



# LOCAL UNION 12 NEWS

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## Employee Safe and Sick Time Coming State-Wide

Effective January 1, 2024, Minnesota’s Earned Safe and Sick time Law will require Employers to provide paid leave to all Employees who work in the state. Currently, there are similar ordinances in the cities of Bloomington, Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul that are in effect for workers who are currently working in these respective cities.

An Employee is eligible for Safe and Sick time if they:

- Work at least 80 hours a year for an employer in Minnesota,
- And are not an independent contractor.



An Employee may use Safe and Sick time for:

- the employee’s mental or physical illness, treatment or preventive care;
- a family member’s mental or physical illness, treatment or preventive care;
- absence due to domestic abuse, sexual assault, stalking of the employee or a family member;
- closure of the employee’s work place due to weather or public emergency or closure of a family member’s school or care facility due to weather or public emergency; and
- when determined by a health authority or health care professional that the employee or a family member is at risk of infecting other with a communicable disease.

Safe and Sick time is accrued at 1 hour per every 30 hours worked up to 48 hours each year . During collective bargaining it is encouraged to include all sicktime in excess of the minimum standard set by the state as “safe and sick time” for added protections for union workers.

Local 12 representatives and leadership are actively paying attention to legislation and how to incorporate it in collective bargaining agreements to help improve our members lives. If you have any questions please reach out to your union steward or representative.

For more information regarding the state law, including the city ordinances which are already in effect please visit <https://www.dli.mn.gov/sick-leave>.

## Door Knock With Aurin Chowdhury



Aurin Chowdhury, Minneapolis City Council Ward 12 Candidate, Endorsed by Local 12

Come knock doors for our endorsed candidate for Minneapolis City Council Ward 12, Aurin Chowdhury!

Where: We are meeting at Morris Park. 5531 39<sup>th</sup> Ave S Minneapolis 55417

When: September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 11am.

Questions about the door knock can be sent to [dhogan@opeiu12.org](mailto:dhogan@opeiu12.org)

Aurin is a former member of Local 12 and previously worked for Minnesota Youth Collective. Since then she has worked as a policy advisor for Councilmember Jason Chavez and continues to craft equitable policies that benefit working class residents of Minneapolis and beyond.

### Per Aurin's bio:

*My name is Aurin Chowdhury.*

*I'm a first-generation Bengali-American, daughter of working-class immigrants, organizer, renter, and experienced policy aide. I'm running to fight for working families, deliver progressive change for our communities, and work collaboratively to move our city forward.*

*My parents immigrated here from Bangladesh and made the Southside their home. My mother worked as a bank teller in Uptown by day, and took shifts at a call center by night. My father worked multiple jobs to pay his way through school. Like many in our community, my parents relied on social services and public goods to make ends meet. I often reflect on how our city could have better supported them. A more extensive transit system, renter's protections, and good paying union jobs could have made a huge difference to improve our family's quality of life. Even in our struggle, my family loved South Minneapolis, a place of opportunity and possibility.*

*I grew up on the Southside, went to Minneapolis Public Schools, and developed a deep appreciation for our community. I have always been passionate about public service and community building, because I believe that our community has the power to create the world we deserve. I have experience challenging the status quo through organizing, fighting alongside workers, and supporting progressive candidates for public office.*

“ I believe that our community has the power to create the world we deserve. ”  
— Aurin Chowdhury

*I've spent years shaping public policy and building inclusive coalitions – first at the office of Senator Kari Dziedzic and now as a Policy Aide at the City of Minneapolis. In my time at City Hall, I developed policies to combat wage theft, expand affordable housing for students, and deliver funding for small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These experiences have provided me with a strong understanding of what it takes to get things done for residents of Minneapolis and the importance of delivering excellent constituent services. I have a strong record of public service and advocacy and I'm ready to bring that experience to fight alongside you at City Hall.*

*Ward 12 needs a Councilmember who will not only represent our values, but move them to action. That's the type of transformative leader I will be.*

*I look forward to meeting you and earning your support,*

*Aurin Chowdhury*



## Political Action Training By Paula Moyer, Local 12 Member

I have to admit that when I got my reminder about this weekend training, I had a bit of a struggle within myself about devoting a whole weekend to this topic. My “yes” doesn’t come easily. Time is, after all, a precious commodity.

