



NEWS RELEASE
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International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49 statement on treatment of the Minnesota National Guard by other labor leaders this week

MINNEAPOLIS - I learned on twitter last night of an incident that occurred earlier this week involving other union leaders and the Minnesota National Guard at the St. Paul Labor Center. What I read disgusted me.

Minnesota National Guard members who were at the house of labor to use the restroom and get a break from their duties protecting our communities were told to leave, and verbally disrespected as they left. I have waited to see an apology and an unequivocal repudiation of these actions by the umbrella labor organizations we belong to, mainly the AFL-CIO.

I have not seen anything of the sort. I feel the need to make it very clear where I, and the 14,400 workers I am elected to represent stand.

Local 49 in the strongest terms, and without equivocation, denounces the treatment of our brave men and women of the Minnesota National Guard by labor leaders there that night. They absolutely do not speak for us in any way. Many of our members serve in the Guard and other branches of the military, and I have heard from some this morning. I want to say to them and to all the men and women that serve our nation Local 49 stands with you. You are welcome in our house anytime, and we have your back.

I feel strongly that a statement is not enough. This disgusting incident requires action that demonstrates the seriousness of our repudiation of the anti-National Guard sentiments expressed by some in labor.

Therefore, effective immediately, I am ending our affiliation with the Minnesota AFL-CIO and all of its regional labor federations. Our organization will not spend one dollar of our members money to support organizations that feel it is justified to treat the men and women that volunteer to put their lives on the line to protect us this way.

There can be disagreements within the house of labor, but we will not stand in solidarity with any organization that disrespects our men and women that serve our state and nation in this manner.

Jason George, Business Manager, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 49

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About IUOE Local 49

The International Union of Operating Local 49 is the largest construction union in Minnesota and represents 14,000 members in many different industries related to infrastructure and construction throughout Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. For more information visit www.local49.org.