Minneapolis voters vote for change

MRLF’s endorsed candidates win 10 of 13 Minneapolis City Council seats

By Steve Share, Labor Review editor

MINNEAPOLIS — In the highest voter turnout in a municipal election since 1993, Minneapolis voters voted for change November 7 and picked Jacob Frey as the city’s new Mayor.

Voters re-elected eight of 11 Minneapolis City Council incumbents who sought re-election.

Three incumbents lost their re-election bids — Barb Johnson in Ward 4, Blong Yang in Ward 5, and John Quincy in Ward 11. Voters elected six new members to the Minneapolis Park Board and re-elected three Park Board incumbents.

The Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, which did not award its AFL-CIO endorsement in the Minneapolis Mayor’s race, saw wins for 10 of its 13 endorsed Minneapolis City Council candidates.

All five MRLF-endorsed candidates for Minneapolis Park Board were elected, producing a new Board with a 5-4 majority that ran with AFL-CIO backing (see page 5).

“Workers will be at the core of the agenda,” said Mayor-elect Frey, addressing the MRLF’s delegate meeting November 8 in Minneapolis.

Mayoral campaign

MINNEAPOLIS — Jacob Frey, Mayor-elect of Minneapolis (photo above, left), visited the delegate meeting of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO the day after the November 7 election. “I want to work with you. I want a partnership,” Frey told delegates.

“Workers will be at the core of the agenda.”

Iowa union members vote ‘yes,’ stay union

By Mark Gruenberg, PAI staff writer

DES MOINES — When Iowa’s ruling Republican legislators jammed through a law requiring most of the state’s public worker unions to stand for recertification — by absolute majority votes before they could start bargaining new contracts — they expected state and local workers and teachers would defect in droves.

Whoops.

In reports posted on local union websites — and picked up by former Deputy OSHA Administrator Jordan Barab’s “Confined Spaces” blog — the unions rolled to overwhelming wins everywhere in the state.

IOWA page 4

Union families need your help

Working Partnerships seeks cash donations for our Emergency Food Program to help union families in need this winter. Your check for $25 can buy a union grocery store gift card.

Your donation is tax-deductible.

Send checks payable to:
Working Partnerships
312 Central Ave. Suite 542
Minneapolis, MN 55414

MRLF helps pass 20 of 23 levies in 12 school districts

By Steve Share, Labor Review editor

MINNEAPOLIS — Voters in Minneapolis-area suburban school districts said “yes” to schools by wide margins November 7, passing school levy requests in 12 school districts.

The levies will help reduce class sizes, build new schools, rehab existing facilities, and invest in new technology to enhance student learning, among other objectives.

The Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO endorsed a total of 23 levies in 12 school districts — and worked actively in targeted districts to coordinate union activity to help levies pass.

Only three of the ballot questions failed to pass.

Across the metro area, Education Minnesota’s local teachers’ unions partnered with the Building Trades, school parents and community members to pass the levies.

“In my 39 years of union work, I never have seen such a well-orchestrated, collaborative effort from all the labor groups."

— LeMayne Corgard, Anoka-Hennepin Education Minnesota

Anoka-Hennepin (ISD #11)

In the Anoka-Hennepin school district, the largest in the state, voters approved an operating levy with just over 66 percent voting yes and a $249 million bond levy with nearly 66 percent voting yes.

“In this district, to go with a two-thirds majority, I don’t think we’ve ever passed [a levy] with that support,” Corgard said. “I think we had a clear, well-articulated message to the voters. I felt we put out very accurate, honest information so the voters could make a well-informed decision.”

Bloomington (ISD #271)

In the Bloomington school district, a $22.4 million operating levy to continue and increase a current levy passed with more than 69 percent support.

SCHOOL LEVIES page 7

Confined Spaces blog

IN THE NEWS — The latest in workplace health and safety from Confined Spaces, a blog of thebeiter.org.
Changing how we count our wins

By Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou, President, Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation

Over the past four years, the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation has been embracing a more ambitious and dynamic strategy where our campaigns don’t just stop on election day.

We’ve worked hard to expand our scope from solely focusing on typical election activities.

We’ve also focused our political work on growth, training, supporting member activism and building deeper solidarity within our ranks and with our allies.

As an anti-worker economic system run by the one percent comes barreling at us and as our political landscape becomes more high-stakes, we clearly need a strategy of deeper member engagement and solidarity.

Now, it’s time to double-down.

We’re moving to a new model where our organizing drives our politics, not the other way around. This means that our strategic decisions around elections are rooted in growth, leadership development and real conversations about the state of all working people.

Come the day after an election, we no longer can count just our endorsed candidates’ victories.

We also need to measure the levels of activism, education, and growth of our union members, as well as our ability to advance a pro-worker message in our communities. These things are much more difficult to measure in a technical sense, but they are the building blocks we need to go on to win the workplace, in our city halls, and in our communities.

With 2018 looming in the background, we knew that our program in 2017 needed to be scrappy. Our 2017 work needed to be the launch pad to win the pivotal 2018 Governor’s election, to advance a pro-union agenda, and to create a future that builds solidarity within our ranks.

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With 2018 looming in the background, we knew that our program in 2017 needed to be scrappy. Our 2017 work needed to first and foremost be rooted in leadership development to build out the team we will need over the next 12 months.

We spent less money on mail and independent expenditure activities and more time and effort on volunteer recruitment, membership engagement, voter guides and candidate forums.

For 2017, this was a winning combination. Overall, we chalked up wins with a slate of exciting new Minneapolis Park Board candidates, a majority of our Minneapolis City Council candidates, a handful of targeted school board candidates in our suburbs and massive victories in almost every single education levy in our jurisdiction.

We had a few losses and setbacks in a handful of locations — including losses for a few leaders that we hold dear to us — but overall the mood is a step in the right direction.

More importantly, however, in several communities our issues became the issues which school board and city council candidates were talking about.

In the northwest suburbs, we mobilized dozens of new local leaders who are willing to continue the work of turning Anoka around into 2018 and beyond.

Also in the northwest suburbs, we elected champions for working people in traditionally very red communities.

