



SERVICE EMPLOYEES  
INTERNATIONAL UNION  
CLC

**SEIU Minnesota  
State Council**

Brian Elliott  
Executive Director

2233 University Avenue West  
Suite 422  
Saint Paul, MN 55114-1629

651.203.0401  
Fax: 651.203.0405

**Healthcare Minnesota**

Jamie Gulley  
President

651.294.8100  
fax: 651.294.8200

**Local 284**

Kelly Gibbons  
Executive Director

651.256.9100  
fax: 651.256.9119

**Local 26**

Greg Nammacher  
President

612.331.8336  
fax: 612.331.8347

**Workers United**

Margarito Diaz Jaimes  
Regional Political  
Coordinator

312.738.6100

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Dear Chair McEwen and Committee Members,

I am proud to write in support of Nicole Blissenbach's confirmation as commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry.

I have had the privilege to work in collaboration with Commissioner Blissenbach for a number of years, most recently in close partnership on the passage and implementation of the state's Frontline Worker Pay program. Commissioner Blissenbach was able to help ensure that the legislation was clear so as to facilitate implementation, and then led her team at the Department to distribute \$500 million in payments to over one million Minnesota workers on the frontlines of the COVID 19 pandemic and who met eligibility requirements in the law. The successful implementation of the Frontline worker Pay program required the foresight to learn from other states and begin the internal planning early, to partner with organizations that work with frontline workers to ensure that all eligible workers had an opportunity to apply, to fairly execute the program in strict keeping with the eligibility parameters laid out in the law, and to work closely with stakeholders, consultants, and the Departments of Revenue and Employment and Economic Development to anticipate, prepare for, and address issues as, or even before, they came up.

Commissioner Blissenbach is a shining example of the collaboration that should be between a government agency and the people it serves, and her genuine concern for workers' economic wellbeing is constantly at the forefront of how she approaches the work of the Department. She's led efforts to combat wage theft and recover wages owed. Indeed, she is a leader who understands and values the expertise of her staff as they work to achieve DLI's mission of equitable, healthy, and safe work and living environments.

Commissioner Blissenbach is thoughtful, smart, and fair, and is exactly the right person to lead the Department of Labor and Industry. I highly recommend her confirmation.

Sincerely,

Brian Elliott  
Executive Director