

Frontline Worker Hero Pay

Despite a \$10 billion budget surplus, a global pandemic, and a legislative session that struggled to pass bills for bonding and infrastructure, legislative leaders were at least able to reach an agreement to provide **\$750 checks** for approximately 660,000 front line workers who Make Minnesota Happen. This agreement includes an expansion of the definition of front-line workers eligible for this pay.

"It's clear that our near \$10 billion surplus was built off the backs of our frontline workers continuing to do the work that keeps our economy running and our communities safe," Council 5 Executive Director Julie Bleyhl stated after the Legislature passed the Unemployment and Frontline Worker Pay legislation package. The pandemic further revealed the value of our front-line heroes who worked when PPE was in short supply and vaccinations were non-existent for this contagious and deadly virus.

While corporations continue to earn billions of dollars and pay NOTHING in taxes, our union will never stop fighting for working people who bring excellence to public services, dignity in the workplace, and opportunity and prosperity for all workers.

Legislators Leave With Billions on the Table

Governor Walz and House Democrats compromised throughout the Legislative session in order to get Minnesotans the help they need right now. On the other hand, Senate Republicans (and the GOP candidate for Governor), emboldened by hope of electoral success in November, bogged down end of session negotiations with uncompromising policy and spending positions, to derail a bipartisan agreement. They broke their \$1 billion promise to **Health and Human Services**; they failed to pass matching funds to unlock billions in federal infrastructure

funding; they broke their \$1 billion promise to Education; and when it comes to public safety, they made it clear they'd rather have political talking points than real solutions.

Examples of Compromise

- **Hero Pay** for frontline workers could not wait another year, so Governor Walz and House Democrats compromised to Republican demands to cut the checks in half, in order to ensure some relief was passed this year.
- As budget negotiations ramped up, Governor Walz and House Democrats again compromised to ensure progress on critical funding needs, such as **education, long-term care, and public safety**.
- They agreed to spend \$4 billion on a tax bill, in exchange for \$4 billion in additional spending, and leaving \$4 billion unallocated as a buffer for a potential economic downturn.
- A \$4 billion tax cut would have made this agreement the largest in state history.
- This agreement included permanent tax cuts, including a full tax exemption of **all social security income**.
- **Nearly every Minnesotan would have received a tax cut under this plan.**

Fact: Negotiations Derailed by GOP

- GOP-endorsed candidate for Governor, Scott Jensen, came to the capitol and urged GOP legislators to "hold the line" and "give the surplus back" to reject the parameters of the spending deal.
- Refusal to increase public safety funding if crime prevention initiatives were included.
- Senate Majority Leader Jeremy Miller immediately insisted the Senate GOP was not interested in a special session, even though negotiators were extremely close to an agreement.

- Senate GOP rejected a deal on across the board tax relief and additional investments in education, public safety, HHS and our public employee pension programs, a compromise which would have benefited all Minnesotans.

- They refused to fund children and families, public safety and our schools, our nursing homes, and our courts because they want big tax breaks for the wealthy and \$4 billion wasn't enough for them.

We are disappointed the Senate GOP chose to run out the clock on negotiations and **we urge them to return to the table and finish their work.**

Unfinished Business

- Increased funding for kids and families.
- Affordable child care.
- Expanding unemployment insurance to hourly school and university workers.
- Bonding bill to update infrastructure of our public buildings
- Funding for our courts - \$44 plus million over three years for compensation increases.
- Investments for our nursing homes to address workforce shortage and staffing crisis.
- **Public employee pension funding -public employers contribute far less than the national average toward our public pension, with a historic surplus, we can afford to change that and increase state aid.**
- Increases to local government aid and county program aid to help local units of government respond to inflation and increased needs.
- Paid Family and Medical Leave and Earned Sick and Safe Time.
- The second half of the frontline worker checks.

Local 3931 Wage MOU Vote

A vote to accept or reject a MOU was scheduled for workers at the Minnesota Red Cross. The MOU will allow implementation of the higher wage rates and back-pay retroactive to October 1, 2021.

The negotiations team recommended acceptance and upon approval, the following will be implemented:

- 2.5% increase in 2022 and 2023,
- 4% range movement on 1/1/22,
- 3.5% range movement on 1/1/23,
- New Juneteenth holiday,
- Salaries below the new rate will be raised to the new minimum,
- Employees with 1+ years service receive an \$1/hour increase.

Local 1129 Roseville Public Schools Workers Reach TA

AFSCME Local 1129 Office Support and Paraprofessional/Media Technology workers reached a tentative agreement for their 2-year contract starting 7/1/22.

Wage increases included a 2.25% increase in year 1 and 2.5% in year 2. Improved wage grids provide employees at the top of the grid to receive a 2.5% increase in both years.

Expanded longevity increases include 10-year employees, in addition to 25-year employees for a HCSP contribution of \$250 and \$500 respectively; 5-year employees receive an extra personal day each year; additional \$200 HCSP contribution if 2+ personal days remain at end of the school year.

Great job, siblings!



Contract Ratified for City of Duluth Workers

AFSCME Local 66 COD ratified a 2-year contract that includes wage increases of \$0.80 in 2022, 2% increase in 2023, and a 3.5% increase in 2024; shift differentials of \$1.50 day shift, \$2.25 night shift; comp time carryover; increased holiday OT rate to 2x; option to convert vacation hours to a HCSP; 4 hours for each standby shift worked on holidays; Juneteenth holiday; \$325 uniform allowance and access to insulated coveralls.

Great job, siblings!

Catholic Charities Workers Reach TA

Local 3481 reached a TA which includes a 3.5% wage increase, longevity increases, overnight retention pay, a new holiday, and a telework option. Annual longevity increases of \$500 (4+ years) and \$350 (up to 4 years) for full- and part-time permanent employees. Overnight Retention Payment of \$300 for existing full-time employees, or pro-rated for existing part-time employees; new Juneteenth holiday; and a telework option for building or program closures due to weather or unforeseen closures.

Great job, siblings!

2022 SEPC Conference

More than 200 AFSCME Council 5 state executive branch employees met to begin the process of state negotiations and elect new officers. Delegates and Council 5 Executive Director Julie Bleyhl, leaders and staff **thanked outgoing SEPC President John C. Hillyard** for his many years of service and congratulated him on his well-earned retirement.

Election of officers took place and the following members were elected: **Joel Hoffman** of Local 4001 and Council 5 Secretary was **elected SEPC President**; **Eric Hesse** of Local 404 and Council 5 President was **elected SEPC Vice-President**; **Trish Dierson** of Local 2829 was **elected SEPC Secretary**; and **Jessica Langhorst** of Local 1092 and Council 5 E-Board member was **elected SEPC Treasurer**.

Congratulations!

City of Apple Valley TA Reached

AFSCME Local 479 reached a 2-year TA with an improved and restructured wage grid in 2022, a 3% wage increase in 2023, modest insurance increases in year 1 and \$0 increase in year 2; additional \$80/mo. for a HRA/HSA for employees enrolled in a city-sponsored deductible health plan; new Juneteenth holiday; a new \$1,000 yearly retention payment.

Great job, siblings!