purchase Medigap or supplemental plans to achieve full coverage. We could also expand benefits to include hearing, dental and vision.

This is why the Minnesota AFL-CIO recently joined other labor bodies in passing a resolution to “level the playing field” as a first step to expose the scam that is health care privatization, while recognizing the need to push back in a way that protects retirees' access to care. Learn more about how you and your union can get involved in the campaign to protect and strengthen Medicare online at [www.hca-mn.org](http://www.hca-mn.org).

– Roach is former executive director of the Minnesota Nurses Association.



## Twin Cities unions show solidarity with actors as strike enters fourth month

Local union members staged a rally in St. Paul's Rice Park on Sept. 30 to show solidarity with over 150,000 striking actors and performers nationwide. Hopes were high for a breakthrough in negotiations, as the Writers Guild, whose members had been on strike since May 2, had just announced a tentative agreement with the major film production companies that would end their work stoppage. SAG-AFTRA's negotiations resumed Oct. 2 but broke down the following week, and at press time the two sides remained far apart – about \$480 million annually – on the issue of streaming residuals. The Sept. 30 rally drew support from local actors, writers, educators, stagehands and striking autoworkers like Alex Tivis, pictured at right with SAG-AFTRA Twin Cities Local President Casey Lewis.



## Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

1. Publication Title: The Saint Paul Union Advocate
2. Publication Number: 647820
3. Filing Date: Sept. 27, 2023
4. Issue Frequency: Monthly except during July and December
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 10
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$15.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 353 W. 7th St. #201, Saint Paul, MN 55102-2314  
Contact person: Michael Moore Telephone: 651-222-3787
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: Same as above
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor:  
Publisher: Saint Paul RLF (address same as above)  
Editor: Michael Moore (address same as above)  
Managing Editor: N/A
10. Owner: Saint Paul RLF, 353 W. 7th St. #201, Saint Paul, MN 55102-2314
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: None.
12. Tax status has not changed
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: Sept. 1, 2023
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies	38,260	38,000
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation		
(1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	34,023	28,309
Paid and/or Requested Circulation		
(2) Paid/Requested In-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	3,661	9,113
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation	37,684	37,422
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution		
(4) Outside the Mail	30	30
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	30	30
f. Total Distribution	37,714	37,452
g. Copies Not Distributed	546	548
h. Total	38,260	38,000
i. Percent Paid	99.92%	99.92%
16. Electronic Copy Circulation: None		

(signed) Michael Moore, editor



# Minutes of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation

## SEPTEMBER 13, 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, Hoerth, Hoppe, Luneburg, Madden, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Sansom, Schmidt, Seath, Tastad-Damer, VanDassor, Vanderport, Varco and Wynn. Excused were Engeldorf, Gibbons, Markham-Kocurek, Ryan, and Slattery. Absent were Hill.

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

## CREDENTIALS

Credentials were received from IBEW Local 23. President Peterson administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates in attendance.

## GUESTS

• Dr. Matt Hoffman, Dr. Nick VenOsdel, and Dr. Renee Koronkowsky from Doctors Council SEIU spoke to the delegation regarding the physicians and APPs at Allina primary and urgent care clinics filing for unionization.

• Dan McCurdy spoke about union organizing at Delta Air Lines.

## MINUTES

**M/S/C TO APPROVE MINUTES OF JULY 12, 2023, AS PUBLISHED IN THE UNION ADVOCATE NEWS-PAPER AFTER THE ACTING SECRETARY-TREASURER NOTES THERE ARE NO ADDITIONS OR CHANGES CALLED FOR.**

## COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

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

Items to come before this committee included:

• The Dakota County Labor Assembly requests recommendation to grant labor endorsement to the fol-



Physicians and clinicians organizing unions with SEIU Doctors Council addressed delegates at the federation's September 2023 meeting. Union supporters have won National Labor Relations Board elections across Allina Health's primary- and urgent-care clinics and at Allina's Mercy and Unity Hospital, although the health system has tied up the latter result in appeals.

