

2027 Minnesota Legislative Priorities



Special Education Funding

Following drastic cuts to special education funding through the federal dismantling of the US Department of Education, we anticipate a continued deficit in special education funding critical to safe and responsive staffing in our schools, and to services like programming and transportation for special education students.

Childcare Funding

The current federal administration has suspended federal funding for Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) in Minnesota, a decision currently under legal challenge after the Minnesota Attorney General's Office challenged the pause of funding. Pending the outcome of this legal action against the federal administration, state legislative action may be necessary in order to ensure that childcare providers across the state, including those within school based childcare programs, are able to receive necessary public funds to remain operational. In school based childcare programs, the loss of federal funds further strains local school district budgets and AFSCME Council 65 is committed to protecting our local public schools statewide.

Standing for a Dignified Retirement

At our October 2025 convention, delegates approved a resolution to commit our Council efforts to the pursuit of a reduced retirement age without penalty across Minnesota's various public pension systems. A retirement age of 65 with no penalty would help to provide working Minnesotans the opportunity for a more dignified retirement. We also stand in support of the strengthening of all other pension systems that our members and other working people contribute to.

Closing the Self-Insured Insurance Plan Loophole

Self-insured insurance plans do not require collective bargaining support for the employer to reduce the aggregate value of that plan. This loophole in workers' insurance must be closed. We support legislation that will close this loophole to ensure that workers with self-insured insurance plans have a say in how changes to their insurance plans are determined.

Defense Work

Our work in this session is expected to mirror much of the work we did in the last legislative session in safeguarding hard fought worker protections like ESST, Minnesota Paid Leave (MPL), and unemployment for hourly school workers as well as those wins that improve and protect our communities like local government aid, county program aid, free school meals for all Minnesota kids, and state health and human services program funding in the wake of the federal HR1.

Protecting Workers Against Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Last session, we worked on legislative measures on the topic and in this upcoming session we plan to work in a similar manner to advocate for workers' rights in the face of AI and to draw attention to the ways that unmitigated growth and implementation of AI across every sector can be harmful both for the jobs our members do and the clients and the public that they serve.

Prohibition on Local Government Use of NDAs

The use of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) in the context of local government threatens the transparency and accountability of all public programs. We will continue to fight alongside other labor and community partners to build upon work done last session to bring forward a ban on the use of NDAs for local government officials.

Unemployment for Striking Workers

Collective action remains the most effective way for workers to secure better pay and conditions; when one group of workers wins a strike, it raises standards for everyone. However, current labor laws are heavily skewed toward employers. Companies can legally stall negotiations, make threats, cut off health benefits, and lock out or replace workers all while keeping their own pay and benefits intact. Because going on strike means sacrificing a paycheck and risking a family's financial stability, it is often a last resort. It is time to level the playing field by granting striking workers access to unemployment insurance.

Minnesota Judicial Branch Funding

Our state legislature failed to provide an increase to continued operational funding for the branch this last biennium and so we're focusing our efforts on members of the judiciary committee in each legislative body, with the goal of a hearing for funding appropriations to the branch in order to fund fair wage increases to respect the critical work of the AFSCME clerical and technical staff who are essential to the operations of our state's legal system.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families(TANF)

The current federal administration has moved to suspend all funding of both SNAP and TANF programs for Minnesota families, programs our members administer across the state. The Minnesota's Attorney General's Office has filed a lawsuit challenging the pause of this funding, though the future of these funds is still uncertain at this time, putting Minnesota's most vulnerable families at risk.

Defense Against Gig Worker Systems in Healthcare

Various corporations have attempted to infiltrate healthcare systems across our state with "gig worker" structures, which permit the exploitation of healthcare workers who work via app as an independent contractor and therefore outside of employment protections and the right to organize a union. These app systems also serve to dilute bargaining units of permanent healthcare staff in a facility and pose a threat to consistent, qualified patient care teams who are best equipped to serve patients. AFSCME Council 65 stands opposed to the permissibility and expansion of these gig worker systems in our healthcare facilities.

Adding Collective Bargaining Status to Job Postings

Workers should know the collective bargaining status of jobs that they apply for. AFSCME Council 65 supports measures to require job postings in Minnesota disclose collective bargaining status including benefits and the term of the current contract for union jobs. This information will help with appropriate bargaining unit designation upon the creation of new job titles and to maintain our bargaining units as defined, as well as providing job seekers with the enhanced ability to seek out union jobs.

Anti-Privatization

We are in coordination with our We Make Minnesota (WMM) coalition partners to draft legislation for this session that protects public services, and builds an infrastructure to prevent further outsourcing and to bring some privatized programs back to the public sector where the work is performed by union labor and has the transparency and oversight of public programs. From there, we will alongside coalition partners and those same state legislators to put these ideas into action and law.

Statewide School Insurance Pool

We, alongside other allied unions like Education Minnesota and SEIU Local 284, have worked to advocate for a statewide school employee insurance pool to lower the costs and increase access to health insurance for all school employees statewide and to also lessen the burden on funding that insurance in our school districts. Last session, a bill was passed requiring school districts to annually disclose how much they pay for health insurance. This information will help in passing a statewide insurance pool bill.

Rural EMS Funding

After securing one-time funding in the amount of \$24M in 2024, we know that the underfunding of critical rural EMS services across the state continues. This underfunding threatens response time and access to critical emergency medical response and also leaves these services vulnerable to acquisition by private equity firms and healthcare conglomerates that prioritize profits over community care. We support not only increased public funding for rural EMS services, but also legislation prohibiting private equity and real estate investment trust (REITs) acquisition, and increased control over providers of critical healthcare services.

Modernize Managed Care Organizations Systems.

Local Managed Care Organizations (MCO's) provide essential services for communities. We oppose any effort to privatize MCO's or transfer their services to state government. However, the computer systems that MCO's use are outdated. To support MCO's in their work to provide exceptional services for local communities we endorse efforts to update and modernize the systems that use.