As a result of bold leadership from the Building Trades and Education Minnesota, trades members, teachers, parents, and community members teamed up to win historic investments in public education and union construction through successful levy campaigns all over the metro.

Thank you to everybody who helped us over the last six months, particularly to the affiliates who are helping us to develop this new vision.

Now our sights are set on building capacity across the diverse mosaic of our entire seven-county jurisdiction to win for workers in 2018 and beyond. We are all in this together, no matter where you live across the seven counties.

We all need to embrace the young new leadership in the City of Minneapolis, recognizing their new energy and diversity as an asset that positively impacts workers across our entire state.

In every community, our local elected officials, policy initiatives and workplace campaigns will continue to be the launching pad to win the pivotal 2018 Governor’s election, to advance a pro-union agenda, and to create a future that builds prosperity for all working families.

Minneapolis’s labor media win 15 awards from International Labor Communications Association

Labor Review honored for general excellence, writing, design

ST. LOUIS — Minnesota’s labor media won 15 awards in the 2017 media contest organized by the International Labor Communications Association.

The annual awards recognized excellence in labor communications efforts in print, video, and electronic media produced in 2016.

Minnesota award-winners included AFSCME Council 5, the Minneapolis Labor Review newspaper, the St. Paul Union Advocate newspaper, and the University of Minnesota’s Labor Education Service.

The awards were presented in St. Louis October 20 at an ILCA conference preceding the national AFL-CIO convention.

The labor media contest welcomes entries from local unions, councils, regional and state federations, and international unions, who compete in different groups of similar scope and size.

Minnesota’s AFSCME Council 5 won two awards:

First place for best feature story, for Lynette Kalsnes’ story “Plowing straight into a winter white-out: MnDOT drivers brave the ice, read the snow like tea leaves.”

Second place for general excellence for Stepping Up, Council 5’s newsletter, edited by Lynette Kalsnes.

The Minneapolis Labor Review, published by the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation and edited by Steve Share, won three awards:

Second place for a special category of writing awards — the Saul Miller Awards — covering the subject of collective bargaining, for Steve Share’s July 29, 2016 story, “Day four of strike; Nurses highlighted violence they suffer on job.”

Honorable mention for general excellence for a print publication produced by local, regional or state labor federations (November 18, 2016 and December 16, 2016 issues).

Honorable mention for best design for a print publication produced by local, regional, or state unions or labor federations (for the November 18, 2016 issue).

The St. Paul Union Advocate, published by the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation and edited by Michael Moore, won two awards:

Second place for best editorial or column, for Dave Kamper’s piece LABOR MEDIA AWARDS page 7

Minneapolis Labor Review

Since 1907

Steve Share, Editor

AFL-CIO

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Holiday Issue

Deadline: December 6, 2017

“The rights labor has won, labor must fight to protect.”

—Floyd B. Olson, Minnesota Governor, 1930-1936

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Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO

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Events

December 5: Author will discuss landmark 1916 Iron Range strike by immigrant miners

ST. PAUL — Author and documentary filmmaker Gary Kaunonen will discuss “The 1916 Iron Ore Strike” — which rocked Minnesota’s Iron Range and beyond — Tuesday, December 5 from 7:00– 8:00 p.m. at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul. Admission is free.

On June 2, 1916, 40 mostly immigrant mine workers at the St. James Mine in Aurora, Minnesota, walked off the job. Kaunonen researched how this seemingly small labor disturbance mushroomed into one of the region’s, if not the nation’s, most contentious 20th-century battles between organized labor and management. This strike had a profound impact on workers and immigrants and mining and labor relations in Minnesota and beyond.

Kaunonen is the author of Flames of Discontent: The 1916 Minnesota Iron Ore Strike (University of Minnesota Press, 2017). He also produced a feature-length documentary film, “Northern Minnesota’s Labor Wars,” (USA, 2017, 73 minutes) which covers the same era. The full film is available on YouTube.

December 5: ‘Labor Movie Night’ presents drama ‘Suffragette,’ struggle for women’s right to vote

ST. PAUL — The “Labor Movie Night” film series at the East Side Freedom Library will screen the drama “Suffragette” Tuesday, December 5 at 7:00 p.m. Admission is free.

Telling the story of the British women’s suffrage movement of the late 19th and early 20th century, the film stars Academy Award nominees Carey Mulligan and Helena Bonham Carter and three-time Academy Award winner Meryl Streep.

Inspired by true events and real historical figures, “Suffragette” (U.K., 2015, 105 minutes, Rated PG-13) concentrates on the experiences and roles of working-class women in the British struggle for women’s right to vote. This movie provides one of the most complex representations of how people are transformed through their participation in a social struggle. View the official trailer at www.focusfeatures.com/suffragette.

The “Labor Movie Night” series is co-sponsored by AFSCME Local 3800 and the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation. The East Side Freedom Library is located at 1105 Greenbrier St., St. Paul.

December 7: East Side Freedom Library hosts fundraiser for CTUL and ‘Raise Worker Voice’

ST. PAUL — The East Side Freedom Library will host a fundraiser for CTUL’s “Raise Worker Voice” campaign Thursday, December 7, from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

CTUL has been organizing low-wage workers for ten years and is undertaking the “Raise Worker Voice” fundraising campaign to increase the scale of its efforts.

The December 7 event will include speakers from CTUL and light refreshments. The donation amount is open.

Peter Rachleff, co-executive director of ESFL, and Phil Sandro, Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs, invite you to join them in supporting CTUL’s “Raise Worker Voice” campaign and participating in an evening of solidarity.

The East Side Freedom Library is located at 1105 Greenbrier St., St. Paul.

December 9: Vice President Joe Biden will speak at DFL Party’s ‘Founder’s Day’ dinner

MINNEAPOLIS — Former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden will be the featured speaker at the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party’s 12th annual “Founder’s Day” dinner.

The event will be Saturday, December 9, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Minneapolis Hilton, third floor ballroom, 1001 Marquette Ave., Minneapolis.

Prices for individual tickets begin at $75, of which $50 is refundable through the state’s Political Contribution Refund Program. Sponsorships also are available.

