**Political Council Personal Statements**

**James Dirth – Local 201**

Hello, my name is James Dirth. I work for the Department of Human Services in St. Paul. I have been with the state government for 3 years and a MAPE member for just as long. I did advocacy work for students at the University of Wisconsin La Crosse for three years while in college. I met with legislators, testified at committee hearings, and informed student leaders about ongoing policy proposals at the Wisconsin legislature. I am a firm believer in the power of unions and why they are necessary for workers after years of deteriorating working conditions, stagnant wages, and growing wealth inequality.

If elected, I want to focus on two issues. First, holding elected officials accountable, particularly those who have claimed to support unions during elections season. We have a tremendous opportunity to create great change in Minnesota with the current legislature and we need to make sure that any elected official who claimed to support unions and workers on the campaign trial does so through legislation and policy. MAPE needs to act as a constant force for those elected officials who claim to support unions and workers to make sure that they are held accountable for what the voters put them into office for.

Second, I would like to see MAPE advocate for policies that support workers throughout the state, especially for workers who are currently fighting for the right to unionize. MAPE is a well-established union and we should use our organization capacity to help workers in their fight for better working conditions by advocating for policies that benefit all workers.

**Kelsey McKenna – Local 902**

My name is Kelsey McKenna. I work for the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), in the Infectious Disease Lab located in Saint Paul. I have been a state employee for about nine months now, and just recently joined MAPE in the last month or so. I previously worked at the Mayo Clinic in the Virology Lab and was a member of the Virology Education Team, as well as a Champion of the Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (EID) Committee for the Department of Lab Medicine and Pathology during my time there. I am currently serving on the Safety Task Force here at MDH.

My strongest passions include education, human rights, equity and fairness in the workplace, and workplace safety. I nominated myself for the political council as I am looking to get more involved in my community and have always been inclined to get involved in politics. I am a strong supporter of work unions and believe that our voices have more power in numbers. I would gladly stand up and represent those voices for my fellow MAPE union members.

What is most important to me is that our humanity and work-life balance are maintained and upheld to a high standard. If I am elected for this position, I will be sure that our voices are heard, and that political action is taken regarding our needs and desires as state employees. I am a strong believer in change coming more easily through education and understanding, so educating not only our union members but also our state legislators will be a critical component to me serving on the political council.

**Kyle Wilmar – Local 601**

My name is Kyle Wilmar. I am a Disability Specialist at Disability Determination Services in St. Paul. I have been a state employee for four years and a MAPE member for a year and a half. I am currently serving on MAPE PAC and have spent countless hours out campaigning for our MAPE endorsed candidates. Now I am running for political council because electing pro-labor candidates isn’t enough. We need to keep politicians accountable to their campaign promises. We need to make sure that our legislative priorities are known and taken seriously. We need a government that works for the workers. As state employees, we have kept Minnesota going and have had a lot asked of us over the last few years. I want to make sure we are fairly compensated for our work and can improve our work lives. We do this through action and involvement in the legislative process. My goal for the political council is to work towards a more politically active and educated union that can effectively organize to fight for better working conditions for all Minnesota workers. I plan on achieving this by taking actions to keep our members informed of our current legislative goals and any legislation that would impact us as working-class Minnesotans. I will organize events to get our members involved in the legislative process and also provide information for actions our members can take to be more politically involved in their free time. I know politics isn't everyone's favorite activity and many feel disillusioned by politics in general, but I want to make it as easy as possible for all of our members to be politically engaged and active. Our strength comes from our numbers and unity. Together we can make Minnesota a better place for all workers!

**Liz McLoone – Local 501**

I am Liz McLoone and I serve as a Senior Specialist and the Labor Liaison for the Rapid Response Team at DEED. I have been a MAPE member for the past 4 years and before that, a Machinists member within two different locals. On the state’s Rapid Response Team, we respond to layoff notifications and work to ensure employees receive information about the Dislocated Worker program in order to obtain a new job as quickly as possible.

Prior to my time at DEED, I worked for over a decade and a half doing political, legislative and union work throughout the state of Minnesota. I have done so on behalf of labor, elected officials, non-profits and multiple political campaigns. I’ve had the honor of working for former Governor Mark Dayton and Governor Walz. I also took a Leave of Absence from my state job to work the 2022 elections on behalf of MAPE members. It’s through this experience that I got to meet many of you and learn what means the most to you regarding policy and legislative initiatives. I believe in the mission of MAPE and the State of Minnesota, as well as the work that we do, so it will be a comfortable fit for me to represent our members in a political capacity. I humbly ask for your support.