So, I admit I started out my attendance at the training session with a lot of skepticism. In my mind, I had a stereotype of International union staff as being cynical, narrowly focused bureaucrats. Once I was at the Political Activism Training, those stereotypes were broken. My colleagues and the union leadership shared my ideals: not just to take care of wages and benefits but create a world where we truly have a place at the table, where our thoughts, opinions, and recommendations matter.

The suggested approach to talking to co-workers? Not the strong-arm tactic I would have expected. Instead, we were asked to start by **listening to their stories** and sharing our own.

I loved the way the storytelling made for such a solid base for the rest of the training. I can see that style of organizing as something I can embrace. And, while I have heard for many years about “active listening,” the term “deep listening” was new to me. I loved the ground rules on that: don’t respond by talking about yourself, keep your attention on the speaker.

We were asked to learn what keeps our co-workers awake at night and look at how our union and our political action can address those concerns. “After all,” said one speaker, “we want to *change the world.*” *Change the world?*

To name a few of our desires, we want:

To provide well for ourselves and our loved ones,

To be treated with dignity and respect at work and in society,

To help create an inclusive, sustainable world, and

To use the abundant resources of our country to eliminate injustices and meet the needs of as many of our people as possible.



There was a lot of emphasis on the increasing concentration of wealth in our country, about the extremely wealthy 1% and the rest of us. And of open naming of what we are facing: an *ongoing class struggle*. We need to see this term more, to openly acknowledge that our interests and those of the 1% have nothing in common, and are, in fact, in direct conflict with each other. The 1% wants to continue to enrich itself – at our expense.

The speakers at our political activist training talked about this split in interests, and about how we need to contribute to our own PAC, the *J. B. Moss* fund, so that our goals can be met not just at the worksite but in our state, local, and national government. This fund helps to defeat union-busting attempts, and supports legislation that protects all of our rights – across all races, ages, genders and gender identities, sexual orientations, and abilities.

Almost in spite of myself and my earlier skepticism, I eagerly jumped on board to be part of this noble mission.

That’s what I got from the training session I attended: a sense of vision. An acknowledgment of some defeats that the labor movement has sustained, and yet a hope that we can turn this around. If we are determined and stick together. Together, we have the ability to make this country, this world, a great place. In the words of the hallmark labor song, “Solidarity Forever”:

*In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold,*

*Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousandfold.*

*We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old,*

*For the union makes us strong!*

In other words, I want to change the world, too. Starting with the world right in front of me. I want to join hands with like-minded people and support our PAC because of the good we can do together.

When I first started at HealthPartners and checked off my *J. B. Moss* contribution, it was very low. Like I said, I'm sometimes a hard sell. But now that I know some of the causes we support and how well this fund is used, I'm going to increase my contribution as much as I can reasonably do.

*I'm in. Are you?*

*To contribute to the J.B. Moss fund for as little as \$1 per paycheck, fill out an updated member application at <https://form.jotform.com/223213293055044>.*

## **Paid Family Leave Passed in Minnesota Legislation!!!!**

Minnesota Paid Family Leave was passed in the past legislative session. Local 12 has been hard at work trying to figure out what this means for our members and their collective bargaining agreements.

While the law does not go into effect until January 1, 2026, it's important to start thinking about what it means for us now. Most Minnesotans will be eligible for Paid Family and Medical Leave benefits after they have earned more than about \$3,500 in wages within the state over a period of a year.

Within a single year, an eligible employee can take up to 12 weeks of medical leave or family leave for a single qualifying event, or up to 20 weeks of combined medical and family leave if the employee has more than one qualifying event in the same claim year.

Payment benefits will vary based on the employee's weekly pay and paid for by the State of Minnesota. There is a premium however that both employers and employees now will be required to pay. The premium is a total of .7% of the employee's gross wages, and the employee may be required to pay .35% of that premium unless the employer either chooses to pay for the full percentage or it's bargained for by the union in the collective bargaining process.

For more information regarding the Minnesota Paid Family Leave program please visit: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/paid-family/individuals/>





## Dear Mother Jones,

*Sometimes at work, I have noticed my manager has made snide comments about our union. He would say things like, "running to your union won't help you". "It's best to negotiate your contract with us instead of your rep". We have become scared and intimidated to communicate with our union leadership now because we feel that if we do it will only become worse for us. But this feels wrong. What should we do?*

*Signed Scared Employee*

Dear Scared Employee,

The reason why your employer doesn't want you to contact your rep is because they like to keep you in their control. The only thing that beats the boss is the power of the union. Don't listen to him. This is entirely against the law. Document these instances, the time, place, witnesses if it's said in front of someone. And be sure to remember every detail if possible and call your rep immediately. Local 12 representatives will file what is called an Unfair Labor Practice Charge against your management and employer with the National Labor Relations Board.