Tickets are available online at dfl.org. For sponsorship information, contact Tyler Blackmon at tblackmon@dfl.org or call 651-251-6390.

Biden also will speak at another local event later that evening (see page 4).
**Iowa: In many cases, union member turnout was 100 percent for the union**

continued from page 1

In many cases, the local turnouts were 100 percent — and 100 percent for the union.

Barab, a former AFSCME Safety and Health Director with close ties to the Iowans, reported 436 out of 468 public-sector bargaining units voted to re-certify their unions in an 88 percent turnout.

AFSCME Council 61 President Danny Homan told Barab “100 percent of AFSCME-covered employees voted to retain their union.” He admitted AFSCME lost one 4-person unit, because of a voided ballot.

Public safety worker unions aren’t required to re-certify by the new law.

The Iowa State Education Association, part of that overall total, did even better. Recertification won among its bargaining units, 216-4.

That came after effective member-to-member meetings and a video with union President Tammy Wawro standing in front of her elementary school explaining teachers and staff needed to “vote yes to have a seat at the table.”

Overall, union retention beat decertification 28,448-624, with 4,043 non-voters, who are counted as “no” votes, Barab reported.

Members of another 200-plus ISEA bargaining units will go to the polls next year.

**Recertification requirement just one part of the new law to weaken unions**

The union members needed to vote on recertification because, in February, Iowa’s Republican legislative majority passed and then-Governor Terry Branstad signed, the anti-union measure.

Iowa Republicans copied the anti-worker, anti-union crusade of right-wing Republican Governor Scott Walker in next-door Wisconsin.

The recertification requirement was just one part of the bill to emasculate unions in Iowa.

The measure severely restricted the scope of collective bargaining, even if the unions won recertification. Health insurance, seniority, vacations, layoffs and transfers are among the subjects now off the bargaining table.

Now the overwhelming votes to re-certify put the unions in a stronger position to bargain over everything left, union leaders said.

Homan reported his AFSCME council lost just that one small bargaining unit and won the other 1,699.

“This sweeping victory confirms what we’ve known since the gutting of collective bargaining rights in February: That unionized employees, both members and non-members, value their voice in the workplace,” he said.

In the Iowa State Education Association video, ISEA President Wawro urged: “Vote yes to have a seat at the bargaining table. Vote yes for positive working conditions and good student learning environments. Vote yes to send a message to district officials and legislators that educators stand together on important issues.”

The vote was especially difficult for the ISEA locals because the state labor board mailed out all the ballots in plain white envelopes and recipients could easily set them aside, Des Moines Area Community College history professor Lisa Ossian, a former NEA board member, told her state union.

To make sure that didn’t happen and to make sure the ballots got back to the state capital of Des Moines on time — the teachers got only two weeks to vote in this round — “a faculty leader at one of DMACC’s many campuses collected and personally drove her colleagues’ ballots to the state labor board’s offices,” Ossian reported. Her bargaining unit has 361 members. The vote: 312-6 for recertification, with only 43 ballots not returned.

“Efforts to break unions usually do just the opposite,” Des Moines English professor Lynn LaGrone told ISEA. “Energy and time devoted to tearing us down might be better spent finding ways to solidify our common goal: Offering the best education we can to the students who rely on us.”

Aided by its international union, Teamsters Local 238 ran 69 state-sponsored recertification elections for 2,200 bargaining unit members and won 57.

The losses in 12 units covered only 44 total members.

Of the 1,888 members who voted, 1,828 voted to remain with the Teamsters.

“Given the roadblocks constructed by anti-union elected officials in the state, the results are overwhelmingly positive,” Teamsters International President Jim Hoffa said. “Teamster members and staff who worked for months to build solidarity and momentum across the board should be proud of their efforts.”

December 9: TakeAction Minnesota plans annual post-election ‘People’s Celebration’

ST. PAUL — The progressive advocacy group TakeAction Minnesota will host its annual post-election “People’s Celebration” Saturday, December 9.

The event will take place at St. Paul River Centre, 175 West Kellogg Boulevard, St. Paul.

The evening will begin at 5:00 p.m. with a social hour and cash bar, followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m., a program at 7:45 p.m., then dessert and dancing with a live salsa band.

Save the date: Minnesota AFL-CIO planning February 15-16 ‘Campaigns Conference’

ST. PAUL — If you want to be engaged in labor’s political work in the all-important 2018 elections, mark your calendar for February 15-16, 2018. Those are the dates for the Minnesota AFL-CIO’s first “Campaigns Conference.”

In the past, following the November elections, the Minnesota AFL-CIO traditionally has planned a two-day “legislative and political conference” at the end of the year to kick-off political work for the following year.

That event is being significantly changed as the state federation and affiliated unions prepare for 2018.

Watch for the December 22, 2017 issue of the Minneapolis Labor Review for additional details.

December 15: Fare for All’s $30 holiday meal package includes meat, veggies, apple pie

MINNEAPOLIS — Fare For All, a local non-profit food program, will sell special “Holiday Packs” for $30 Friday, December 15 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Sprinkler Fitters Local 417 union hall, 1404 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis. Each Holiday Pack includes a 7-9 pound spiral cut ham, a whole chicken, beef meatballs, roasted chicken wings, garlic herb chicken, mixed vegetables and a Dutch apple pie.

At 38 locations, Fare For All sells packages of fresh produce and frozen meat with prices ranging from $10 to $30 per package. Everyone can save up to 40 percent on their food purchases. The program has no income requirements and is open to everyone who is looking to save money.

Working Partnerships, the AFL-CIO community services program, hosts the Fare for All site at the Sprinkler Fitters hall.

For more information: fareforall.org.

More Events
Minneapolis Park Board: All five of MRLF endorsed candidates win races

By Steve Share, Labor Review editor

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO endorsed five candidates for Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board — and all five candidates won their races in the November 7 elections. With all nine positions on the Park Board up for election, the result is a 5-4 majority of AFL-CIO endorsed candidates.

“We’re going to have a very different Park Board that’s aligned with our agenda and ran on our agenda,” said MRLF president Chelsie Glaubitz, addressing the MRLF delegate meeting the night after the election.

