Minnesota State Legislative Election Review

November 6th, 2020

Brothers & Sisters,

After two days of counting the ballots of the most contentious state and national election in recent memory, I finally feel like its safe to comment on the results of our state legislative races.

In a nutshell there will be no change in the balance of power at the Minnesota state capitol. The DFL lost a few House races but still maintains a majority in that chamber. The GOP still maintains a razor-thin control of the Senate.

What does this mean for MPFF members? Probably more of the same at the Capitol where we enjoy strong bi-partisan support. This is why we always stress that we need to support candidates who support us, regardless of political party. While other labor unions have been shut out of Minnesota’s divided government, the MPFF has continued to get initiatives through year after year because we have not been partisan. If you forget everything else I say, please always remember that fact.

Of the 41 state legislative races where the MPFF issued endorsements, all but three candidates were successful. That’s about a 90% success-rate and some of those races were very tight, meaning our endorsement meant that much more.

There are some serious challenges ahead. The State of Minnesota faces a huge budget deficit, $4.6 billion at last count, which will probably lead to calls on the left to raise taxes and calls on the right to cut budgets. Because no party has complete control, I would say the prospect of tax increases seems pretty slim, meaning look for possible proposals to reduce programs many of our departments benefit from, such as Local Government Aid (LGA) and the Fire Safety Account. However, much of this is dependent on the size of any local government bailout package that the US Congress may pass.

In the coming weeks before the Legislature convenes in January, party leaders will be staking out their priorities for the 2021 Legislative Session. For the MPFF our early priorities include playing defense on LGA and the Fire Safety Account. Also, we will be fighting for new initiatives such as the MN Hometown Heroes Protection Act and gaining survivor benefits for the families of our members that are lost due to cancer. More to come on that.

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Chris Parsons
President
Minnesota Professional Fire Fighters