There are several types of charges we could file against an employer. Some common ones are direct dealing, which is when the employer makes a deal with the employee without your representation present and retaliation against employees. These charges get filed when an employer violates provisions set forth in the National Labor Relations Act.

Members should always feel safe to communicate with their representatives and stewards regarding issues at work and collective bargaining. This is why you pay your union dues so you can have a voice and power in how your work is valued. Don't let him intimidate you. Take your power back. Ask questions, get educated, and unite your coworkers. You are not alone.

If you have a question for Mother Jones you would like answered in the newsletter, write [nmills@opeiu12.org](mailto:nmills@opeiu12.org)

## Dear Mother Jones,

*The other day my boss called me into the office. I wasn't sure what the meeting would be about. I went alone and they handed me a termination for a mistake I had allegedly made while entering data on a spread sheet. This was a minimal mistake that while inconvenient, wasn't detrimental to the company. This spreadsheet is shared amongst several employees. I had no prior discipline, and had otherwise been a good employee for the past 20 years. I don't understand what happened or why I deserved this. What do I do?*

*Signed Concerned and Unemployed*

Dear Concerned and Unemployed,

This is all kinds of wrong. Without knowing what is in your contract, it's safe to say your employer violated just cause under your discipline clause in your contract. There are 7 Steps to Just cause:

Fair notice, prior enforcement, due process, substantial evidence, equal treatment, progressive discipline, mitigating and extenuating circumstances.

It appears much was violated here and an investigation is needed on the Union's part. You need to make sure you call your rep immediately to file a grievance. Your rep can walk you through what rights you have or don't have and let you know how they can help you during this difficult time.

Also always remember that had your employer given you the opportunity for an investigation you would have had the right to representation during that meeting. Never refuse it. Your union steward or union representative is there to make sure the investigation conducted is fair, and also acts as your witness while taking notes. This will help you later if you are ever in need of a grievance. These are called your Weingarten Rights and they are very similar to Maranda rights, only the employer doesn't have to tell you you have them. You just need to know you have them. So be sure to tell your co-workers to always ask for a representative before going into disciplinary meetings.



# Membership Information

## Important Dates

**September 20** Member meeting

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**November 10** Steward meeting

(More info to come)

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**November 15** Member meeting

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## Get Involved!!!

They say that the best organizer is a bad boss. But the Union still needs to do it's work. Union strength for as long as unions have been around has been dependent on it's members. Union staff is here to help members get organized, get educated and rise up, but the real strength comes from the membership uniting and putting it's best foot forward.

Members can be involved by becoming stewards in their workplace, running for local board seats, joining their workplace Contract Action Teams and bargaining Committees. Start a newsletter or email/text chain for your work place to communicate union updates periodically with members. Hold a monthly happy hour at the nearby bar or coffee shop.

If you are an artist, Local 12 would love a volunteer to contribute cartoons to the Newsletter! If you'd like to contribute to the newsletter with an article, editorial, or art, please email [nmills@opeiu12.org](mailto:nmills@opeiu12.org).

## Know Your Rights

Before going into any meeting with the boss make sure, it's not a discipline meeting. If it is a discipline meeting. Always call your union Steward.

## Reach Your Representative

Kelsie Anderson, Union Rep: [kanderson@opeiu12.org](mailto:kanderson@opeiu12.org), Molly Thul, Union Rep: [mthul@opeiu12.org](mailto:mthul@opeiu12.org), Cesar Montufar: [cmontufar@opeiu12.org](mailto:cmontufar@opeiu12.org), Devin Hogan, President: [dhogan@opeiu12.org](mailto:dhogan@opeiu12.org)

## Question or Comment?

Please share your comments about this edition. Send them to: [nmills@opeiu12.org](mailto:nmills@opeiu12.org)

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**Receive text updates from your union by texting OPEIU to 97779. Message and data rates may apply.**

## Keep in Touch:

OPEIU Local 12: [www.opeiu12.org](http://www.opeiu12.org)



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