“I’m looking forward to working with the new board,” said Tony Kelly, field representative for City Employees Local 363, which represents park workers.

“We’ve had great conversations throughout the campaign. I look forward to acting on what we talked about.”

At Large: Londel French

Three At Large Park Board positions were on the ballot but the MRLF endorsed just one At Large candidate: Londel French. He placed third in first choice votes and maintained that third place position through four rounds of Ranked Choice Voting.

After the first round, French gained 3,639 votes — substantially more than the number of votes picked up by either the first place finisher, Latrisa Vetaw, or second place finisher, incumbent Meg Forney. In fact, the number of votes gained by French after four rounds of Ranked Choice Voting was almost equal to the combined gains of Vetaw and Forney.

French is a member of Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59 and a former longtime union steward.

“I want to thank everybody who played a part in this campaign to make sure our parks are accessible for everyone,” French commented on Facebook.

“We told the status quo that business as usual would not continue.”

District 2: Kale Severson

MRLF-endorsed Kale Severson won the open District 2 Minneapolis Park Board seat in the first round of Ranked Choice Voting. Severson received 5,089 first choice votes — nearly 57 percent of the votes cast in the two-candidate race.

District 3: A.K. Hassan

In the District 3 race for Minneapolis Park Board, MRLF-endorsed A.K. Hassan established a wide lead in first choice votes with more than 48 percent of the total 14,630 votes cast in the three-candidate contest. Round two of Ranked Choice Voting put Hassan over the top with nearly 53 percent of the vote.

District 4: Jono Cowgill

In the District 4 Minneapolis Park Board race, MRLF-endorsed Jono Cowgill faced a two-way contest with former Park Board commissioner Tom Nordyke, who had served from 2006-2009. First-time candidate Cowgill beat Nordyke by a margin of 6,794 to 6,615 — only 179 votes but enough to make Cowgill the winner in the first round of Ranked Choice Voting.

District 6: Brad Bourn

In the District 6 Minneapolis Park Board race, MRLF-endorsed incumbent Brad Bourn faced two challengers in his bid for a third term. In the first round of Ranked Choice Voting, Bourn received 8,084 votes — almost 44 percent of the total. He led former Park Board commissioner Tom Nordyke, who received 7,491 votes, by a margin of 593 votes. The second round of Ranked Choice Voting dropped the third place finisher. In the second round, Fine picked up more votes than Bourn but Bourn still came out in first place. Bourn beat Fine by 314 votes out of a total 18,488 votes cast.

Indeed, every phone call, every door knocked, every vote counts!

In suburbs, wins for six of nine MRLF endorsed candidates for local offices

By Steve Share, Labor Review editor

MINNEAPOLIS — Six of nine candidates endorsed by the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO won their races for suburban city council seats and school board seats in the November 7 elections.

Anoka-Hennepin School Board

In the most significant win for labor, MRLF-endorsed Anna Dirkswanger won an open District 4 seat on the Anoka-Hennepin school board.

In a two-candidate race, Dirkswanger prevailed by a vote of 2,751-2,568 — a winning margin of just 183 votes out of 5,377 cast (there were a handful of write-in votes).

“Yesterday was a win for all of us as our communities came together and prioritized our kids over political parties, and that’s something to be proud of,” Dirkswanger said in a Facebook post.

A first-time candidate, Dirkswanger is a former MAPE member who has pledged to be an advocate on the board “for students and teachers.”

The MRLF also endorsed two incumbents for Anoka-Hennepin School Board. MRLF-endorsed Bill Harvey won the District 3 contest with nearly 60 percent of the vote. MRLF-endorsed Jeff Simon District 6 ran unopposed and also was re-elected.

Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose School Board

In the Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose School Board At Large races, the MRLF endorsed two winning candidates: incumbent Bob Sansevere and first-time candidate Amanda Burnham Reineck.

Five candidates were in the race, with the top three vote-getters to be elected.

Reineck placed second, winning election with 442 votes.

Sansevere placed third, winning election with 440 votes — just 11 votes ahead of incumbent Stanley Vander Kool (who was not elected).

Reineck is a pre-K teacher and member of SEIU Local 284 while Sansevere is a member of the Minnesota Newspaper Guild.

Golden Valley City Council

In the race for Golden Valley City Council At Large, with two candidates to be elected, MRLF-endorsed incumbent Larry Fonnest came in second and won re-election.

MRLF-endorsed Jim Ryan, an AFGE member, came in a distant fourth place and was not elected.

St. Louis Park City Council

Neither of the MRLF-endorsed candidates for St. Louis Park City Council won election.

In Ward 1, MRLF-endorsed Brian Shekleton sought an open seat and lost to Margaret Rog by 924-1,258.

In Ward 3, MRLF-endorsed Jim Leuthner — a member of Carpenters Local 322 — sought an open seat and lost to Rachel Harris by 664-1,109.

New Brighton City Council:

MRLF community organizer Graeme Allen wins election

MRLF organizer Graeme Allen won election to an At Large seat on the New Brighton City Council.

The race was Allen’s third run for a council seat there — and this time he won one of the two seats up for election, coming in second by a comfortable margin.

New Brighton is not in the MRLF’s jurisdiction. Allen was endorsed by the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation, AFSCME Council 5, St. Paul Building Trades, Teamsters Joint Council 32, and Teamsters Local 120. Allen is a member of Teamsters Local 120.
AFL-CIO convention re-elects officers, supports ‘Medicare for All’

By Steve Share, Labor Review editor

ST. LOUIS — The AFL-CIO’s national convention met in St. Louis October 22-25, re-electing the federation’s leadership team and passing resolutions calling for aid to Puerto Rico, investing in U.S. infrastructure, condemning “rising Fascism,” advocating for “Medicare for All,” creating a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, and putting forward a “Workers Bill of Rights,” among other topics.

President Richard Trumka, Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler, and Executive Vice President Tefere Gebre faced no opposition and were re-elected to another four-year term of office.

Trumka, the former president of the United Mine Workers, has led the labor federation since 2009.

Shuler, a former staff member for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, in 2009 became the first woman elected as the federation’s secretary-treasurer.

