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MASH & Fight for $15: 'Wisconsin Needs Unions' roundtable discussion

Posted on Monday, Jul 2, 2018

1110 N. Old World 3rd,
St. Suite 304,
Milwaukee.

Dem. Congressional Candidate Randy Bryce and Gubernatorial Candidates to Join Roundtable Discussion with Workers Calling for More Union Jobs, Higher Wages to Make Wisconsin Stronger

MILWAUKEE – Democratic candidate for Wisconsin's 1st Congressional District Randy Bryce will join gubernatorial candidates Mahlon Mitchell, Kelda Roys and more than a dozen other local and state elected officials for a roundtable discussion on Monday with workers from different industries to highlight the need to make it easier for working people to join together in unions in Wisconsin in order to raise wages and create thriving communities.

Working people who are fighting for higher wages, organizing for unions, and entering employment through the MASH hiring hall will discuss why putting more people in unions is the best way to confront inequality and lift the 64 million Americans paid less than $15/hour out of poverty. They'll also highlight one of the ways Milwaukee workers have been able to build new forms of power through the Bucks agreement–a new standard that's creating the kinds of jobs working families need, and allowing the organization of unions that will raise standards for service and hospitality jobs in the Arena District.

At the roundtable, candidates and elected officials will have the opportunity to respond to the workers by sharing how they plan to take action for building union power in Wisconsin, how they can support and enact policies that help workers, and how they can create more jobs that follow a Bucks-style agreement.

WHAT: Roundtable Discussion organized by the Milwaukee Area Service & Hospitality Workers Organization (MASH) and the Fight for $15.

WHO: MASH hirees; fast food workers; airport workers; Congressional candidate Randy Bryce; gubernatorial candidates Mahlon Mitchell and Kelda Roys; candidate for Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes; Councilwoman Chantia Lewis; Milwaukee County Board members Marcelia Nicholson, Steven Shea, Supreme Moore Omokunde, Willie Johnson, Jr., Jason Haas; Wisconsin Assembly members Daniel Riemer, JoCasta Zamarripa, David Bowen, David Crowley, Evan Goyke, Christine Sinicki (confirmed elected officials & candidates)

WHEN: Monday, July 2, 2018 at 11:00 am

WHERE: 1110 N. Old World 3rd St. Suite 304; Milwaukee, WI 53203

Background:

The laws that gave Americans the right form unions and build the middle class in the 20th century have not kept up with the new economy and new corporate strategies to keep workers and their unions down. A growing number of economists warn that working families are at risk of falling behind because working Americans do not have enough power to ensure that growing corporate profits translate into real wage gains for employees.

Women and working people of color are more likely to work in service and care jobs where wages have historically been kept lower and barriers to forming unions have been made higher.

Over the past 40 years, corporations and politicians have gutted unions, held down pay and made it harder for people to get ahead. The result: 64 million workers are paid less than $15/hour, and their power to join together and negotiate for higher wages, affordable healthcare, and other improvements has been stripped away. To encourage balanced, sustainable growth, Wisconsin needs to help working people raise wages to build thriving communities.

On the contrary, underpaid workers in Milwaukee’s service and hospitality sectors are organizing in innovative ways to raise standards and build power. They are organizing with a new approach anchored in the landmark community benefits agreement for the Bucks arena district and expanding that to other sectors, building on the Fight for Fifteen movement. Their work illustrates how working people can successfully build labor market bargaining power to raise standards with new forms of union organization — and can drive a new conversation about how policy- makers

can do the same for working people generally.