Union Advocate photo

lowing:

- Matt Bruns, Hastings School Board
- Mariah Ring, Hastings School Board
- Matt Seeger, Hastings School Board
- Brandy Wentzler, Hastings School Board
- Sachin Isaacs, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School Board
- Cory Johnson, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School Board
- Jackie Magnuson, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School Board
- Anna Williams, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School Board
- Rowen Elsmore, West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan School Board
- Operating Levy, West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan
- The Washington County Labor Assembly requests recommendation to grant labor endorsement to:
  - Chris Lauer, Stillwater School Board
  - Stillwater Bond Referendum
- **M/S/C TO RECOMMEND THE DELEGATE BODY SUPPORT THE COPE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION TO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO MATT BRUNS, MARIAH RING, MATT SEEGER AND BRANDY WENTZLER FOR HASTINGS SCHOOL BOARD; SACHIN ISAACS, CORY JOHNSON, JACKIE MAGNUSON AND ANNA WILLIAMS FOR ROSEMOUNT-APPLE VALLEY-EAGAN SCHOOL BOARD; ROWEN ELSMORE FOR WEST ST. PAUL-MENDOTA HEIGHTS-EAGAN SCHOOL BOARD; THE WEST ST. PAUL-MENDOTA HEIGHTS-EAGAN OPERATING LEVY; CHRIS LAUER FOR STILLWATER SCHOOL BOARD; AND THE STILLWATER BOND REFERENDUM.**
  - **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO PURCHASE A TABLE OF TEN AT A COST OF \$1,250 TO THE DFL FOUNDERS DAY DINNER.**
  - **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO BE**

## A SILVER SPONSOR AT A COST OF \$1,000 TO THE CD4 DFL BRUCE VENTO DINNER.

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

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES SEPTEMBER 13, 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 the St. Paul RLF's marching unit in the Labor Day Parade at the Minnesota State Fair, Oktoberfest and Mark Krey's resignation from the COPE Committee.
  - **M/S/C TO FOLLOW THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LABOR COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE REGARDING OKTOBERFEST.**
  - **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$825 CONTRIBUTION TO SPONSOR A HOLE WITH A SIGN TO THE EIGHTH ANNUAL WORKING PARTNERSHIPS GOLF TOURNAMENT.**
  - **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO CTUL'S ANNIVERSARY GALA.**
  - **M/S/C TO SPONSOR A TABLE AT A COST OF \$75 AT THE ST. PAUL COLLEGE EVENT.**
    - The following resolution: *RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PREVAILING WAGE AMENDMENT TO SAINT PAUL'S RENT STABILIZATION ORDINANCE*
- WHEREAS construction workers who are paid the prevailing wage rate as defined by City of Saint Paul ordinance are better able to afford rent payments in the City of Saint Paul, and payment of prevailing wage has been shown to increase wage rates of workers outside the construction industry making them better able to afford rent payments in the City of Saint Paul; and

WHEREAS wage theft is a significant and growing problem in Minnesota's construction industry, with researchers at the Midwest Economic Policy Institute estimating that approximately 26% of Minnesota construction workers have been victims of wage theft; and

WHEREAS wage theft has been documented in the multifamily construction industry in the Twin Cities according to the testimony of workers and advocates; and

WHEREAS prevention of wage theft on multi-family construction projects is in the interest of the City of Saint Paul and its residents inasmuch as it protects workers from unlawful treatment, businesses from unfair competition, and taxpayers from subsidizing the underpayment of workers through higher taxes; and

WHEREAS a prevailing wage requirement reduces the risk of wage theft by removing the incentive for construction contractors to pay less to their workers to gain a competitive advantage and preventing a race to the bottom with employee wages on multifamily housing projects; and

WHEREAS the Council may amend ordinances pursuant to Saint Paul charter; and

WHEREAS the City of Saint Paul's Rent Stabilization Ordinance, initially approved by voters in November 2021, was amended by City Council in September 2022, including a 20-year new construction exception; and

