



**International Association of Machinists  
and Aerospace Workers, District Lodge 77**

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My name is Kirby Kruse. I live in Windom, where I've worked at the Toro plant for 33 years and am a member of the IAMAW (International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers) Local Lodge 1956. I am the President of the IAMAW's District 77, which represents about 3,000 members across 6 locals here in Minnesota.

My fellow manufacturing workers, mechanics, and machinists are frontline workers who are essential to the everyday functioning of our state and society, but our work is often invisible to the general public. As mechanics we keep the trucks running that deliver food and medical supplies. We fix and maintain the vehicles that all other frontline workers rely on to get to work. We make the pumps and valves of water infrastructure. We diecast, weld, and assemble parts for lawn and snow equipment that ensures the upkeep of our cities, counties, and our state.

We have kept working in-person through this entire pandemic because that is the only way our work can be done. Even with masks, plexi-glass, and lots of sanitizing there were still risks for our workers. And those risks have taken a serious toll. We have lost workers to COVID-19- like my union brother, Scott Smith, who worked at the parts counter at Rihm Kenworth in South Saint Paul.

On a personal note, my wife has several auto-immune diseases. There was concern of bringing the virus home to her. My son is from the Duluth area. He has a son who is only 2 years old. During most of the pandemic, childcare was unavailable and schools were remote-only.

I would advocate all frontline workers to be included in the payment, including those whose work is often invisible to the general public, like manufacturing and mechanics.

Thank you for your time and consideration.