

**American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees**  
*One strong united voice for Minnesota workers*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 28, 2021

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**AFSCME Council 5 Demands Safe Staffing**

**South St. Paul, MN** - AFSCME Council 5 Executive Director Julie Bleyhl and the AFSCME Corrections Policy Committee released the following statement on dangerous staffing levels and the need for robust staff recruitment and retention plans:

"All Minnesotans rely on Correctional Officers, secure facility, direct care and treatment staff, and others to keep our state safe, but dangerously low staffing levels and inadequate staff recruitment plans without worker input are risking the lives of workers and Minnesotans. In honor of our fallen heroes, we have vowed to never relent on our collective fight for safe staffing and improving the working conditions in our facilities and workplaces.

"We have grave concerns that the Minnesota Department of Corrections is having to resort to filling security staff positions with non-security staff due to low staffing levels. If this continues, this plan will result in more injuries and workers possibly losing their lives in the line of duty. Our union rank-and-file members are best qualified to help recruit new workers and offer input to ensure enough workers are staffing our secure facilities that will prevent injury and loss of life and protect public safety.

"We call on the Minnesota Department of Corrections, Minnesota Department of Human Services, and all employers across our membership to design staff recruitment and retention plans with worker input to ensure they are successful and restore the Recruitment and Retention Committees in the DOC that allows our union to talk about the many benefits of union membership, including AFSCME free college for workers and their families. We also call on Minnesota lawmakers to increase staffing levels in state agencies and local governments that operate secure facilities to protect workers and ensure operations run smoothly and safely. Our union stands ready and available to work with employers to recruit new workers so we can ensure safe staffing levels and protect the lives of working people and all Minnesotans."

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*AFSCME Council 5 is a labor union representing more than 43,000 workers across Minnesota. We advocate for excellence in services to the public, dignity in the workplace, and opportunity and prosperity for all workers.*