WHEREAS in August 2022, City Council President Amy Brendmoen introduced an amendment that would, as a condition of the 20-year new construction exception, require all employees who perform new construction work on Residential Rental Property projects of more than twelve units, including employees of contractors and subcontractors, to be paid no less than the prevailing wage rate; and

WHEREAS on September 7,

2022, Council President Brendmoen withdrew the amendment, saying the Council and Administration needed more time to continue to work on the amendment, figure out where to put in the code, and figure out enforcement capacity; and

WHEREAS at that time, Council President Brendmoen said "this Council, our City, the Administration... we are a strong Labor city and we want to make sure prevailing wage is part of any requirement for a new construction exemption...we want good paying jobs if we have a new construction exemption" and "My support for a new construction exemption is really contingent on my work and the partnership of this Council and the labor unions to bring back a prevailing wage requirement for new construction and do it right the first time and that will be my intention and I will do that as swiftly as possible" and on September 14, 2022, Council President Brendmoen restated her commitment to advancing the prevailing wage amendment "in the next month or so"; and

WHEREAS action on the prevailing wage amendment was delayed at the request of the Office of the Mayor Melvin Carter III due to the federal lawsuit against the City of Saint Paul claiming that the rent stabilization ordinance was unconstitutional, and on May 22, 2023, a judge denied the lawsuit and granted the City of Saint Paul's motion for summary judgment; and

WHEREAS the Saint Paul Building and Construction Trades and its affiliates have since renewed their request of the mayor to support and City Council to pass the prevailing wage amendment; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation support a prevailing wage amendment to the City of Saint Paul's Rent Stabilization Ordinance that would, as a condition of the 20-year new construction exception, require all employees who perform new construction or convert all or a portion of a Non-residential Property to Residential Rental Property projects of more than twelve units, including employees of contractors and subcontractors, to be paid no less than the prevailing wage rate in effect when the work is performed; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation urge the Saint Paul City Council and Mayor to pass and sign the prevailing wage amendment immediately.

**M/S/C TO RECOMMEND RLF DELEGATION SUPPORT PREVAILING WAGE AMENDMENT TO SAINT PAUL'S RENT STABILIZATION ORDINANCE.**

• ORGANIZING UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS: ATU Local 1005, Doctors Council SEIU, Fire Fighters, IAMAW, SEIU Minnesota Healthcare of Minnesota and Iowa, SPFE, UFCW Local 1189 and UNITE HERE Local 17, gave updates on their organizing activities.

• Thank-you note received from Homes for our Troops for the RLF's \$500 contribution.

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

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

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

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

• Perry Schmidt, reported on behalf of Labor Community Action Committee. We will not be doing Oktoberfest but instead we will have a Wall of Beer and/or Wall of Wine at the December Holiday Party.

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

• Connie Beissel reported on behalf of the Dakota County Labor Assembly. We screened for Hastings School Board, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School Board, West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan School Board and the West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Operating Levy. Our next meeting will be the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. in person.

• Brian Beedle reported on behalf of the Washington County Labor Assembly. We screened for Stillwater School Board and the Stillwater Bond Referendum. Our next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m.

• Martin Hoerth reported on behalf of the Ramsey County Labor Assembly. We will be screening at our next meeting. Our next meeting will be on the fourth Tuesday of the month via zoom at 6 p.m.

**PRESIDENT REPORT**

President Peterson thanked everyone who joined the Saint Paul RLF's marching unit in the Labor Day Parade at the Minnesota State Fair and provided updates on work.

**STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS**

Erica Dalager Reed, AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison reported on Labor Day.

**NEW BUSINESS**

• President Peterson called for a floor vote on the COPE committee's recommendations for granting labor endorsement.

**M/S/C TO UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSE MATT BRUNS, MARIAH RING, MATT SEEGER AND BRANDY WENTZLER FOR HASTINGS SCHOOL BOARD; SACHIN ISAACS, COREY JOHNSON, JACKIE MAGNUSON AND ANNA WILLIAMS FOR ROSEMOUNT-APPLE VALLEY-EAGAN SCHOOL BOARD; ROWEN ELSMORE FOR WEST ST. PAUL-MENDOTA HEIGHTS-EAGAN SCHOOL BOARD; THE OPERATING LEVY IN WEST ST. PAUL-MENDOTA HEIGHTS-EAGAN; CHRIS LAUER FOR STILLWATER SCHOOL BOARD; AND THE STILLWATER BOND REFERENDUM.**

• President Peterson read the Resolution in Support of Prevailing Wage Amendment to Saint Paul's Rent Stabilization Ordinance and called for a floor vote on the resolution.