Gebre is the former executive director of the Orange County Labor Federation in California. As a teenager, he fled violence in his home country of Ethiopia and made his way to a refugee camp in Sudan. In 2013 Gebre became the first immigrant, political refugee, black man and local labor council leader elected as a national officer of the AFL-CIO.

The three officers addressed the convention after winning re-election on the convention’s first day, commenting on a turbulent nation and world and the challenges ahead for the labor movement.

Gebre told convention delegates, “as elated as I am with this second term elected, you know these are tough times. Wages are not rising… Tension is high…”

“All of us or none of us — it’s not just a slogan,” Genre said. Our survival depends on it.”

“We are joined in work that contributes to something greater than ourselves,” Shuler said.

“My head is spinning as the world careers in unexpected turns,” she said. “We’re not doing enough to get ahead of change and turn it into opportunity.”

“I think we need to try things more and take risks and not be afraid to fail,” she added. “You need to have a new perspective. Just focusing on protecting what we have is not the answer. We need to be bolder.”

“We know we have a huge target on our backs,” Shuler said. “What are the new ways we can make unions valuable and indispensable?”

“If we demonstrate value,” Shuler continued, we become essential and Right-to-Work becomes irrelevant because workers will want to join us.”

Elected to a third term as AFL-CIO president, Trumka began his remarks with a tribute to his father. “My father was a lifelong coal miner who knew the value of solidarity… I followed my father into the mines and into unionism…”

“Together we can build a ladder to a better life and climb that ladder,” Trumka said.

The CEOs have people fighting for a better day for all workers, Trumka said. “We do the work. This is our country. And it’s time the American worker took it back.”

“We are joined in work that contributes to something greater than ourselves,” Shuler said.

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The CEOs have people fighting for a better day for all workers, Trumka said. “We do the work. This is our country. And it’s time the American worker took it back.”

Over the four days, the convention debated and passed 56 resolutions, listened to workers share their stories about organizing for better wages and working conditions and a voice on the job, and adopted strategies for the labor movement to respond to the threat of anti-union legislation at the state level and nationally.

In Resolution 1, the AFL-CIO convention adopted a call for a new “Workers Bill of Rights.”

Elements included:

- A good job with fair wages;
- Quality health care;
- Retirement with dignity and financial security;
- Freedom to join together with co-workers for better wages and working conditions whether in a union or not.

Significantly, in Resolution 6, the AFL-CIO convention called for the United States “to move forward toward making health care a basic right for everyone… Our longstanding goal of achieving this is to move expeditiously toward a single-payer system, like Medicare for All, that provides universal coverage using a social insurance model, while retaining a role for workers’ health plans.”

Unlike past AFL-CIO conventions, 2017 in St. Louis did not feature a parade of politicians at the podium. Instead, the convention featured rank and file workers from across the nation sharing their stories and the importance of joining together in collective action in the workplace.

Stanley Rees shared his experience organizing at the Electrolux plant in Memphis, Tennessee, where management ran a vigorous anti-union campaign. “The hardest thing was convincing the young people that we needed a union because they didn’t know what a union was,” Rees said. “We take for granted the 40-hour week, vacations.” After a worker-to-worker campaign, he related, Electrolux employees voted 2-1 to join IBEW Local 474.

In recent years, the AFL-CIO has placed a new emphasis on promoting diversity and Trumka announced at the convention’s outset that “49 percent of the delegates at this convention are women or people of color… That’s the largest ever… We continue to make progress.”

The convention’s setting in St. Louis highlighted the stakes ahead for the American labor movement. The Missouri legislature passed a Right-to-Work bill earlier this year. But a successful workers’ petition drive has blocked the bill and will put the question to Missouri voters on the November 2018 ballot.

After the convention adjourned, this reporter visited the famous Gateway Arch in St. Louis, where a construction project was underway. Larry VanMeter, member of Laborers Local 42, was one of the workers on site. Did he know about the Missouri Right-to-Work bill? “I don’t like it,” he said, adding that he had helped gather signatures for the petition drive to repeal the bill. “I think it’s going to stay union — because we’re fighting for it.”

To view videos from the convention and read the resolutions adopted, visit www.aflcio2017.org.
School levies: Voters approve $1 billion investment statewide

continued from page 1

Brooklyn Center (ISD #286)
In the Brooklyn Center school district, voters passed two levy requests: an operating levy passed with nearly 55 percent support and a $29.93 million construction bonding request passed with nearly 54 percent support.

Columbia Heights (ISD #13)
Voters in the Columbia Heights school district voted 1,602-1,508 to reject a bond request for $16 million to build and improve school facilities. The measure failed to pass by 94 votes.

Hopkins (ISD #270)
Three ballot questions in the Hopkins school district passed with overwhelming support: a $30 million bond passed with nearly 78 percent support, a capital projects levy passed with 78 percent support, and an operating levy passed with 77 percent support.

Maple Lake (ISD #881)
Voters in the Maple Lake school district passed an operating levy with more than 57 percent voting yes and a technology levy with more than 55 percent voting yes.

Prior Lake-Savage (ISD #719)
Prior Lake-Savage school district voters passed a $109.3 million construction levy with 62 percent voting in support and an operating levy, also with 62 percent support.

Richfield (ISD #280)
In the Richfield school district, voters passed an operating levy with 75 percent in favor and a $86.8 million construction levy with 75 percent support.

Rockford (ISD #883)
Rockford school district voters voted to reject two levy requests: Nearly 56 percent voted no to an operating levy and just over 55 percent voted no to a nearly $4 million technology levy.

St. Francis (ISD #15)
A construction levy to raise $80 million in the St. Francis school district passed with more than 52 percent voting in favor.

St. Louis Park (ISD #283)
In the St. Louis Park school district, the two levy questions received overwhelming support: 85 percent voted yes to renew an operating levy while 81 percent voted yes for a $100.9 million construction levy.

Wayzata (ISD #284)
Wayzata school district voters approved three ballot questions: Nearly 77 percent of voters supported the renewal and increase of an operating levy; 77 percent of voters backed a $70 million construction levy; 79 percent of voters backed a technology levy.

