

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2021

South St. Paul – AFSCME Council 5 Executive Director [Julie Bleyhl](#) issued the following statement:

"AFSCME Council 5 did not participate in the events taking place at the St. Paul Labor Center last night. It is essential that we recognize the important work of peaceful protestors and those publicly voicing their concerns, as well as the leadership of Governor Walz and the work of the Minnesota National Guard keeping our communities and peaceful protestors safe and protecting our constitutional rights.

"Many members of our union proudly work for and serve in the Minnesota National Guard and we thank them for their honorable service to our state and country. Members of the National Guard are our neighbors -many of whom are teachers, clerical workers, correctional officers, child protection officers, social workers and others; They volunteer to serve and protect all residents and our communities. We also want to recognize the work of our Department of Transportation members who were called in to close highway off/on ramps to protect the traveling public, and our members in the Department of Public Safety, local agencies, and other public safety workers.

"Our union strongly supports and encourages residents to use their 1st amendment rights to peacefully assemble, protest, call out injustices, and have their concerns heard. Again, we want to thank members of the Minnesota National Guard who frequently protect our communities through search and rescue operations, administering COVID-19 vaccines, responding to natural disasters and floods, fighting in war zones overseas for our shared values, maintaining peace, and actively protecting our constitutional rights."

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