**M/S/C TO UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORT THE RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PREVAILING WAGE AMENDMENT TO SAINT PAUL'S RENT STABILIZATION ORDINANCE.**

**GOOD AND WELFARE**

There was a moment of silence in

remembrance of September 11, 2001.

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

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

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**OCTOBER 11, 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, Engeldorf, Guertin, Hoerth, Markham-Kocurek, McNamara, Michelson, Mullin, Peterson, Sansom, Schmidt, Seath, Slattery, Tastad-Damer, VanDassor, Vanderport, Varco and Wynn. Excused were Gale, Gibbons, Hill, Hoppe, Luneburg, Madden, and Ryan.

President Peterson read the Code of Conduct. The point-of-contact designees are Bernadine Engeldorf, Secretary-Treasurer, and Perry Schmidt, Vice President.

**MINUTES**

**M/S/C TO APPROVE MINUTES OF AUGUST 9, 2023, 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 OCTOBER 11, 2023**

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

Items to come before this committee included:

• The Chisago County Labor Assembly requests a recommendation to grant labor endorsement for the Chisago Lakes School District Bond Referendum and Operating Levy.

• The Dakota County Labor Assembly screened candidates for House District 52B, and no recommendation was made.

• The Ramsey County Labor Assembly requests recommendation to grant labor endorsement to the following candidates for Mounds View School Board: Alissa Daire Nelson, Heidi Danielson, Jim DeMay, Jonathan Weinhausen

• The Washington County Labor Assembly requests recommendation to grant labor endorsement to the following:

- Inver Grove Heights ISD #199 operating levies

- South Washington County School Board candidates Melinda Dols and Simi Patnaik

- South Washington County ISD #833 Bond Referendum and Technology Levy

• The Saint Paul RLF COPE committee requests a recommendation to grant endorsement to Cheniqua Johnson, Saint Paul City Council Ward 7.

**• M/S/C TO RECOMMEND TO THE DELEGATE BODY TO SUPPORT THE COPE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION TO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT TO: CHISAGO LAKES SCHOOL DISTRICT BOND REFERENDUM AND OPERATING LEVY; ALISSA DAIRE NELSON, HEIDI DANIELSON, JIM DEMAY AND JONATHAN WEINHAGEN FOR MOUNDS VIEW SCHOOL BOARD; INVER GROVE HEIGHTS ISD #199 OPERATING LEVIES; MELINDA DOLS AND SIMI PATNAIK FOR SOUTH WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD; SOUTH WASHINGTON COUNTY ISD #833 BOND REFERENDUM AND TECHNOLOGY LEVY; AND CHENIQUA JOHNSON, SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL WARD 7.**

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

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES OCTOBER 11, 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 Peterson reported on the appointment of Don Mullin, Saint Paul Building and Construction Trades Council, to the Executive Board; one CD maturing at the St. Paul Federal Credit Union on Oct. 22; annual Labor of Love-Sponsor A Family letter going in the mail this week; Labor-Red Cross Blood Drive scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 28 from noon to 6 p.m. at the Labor Center; and the Holiday Party/Fundraiser.

**• M/S/C TO APPOINT DON MULLIN, SAINT PAUL BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL, TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.**

**• M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO PAY FOR FOOD AND DESSERT AT THE HOLIDAY PARTY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE DECEMBER DELEGATES MEETING.**

• ORGANIZING: UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS: IAMAW, IUPAT, MNA, SPFE, Teamsters abd UAW Local 722 gave updates on their organizing activities.