$1 billion to be raised statewide
Adding up all the levies across the state, voters approved a total of about $1 billion for their local public schools.

“The results show individual Minnesotans are willing to spend a little more to give the children in their communities a great start, with well-trained, professional educators and modern buildings,” said Denise Specht, president of Education Minnesota. “[November 7] was a good day for the children in those communities.”
in the Ward 8 City Council contest, MRLF-endorsed Andrea Jenkins won outright in the first round of Ranked Choice Voting with nearly 70 percent of the vote in a four-candidate race for the open seat. Incumbent Elizabeth Glidden did not seek re-election and endorsed Jenkins.

Minneapolis City Council, Ward 9

In Ward 9, Alondra Cano was the AFL-CIO endorsed incumbent and beat back a challenge from former Ward 9 City Council member Gary Schiff. Cano led in first choice votes in the four-candidate race, 999 votes ahead of Schiff. Round two, with the third and fourth place candidates eliminated, gave Cano a 2,982-1,934 lead over Schiff.

Schiff had been endorsed by UNITE HERE Local 17 and Teamsters Joint Council 32.

Minneapolis City Council, Ward 10

Incumbent Lisa Bender, who was MRLF-endorsed, won in the first round of Ranked Choice Voting with nearly 62 percent of the vote.

Minneapolis City Council, Ward 11

The MRLF-endorsed incumbent, John Quincy, trailed the eventual winner, Jeremy Schroeder, by 3,200-3,230 first choice votes — just 30 votes! The second round of Ranked Choice Voting, however, dropped a third-place candidate and gave Schroeder a lead of 4,757-3,981 votes over Quincy.

Minneapolis City Council, Ward 12

The MRLF-endorsed incumbent, Andrew Johnson, won nearly 83 percent of first choice votes, handily winning a three-candidate race.

Minneapolis City Council, Ward 13

MRLF-endorsed incumbent Linea Palmisano won more than 80 percent of first choice votes in a two-candidate race to win a second term.
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005: Vote planned for contract approval or strike authorization

As the Labor Review went to press November 10, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 was planning for a November 12-13 contract vote and strike authorization vote.

Local 1005 has been in protracted negotiations with Metro Transit for a new contract for the transit system’s 2,500 bus operators, light rail operators, mechanics and other workers.

The Local 1005 executive board was recommending that members vote “no” on the contract, said Local 1005 president Mark Lawson, reporting to delegates at the November 8 meeting of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation.

“But you don’t need to worry” about a possible transit strike over the holidays, Lawson said. “We’re looking at Super Bowl week for going out on strike.”

For updates: minneapolisunions.org.

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005:

Ryan Timlin will be new president, with run-off elections for some offices

Ryan Timlin will be the new president of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 effective, January 1. Timlin, Minneapolis, has been a Metro Transit bus operator for 11 years. He faced no opponents in seeking the president’s office.

All other elected Local 1005 positions, however, drew multiple candidates.

In a first round of voting by members November 8, Dorothy Maki-Green was re-elected as vice president and Tommy Bellfield was re-elected as treasurer.

The top two vote-getters in the five-way contest for recording secretary, Mark Lawson and John McConnell, will face off in a run-off election Wednesday, December 6. Voting will take place at all worksites from 4:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

December 6 will also be the date for run-off elections for MJR Transportation Board and South Transportation Board.

In addition, a special election will be taking place Wednesday, November 22 for Light Rail Operators Board. Voting will take place from 4:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at both the Blue Line and Green Line light rail facilities.

AFSCME Council 5 and MAPE:

Legislative panel rejects state worker contracts

A state legislative panel voted October 5 to reject a proposed contract covering 30,000 State of Minnesota public employees.

The Minnesota Legislature’s Sub-committee on Employee Relations (SER) voted 6-4 on strict party lines, with Republicans voting to reject the two-year contract for members of AFSCME and MAPE.

The two-year contract, which fit within budget guidelines set by the legislature, would have offered raises of 2 percent the first year and 2.5 percent the second year.

“State employees negotiated a fair return on their work,” said Eliot Seide, executive director of AFSCME Council 5.

“Under this new contract… [o]ur wages and benefits are in line with the private sector. It’s a fair deal for state workers and Minnesota taxpayers.”

Votes by AFSCME members and MAPE members overwhelmingly approved the proposed contract.

“We’re tired of being pawns in a political game where Republicans think they can score points by beating up on hardworking people.” Seide said.

Workers will continue working under the terms of current agreements until the full legislature acts on the contracts in 2018.

AFSCME Council 5:

John Westmoreland named new executive director, Eliot Seide retires

The board of AFSCME Council 5 has named John Westmoreland as the organization’s new executive director, effective November 1.

Westmoreland served previously as Council 5’s assistant director and northern field director and in other staff roles.

Westmoreland succeeds Eliot Seide, who is retiring.

Seide has served as Council 5’s executive director since the 2004 merger of three AFSCME councils in Minnesota to create Council 5.

Westmoreland says he plans to meet with leaders of every local in Council 5 and build “a coalition of the willing.”

Westmoreland is a 32-year AFSCME member. Before he joined AFSCME’s staff, he worked as a correctional officer at Stillwater Correctional Facility, where he served multiple roles in AFSCME Local 600 from steward to president, served on the corrections negotiations master team, chaired the corrections policy committee and served on the Council 6 executive board.

AFSCME Local 3800:

Union trims proposed wage increase, U of M proposes a one-year contract

AFSCME Local 3800 and the University of Minnesota continue negotiations over a new contract.

The union has trimmed its proposal for a 3.5 percent increase for each year of a two-year agreement to 2.5 percent for each year, according to a negotiations update on Local 3800’s website.

The University previously had offered a two-year contract with a 1.5 percent increase in the first year and zero increase in the second year. October 24, the University proposed only a one-year contract with a 1.5 percent wage increase.

The University did agree to drop a sick leave proposal which the union had opposed.

“The University told our committee that this was the best they would do for us for a settlement,” the Local 3800 website reported. The University refused a request to schedule additional negotiation dates.

University service and maintenance workers, who are members of Teamsters Local 320, voted overwhelmingly November 2 to authorize a strike (see below).

