



*Season's  
Greetings  
and  
Best  
Wishes for  
a Healthy,  
Happy  
2017*

## **FOURTEENTH ANNUAL FUND RAISER**

The Fourteenth Annual Fund Raiser of the Minnesota State Retiree Council, AFL-CIO has been set for Saturday, April 29, 2017. It will be held from 3-7 p.m. at the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation's new building. The state-wide raffle tickets are being printed and should be available by the time you receive this. If you would like tickets to sell at holiday parties, contact the Retiree Council Office at 651-227-7647, ext. 121 or 1-800-652-9004, ext. 121. All affiliates will receive a mailing in January with full details about the event and some raffle tickets.

# ***BRAVE NEW WORLD***

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.*

The Serenity Prayer comes daily to mind, as the consequences of Election 2016 roll out and we advance/regress into the Brave New World of America's next president. Serenity, courage and wisdom will be in high demand for some time to come . . . and Hope.

"Live in hope or die in despair," my mother used to say. And thanksgiving nourishes hope. There's no strength to keep working for better days without it. So let's give thanks for love, life, friends, the many gifts we've received and – election results notwithstanding – the great dedication and generosity of so many who volunteered on the Minnesota Labor 2016 campaign.

Retirees were a big part of the effort. Volunteer shifts worked by members of State Retiree Council organizations were among the highest recorded among Minnesota AFL-CIO affiliates (and the tally of GOTV shifts hasn't been reported yet). So, if you wrote postcards, made phone calls, knocked on doors, put up lawn signs, organized or participated in the Social Security or Medicare workshops, shot YouTube videos, or volunteered for other tasks, Thank you.

So what can we change, and what must we accept for now? To figure that out will take time and a process of discernment. But it seems to me that, above all, we need to regenerate the power that comes when people act together for change on matters that concern them. And – for the most part – that doesn't mean working on elections.

Walter Reuther was right: "There's a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls." But success at the ballot box requires daily organizing around bread box issues.

If more citizens were active in organizations that work every day to make practical improvements in their lives – not just choose office holders – they wouldn't feel options were limited, when election season came around, to thumbing their noses at the establishment by voting for a self-absorbed snake oil salesman. They would have real power and know how to use it effectively to challenge establishments and actually change what needs changing.

So we've got organizing to do, on immediate breadbox issues at the state legislature for starters, but – more importantly – to grow our unions and retiree organizations and help other broad-based democratic citizen action organizations build power.

That ain't going to be easy, and the road ahead is uphill and long. As the old worker at the end of the classic labor film *The Inheritance* challenges watchers, "You think this is the end? It's only the beginning."

In solidarity,

*Bill Moore*

Bill Moore  
President

## MOVING FORWARD: WHAT TO EXPECT

**ELECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES.** Labor-supported candidates did not fare well in the 2016 elections for a wide variety of reasons. Rather than listing the multiple-reasons contributing to losing, let us *look forward* to what we can expect and how we can prepare for the coming months and years.

**RIGHT-TO-WORK-LEGISLATION.** Most assuredly the Republican majorities in the Minnesota House and Minnesota Senate will revive the old anti-union legislation first made possible in 1947 through the infamous Taft-Hartley Act. We need to re-educate ourselves and our labor friends and allies about exactly what to expect in right-to-work legislation that is now found in 26 states, including Michigan, Indiana, Iowa and Wisconsin. We know it means “right-to-work-for-less,” but that is only scratching the surface. There is a great deal of anti-union venom that will spew forth from the fangs of right-to-work legislation. We need to seek out the fine print and be prepared to expose right-to-work for what it is: unfair, unsafe and unnecessary.

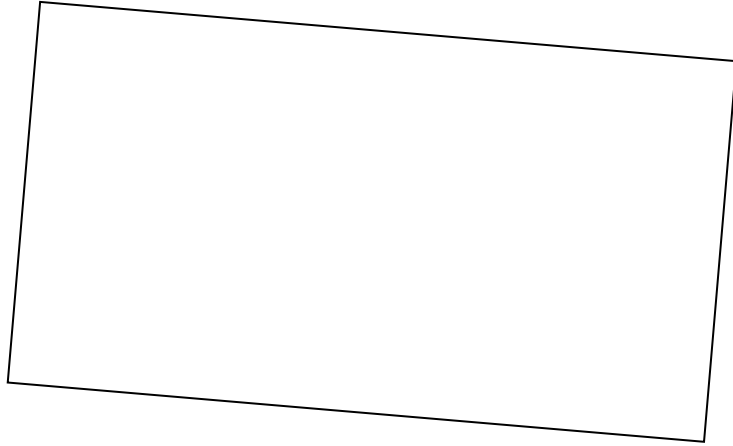
**MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY.** Medicare is the federally funded health care program that pays for much of the hospital care, doctor visits and medications for those of us 65 and older. It costs a lot of money.

Speaker of the U.S. House Paul Ryan has a plan ready to go that would essentially privatize Medicare. As an editorial in the November 18, 2016 *Star Tribune* reminds us, this issue that “largely went undiscussed during the presidential campaign.” Ryan’s “premium support plan” would give a fixed sum of money for seniors to buy coverage on the private insurance market. Lots of luck with that. Speaker Ryan’s advice to his fellow Republicans is, “Now is the time to go big.” Expect a full steam ahead push on this earth-shaking legislation. If successful on decimating Medicare, can further attacks on Social Security be far behind? Perhaps the attacks will happen at the same time

**WE NEED TO ACT NOW.** Let’s start by listening to grass-roots, rank and file union families and friends. We can start the dialogue by bringing together folks to discuss right-to-work and Medicare issues. We can listen and note concerns as well as clarify issues. Have a regular meeting of union retirees? Let’s talk. Want to organize a special meeting of union retirees? Let’s talk. Want to draw together community members? Let’s talk. We need to hear from you

**CALL THE MINNESOTA STATE RETIREE COUNCIL** and let’s roll. We can be reached through the Minnesota AFL-CIO at 651-227-7647 or 1-800-652-9004.

-----Dan Mikel



A strong, united voice for Minnesota's retired workers.

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### **Editor's Note:**

This is an informational publication — and is the official newsletter and property of the Minnesota State Retiree Council, AFL-CIO. For information, contact the Minnesota State Retiree Council, AFL-CIO. Address: 175 Aurora Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55103. Phone: 651-227-7647 or toll-free 1-800-652-9004.

### **Volunteer!**

Join our Rapid Response Political Action Volunteers. Contact information below!

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