• The following resolution: *RESOLUTION OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS AT GENERAL MOTORS, FORD AND STELLANTIS*

WHEREAS the members of the United Auto Workers are fighting for a fair contract with General Motors, Ford and Stellantis; and

WHEREAS these "Big Three" automakers have made record profits over the last decade; and

WHEREAS the CEO's and shareholders of these companies have also received record compensation; and

WHEREAS these record profits were made possible only through the labor of the members of the United Auto Workers; and

WHEREAS the workers at these companies are demanding their fair share of these profits and compensation; and

WHEREAS working people are living in a time of historic income inequality and rapidly increasing basic cost of living; and

WHEREAS we understand that workers, joined together in their unions, their unions joined together in solidarity, forming the modern labor movement, is our best chance at decreasing income inequality by; and

WHEREAS the historic struggle that the United Auto Workers are currently facing may impact the trajectory of the entire working class for years to come; and therefore, be it

RESOLVED the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation extends our most heartfelt support to the United Auto Workers and their historic labor struggle at General Motors, Ford and Stellantis; and be it further RESOLVED the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation stands ready to provide moral and material support to these brave workers and their families, and their union; and be it further

RESOLVED the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation reaffirms the bonds of solidarity that connect us all as working people.

**M/S/C TO RECOMMEND RLF DELEGATION A RESOLUTION OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS AT GENERAL MOTORS, FORD AND STELLANTIS.**

**• M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT THE SAINT PAUL AFL-CIO RETIREES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,000 PER YEAR FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS STARTING JANUARY 2023.**

**• M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO THE JEAN JONES COATS INITIATIVE.**

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

• THANK YOU NOTES received from IUPAT PATCH for the RLF's \$500 contribution to their golf fundraiser, LIUNA MN/ND for the RLF's \$500 contribution to their Family FunRaiser Event and Teamsters Local 120 for the RLF's \$500 contribution to Homes

for Our Troops.

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 September 2023. The report was accepted as read.

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

• The Chisago County Labor Assembly's next meeting will be on the fourth Tuesday of the month via zoom at 6 p.m.

• Connie Beissel reported on behalf of the Dakota County Labor Assembly. We screened school district candidates, and we encourage and invite members to attend meetings. Our next meeting will be the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. in person.

• Brian Beedle reported on behalf of the Washington County Labor Assembly. We will be phone banking and continue with Fare for All work. Our next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m.

• Martin Hoerth reported on behalf of the Ramsey County Labor Assembly. Screenings of candidates have been completed. Our next meeting will be on the fourth Tuesday of the month via zoom at 6 p.m.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Peterson shared opportunities for solidarity with participation in the IATSE rally and UAW strike, and encouraged delegates to volunteer in support of labor endorsed candidates and ballot referendums.

**STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS**

Erica Dalager Reed, AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison, reported on Earned sick and safe time as part of grant to support the law and how it affects communities.

**NEW BUSINESS**

• President Peterson called for a floor vote on the COPE Board's recommendations for granting labor endorsement.

**M/S/C TO ENDORSE CHISAGO LAKES SCHOOL DISTRICT BOND REFERENDUM AND OPERATING LEVY; ALISSA DAIRE NELSON, HEIDI DANIELSON, JIM DEMAY AND JONATHAN WEINHAGEN FOR MOUNDS VIEW SCHOOL BOARD; INVER GROVE HEIGHTS ISD #199 OPERATING LEVIES; MELINDA DOLS AND SIMI PATNAIK FOR SOUTH WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD; SOUTH WASHINGTON COUNTY ISD #833 BOND REFERENDUM AND TECHNOLOGY LEVY; AND CHENIQUA JOHNSON, SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL WARD 7.**

• President Peterson read the Resolution of Solidarity with the United Auto Workers at General Motors, Ford and Stellantis and called for a floor vote to approve the Resolution.

**M/S/C TO SUPPORT THE RESOLUTION OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS AT GENERAL MOTORS, FORD AND STELLANTIS.**

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

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

**Executive Board nominations open at December meeting**

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation will hold nominations for seats on its Executive Board at the regular delegate meeting Dec. 13, 2023.



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