Boilermakers Local 647:

Members and retirees holiday banquet planned December 2

The holiday banquet for members and retirees of Boilermakers Local 647 will be Saturday, December 2 at the Links at Northfork, 9333 Alpine Drive NW, Ramsey (just one block from the Local 647 hall).

Food will start at 6:00 p.m. The event will collect toys once again for Local 647’s Toys for Tots drive.

Bring in a new, unwrapped toy and receive a raffle ticket for your donation.

For any questions, call the Boilermakers Local 647 hall at 763-712-9930.

Carpenters Local 322:

Annual holiday party December 19

Carpenters Local 322’s annual holiday party will be Tuesday, December 19 from 6:00-9:00 p.m. at the Carpenter’s LOCAL UNION NEWS page 10

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www.minneapolisunions.org
Union Hall, 710 Olive St., St. Paul. This will be a members-only event. Check-in from 4:30-6:30 p.m. to receive a gift card and two free drink tickets. Must be present to receive gift card. No outside alcohol allowed. Food will be provided by Famous Dave’s and bar service by Mancini’s. The local office will be open until 8:00 p.m. to pay dues and purchase apparel. RSVP by December 11 online at tinyurl.com/HolidayParty322.

Gas Workers Local 340: Donation to aid hurricane relief

Gas Workers Local 340, which represents CenterPoint Energy workers in Minnesota, donated $5,000 to help hurricane relief efforts in Houston. The money will go to CenterPoint Energy employees who were affected by the hurricane.

Heat and Frost Insulators Local 34: New apprentice class of 15 includes five women

Heat and Frost Insulators Local 34’s new class of 15 apprentices includes five women.

“We’re having a lot of success with [attracting] women and minorities,” reported Eric Houske, Local 34 apprentice coordinator. He said the new group of apprentices will put Local 34 right on track to meet its 2018 apprentice goals of about 10 percent women and about 21 percent minorities.

Houske said he does outreach work at job fairs and programs like Construct Tomorrow.

But, he added, “most of the success can be attributed to our current apprentices.” They’re liking their experience, he said, “but most of the success can be attributed to our current apprentices.”

Linden Hills Co-op workers celebrate UFCW contract

MINNEAPOLIS — Workers at Linden Hills Coop, a natural foods grocery, voted overwhelmingly September 26 to ratify their first contract as members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 653. The three-year contract, which began on October 1, includes raises for all employees and paid time off. An overwhelming majority — 85 percent — of Linden Hills Coop workers voted to join UFCW Local 653 in February of this year. “By standing together and voting to approve this contract, we’ve improved our lives and jobs. We chose to do this because we’re committed to strengthening co-op and community because no one deserves to be left behind or struggle alone,” said Evan Adams-Hanson, a front-end store coordinator at the shop. For your weekly groceries or for the holiday meals? Shop Linden Hills Coop at 3815 Sunnyside Ave., Minneapolis. 

IBEW Local 292: Children’s Xmas Party December 2, Members-only party December 8

The IBEW Local 292 Children’s Christmas Party for members’ children and grandchildren will be Saturday, December 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Minneapolis Convention Center, Room 200, 1301 2nd Ave. So., Minneapolis.

Local 292’s members-only Christmas Party will be Friday, December 8 from 6:00-11:30 p.m. at the United Labor Centre, Rooms 216-218, 312 Central Ave., Minneapolis.

For both events, a monetary donation to the food shelf is encouraged.

Operating Engineers Local 49: Metro area holiday party December 2

Operating Engineers Local 49 invites members and a guest to attend holiday parties across its jurisdiction planned for December, January and February.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul area party will be Saturday, December 2 beginning at 6:00 p.m. at Envision Event Center, 484 Inwood Ave. N., Oakdale. This event will be open to active and retired members and their spouses.

Space is limited. RSVP early to 612-877-3722.

For other party locations, visit www.local49.org.

Teamsters Local 320: Members authorize strike at U of M

Teamsters Local 320 members who work at the University of Minnesota voted overwhelmingly November 2 to authorize a strike.

Local 320 and the University have been in contract negotiations for seven months and the workers have been working without a new contract for five months.

“The failure of the University at the negotiating table cannot continue and the workers and their families deserve better,” said Brian Aldes, secretary treasurer and principal officer of Teamsters Local 320.

Local 320 represents about 1,500 University employees who are building and grounds workers, food service workers, HVAC building mechanics, lab animal attendants, and waste management workers.

As the Labor Review went to press, the two sides planned to meet with a state mediator November 27.

UNITE HERE Local 17: Members reject longtime incumbents, elect entire slate of new leadership

Voting October 25, members of UNITE HERE Local 17 rejected longstanding incumbent officers and elected a brand-new slate of officers, executive board members, and stewards to three-year terms.

Christa Mello was elected president, defeating incumbent president Nancy Goldman.

Goldman first won election in 2005, leading a slate that was elected that year without opposition.

This year’s election brought defeat for Local 17’s other top three incumbent officers: Martin Goff, senior vice president; Wade Laneburg, secretary-treasurer; and Uriel Perez Espinoza, vice president.

(Laneburg, however, will be staying on staff as Local 17’s political director while Espinoza is staying on as community organizer/business agent).

Led by Mello, the slate which defeated the incumbents included: Rosa Valenzuela for senior vice president; Sheikh Freeberg for secretary-treasurer; and Miewael Gebra for vice president.

Mello, a Local 17 business agent for the past seven years, came out of UNITE HERE Local 1481 in Northfield. She was a rank and file member working at the Multek plant in Northfield and a shop steward. Local 17 officers helped Local 1481 negotiate the smaller local’s contract. Later, they invited Mello to join Local 17’s staff.

Valenzuela, a former housekeeper at the Ramada Plaza, was part of Local 17’s original organizing effort there. She has been a Local 17 member for 20 years and has worked 12 years on Local 17’s staff.

Freeberg has been on the Local 17 staff for three years. He was a “salt” at the Radisson Blu Mall of America and part of Local 17’s organizing drive there.

Gebru has been a Local 17 member for 11 years and participated in the union’s Sky Chefs organizing campaigns at the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport.

