

Minnesota Elections

BY MEGHAN O'HARA

ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, an especially important election was on the mind of every Minnesotan resident

Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) Party Governor Tim Walz was re-elected for his second term following a race between him and former member of the Senate, Scott Jensen. Minnesotan voters turned out in substantial numbers after hearing Scott Jensen's plans for Minnesota. This large turnout from the DFL led to Minnesota having a huge blue wave, meaning that the DFL now has control of the governor's office and Legislature. Tim Walz won the election with 52% of the votes, whereas Scott Jensen came in with only 45%.

Disappointed, Scott Jensen had big hopes for Minnesota's future but was quickly shot down after the election results came in. Jensen had big plans to take Gov. Tim Walz's position and enact laws on crime and abortion in Minnesota. Due to the controversy of Jensen's plans, many Minnesotans were disheartened, leading Jensen to have a substandard voter turnout.

"I am deeply disappointed in Minnesota right now. Jensen could have helped Minnesota have a foot in the right direction, but those young voters are brainwashed by Democrats!" said Isaac Watson, a car mechanic in Woodbury.

There was some hope for Minnesota Republicans during the race for Attorney General between (R) Jim Shultz and (D) Attorney General Keith Ellison. Ellison won with only around twenty-one thousand more votes, meaning both candidates had 50% of the votes. However, this made some Minnesotan Democrats extremely unhappy. Stephen Kitzman, who is a proud Democrat, stated, "This blue wave is amazing! I am so

fortunate to be able to vote in such an election that made history!"

For Republicans, this could be a discouraging election, but for Democrats, this election may seem like a step in the right direction for the state's future. Gov. Walz plans to protect abortion rights, along with expanding opportunities for economics in Minnesota. These plans were a huge success in Walz's campaign, leading him to be re-elected for another four years. In addition to this, Walz also was able to persuade young



Photo Credit: Megan Connelly

voters to turn out in the recent election, which was an enormous success on his part.

Young Minnesotan voters expressed deep concern for this year's midterm election which caused them to get out and vote. Ryan Dallwinther, who is a first-year student at the University of Minnesota stated, "This was my first time voting, I am 19 years old, and could not care less about politics, but when it came down to Scott Jensen's views on abortion, I knew I had to vote to keep the rights for the woman in my family." Ryan is one of the many young voters who voted this year to keep abortion rights intact. However, abortion was not the only thing on the minds of young voters. Climate change was also a major concern. Kelli Remme, who is a sophomore and pre-nursing student at Concordia St. Paul finds climate change to be a huge issue in today's society. When asked the question "Why did you vote today?" she stated, "Climate change is why. When I think about my future, I want to be able to have children. If climate change does not slow down or end, my children's future is at stake, and I do not want that."

Climate change was a key plan for Gov. Tim Walz. In an article written by MPR News called "Minnesota governor rolls out plan to fight climate change." Authored by Steve Karnowski, writer for the Associated Press. Walz stated "This issue will transcend whoever is elected. This issue is not going away. it needs to be addressed." In this quote, Walz is acknowledging how detrimental climate change is, leading him to start a plan to act on climate change. This was a very smart move on Walz's campaign as this led him to get the younger generation to get out and vote.

Social Workers Part of MPD Department

BY KALI FOLLAND

SOcial workers are embedded in the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). It is a part of the program that the City Council had approved to improve the way Minneapolis Police Department helps with mental health or addiction issues. A Hennepin County social worker will be part of the five precincts working with police officers.

Andesola Oni, with Hennepin County Criminal Justice Behavioral Health, believes that this will be a part of a larger system strategy to support mental health needs in communities. Social workers will follow up on cases and reach out to people that police officers encounter.

"They can prevent repeated calls, and bring in a culturally informed expert that will have specialized resources based on individual needs" Oni adds. The program is already in place with over a dozen suburban departments, including Brooklyn Park.

"It's getting those folks connected to the help that has been the challenge for many, many years," Elliot Faust, a member of the Brooklyn Park Police Department, added. "I think this is the best way that we've found to make that connection."

When social workers first started in the police system in 2020, they connected with people on their 405 cases, and provided them with services. MPD co-responders have contacted 985 people dealing with some sort of emergency mental-health issue — 843 adults and 142 children — between fall 2017 and fall 2018, according to data provided by MPD. And among those, more than 260 people calmed down in their homes or workplace after talking to the social workers and officers, meaning they declined trips to the hospital and saved the department resources according to Metro News.

The county and MPD are currently working on hiring for the five positions. Anthony Rauschendorfer plans to apply for the position. "Having the opportunity to personally interact with a community member that needs assistance in any type of way is very important," he said. Rauschendorfer has a Master's degree in social work and a law degree. He currently works with the University of St. Thomas's Community Justice Project. "The big appeal for me [of being an embedded social worker] is having a healthy start to meaningful change," Rauschendorfer said. "The interdisciplinary approach to responding to the community is very important."

The approval comes over two years after the death of George Floyd, whose murder at the hands of officer Derek Chauvin rocked the city of Minneapolis and the entire country. At the time, many police reform advocates argued that an intervention by a social worker could have prevented Floyd's death.