Other members of the winning slate included Betellehem Ali, Carrie Evans and Veronica Perez Moreno for executive board and Desirée King, Jill Gegen, and Rosanne Kasper for trustees.

The challengers’ campaign featured a Facebook page, “Democratic Local 17.”

The Facebook page said the slate was running on a platform of “Lower Wages for Leadership, Better Representation, A More Transparent Union, Better Contracts, More Community Outreach.”

The new leadership was sworn in October 29.

“What we are focusing on is representation of the members, building power, getting members more involved in the union,” Mello told the Labor Review. Another goal: “Reinforce the importance of in-shop stewards.”

She added, “we’re focusing on new ways of communicating with members,” including text messages and a coming re-design of the Local 17 web page.

In addition, the new leadership is inviting all members to a “Membership Planning Meeting” scheduled for Wednesday, January 17 from 4:30-7:30 p.m. at the United Labor Centre.

“That’s when we’ll begin developing an action plan going forward for the union,” Mello said. “We have a very strong vision for the future and the empowerment of our members.”

UNITE HERE Local 17 represents 3,000-plus workers at metro area hotels, restaurants, and banquet and catering facilities.
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**IBEW Local Union 292**

**Minneapolis Electrical Workers**

**Holidays**

Local 292 wishes friends and family a safe and festive Holiday Season. The office will be closed on the following days: Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24 for the Thanksgiving holiday. The Christmas holidays will be observed on Friday, December 22 and Monday, December 25.

**Holiday Parties**

The Children’s Christmas Party will be Saturday, December 2 at 9:00 a.m. at the Minneapolis Convention Center. As a reminder, the party is for members’ children and grandchildren.

The members-only party will be Friday, December 8 at 6:00 p.m. at the United Labor Centre. The Retirees Christmas Party will be Wednesday, December 13 at 11:00 a.m. at the Church of St. Patrick, 6820 St. Patrick’s Lane, Edina.

**Condolences**

Brother Richard Schwab, Jr.; Brother Jason Hoen; Brother William Peltec; Brother Ronald Madaras.

See you at the General Membership Meeting, 7:00 p.m. on the Second Tuesday

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Minnesota union leaders played active role at national AFL-CIO convention

By Steve Share, Labor Review editor

ST. LOUIS — The national AFL-CIO convention which met in St. Louis for four days at the end of October included several representatives from Minnesota, some who were attending their first AFL-CIO convention and some who were attending what might be their last.

The Minnesota contingent included the Minnesota AFL-CIO’s top officers as well as representatives of area labor councils, AFSCME, the Minnesota Nurses Association and the Building Trades.

“We come together every four years at this convention,” said Bill McCarthy, president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO. “It allows our central labor councils and state federations to come together and compare notes and address ways to fight off those forces that would take us down. It gives me hope we will survive and grow as a labor movement.”

“I noticed there was an urgency for all of us to work together,” said Bobby Kasper, president of the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation. “Even though we had some differences of opinion… I think unions really have learned to compromise with each other. I think [AFL-CIO president] Richard Trumka has a great vision to take America back.”

And, Kasper added, “we’re probably the only group that can bring the middle class back.”

“I’m really excited about how much work was done to bring more of the labor movement together on the same page,” said Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou, president of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation. “The enemies we face are bigger than any one union alone.”

“The thing I’m most excited about is the Future of Work [resolution],” she said. “How do we get ahead of the curve and build the labor movement and not just react?”

Minnesota AFSCME Council 5 executive director Eliot Seide was attending his fourth national AFL-CIO convention (and possibly, his last, as he plans to retire later this year). “I think there was a recognition of the urgency to become more nimble, to become more diverse, to modernize our capacity and capabilities, he said. “And I think there was an important recognition that we need to reach out to diverse communities on issues of common concern about the economy and social justice.”

Mary Turner, president of the Minnesota Nurses Association, commented: “This is the first national AFL-CIO convention I’ve been to, as an alternate with National Nurses United.” She was glad to see the convention pass Resolution 6. “The fact that the National AFL-CIO now supports ‘Medicare for All,’ which is a solution to fix our broken health care system, I see as a total victory — and well worth coming to this convention.”

Mary Turner, president of the Minnesota Nurses Association (left) and Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou, president of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation (right). Turner: “The fact that the national AFL-CIO now supports ‘Medicare for All,’ which is a solution to fix our broken health care system, I see as a total victory — and well worth coming to this convention.”

Photo above: Russell Hess, political coordinator for the Minnesota Laborers, spoke in favor of Resolution 55, which supported the transition to a clean energy economy, but he also spoke out against the threats his members have encountered from protesters when working on the Dakota Access Pipeline: “We have had members physically threatened on job sites. This is an emotional issue for us.”

Photo above: Bill McCarthy, president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO: “We come together every four years at this convention. It allows our central labor councils and state federations to come together and compare notes and address ways to fight off those forces that would take us down. It gives me hope we will survive and grow as a labor movement.”

Photo above: Mary Cathryn Ricker, former president of the St. Paul Federation of Teachers and now executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers and now executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers, spoke in favor of Resolution 47, condemning rising fascism in the U.S. She said teachers nationwide report an increasing number of incidents of hate speech and incidents of racism in public schools.

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Photo left: Mary Turner, president of the Minnesota Nurses Association (left) and Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou, president of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation (right). Turner: “The fact that the national AFL-CIO now supports ‘Medicare for All,’ which is a solution to fix our broken health care system, I see as a total victory — and well worth coming to this convention.”

Mary Turner, president of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, was attending her first AFL-CIO convention. “Most important- life was the opportunity to meet a lot of great people from the labor movement who are doing great work in their local unions and central labor councils and learn from them,” she said. Along with others from Minnesota, Daniels participated in a special session for folks from state federations and central labor council which preceded the opening of the convention.

Delegates hailing from Minnesota participated in the floor debate at the convention.

Minnesota Regional Labor Federation president Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou spoke in favor of Resolution 3, which focused on the importance of affiliates conducting internal organizing among union members to increase member engagement and develop new leadership as well as the role of central labor councils in Minneapolis.