

January 5, 2026



THE UNITED COUNCIL ON WELFARE FRAUD STATEMENT ON MINNESOTA FRAUD

The United Council on Welfare Fraud (UCOWF) acknowledges today's news regarding Governor Tim Walz stepping down from the governor's race amid the continuing fallout from Minnesota's widespread public assistance fraud scandals. While Minnesota has become a national case study in how program integrity systems can fail at scale, **UCOWF emphasizes that these challenges are not unique to one state.** Similar vulnerabilities exist nationwide wherever verification standards are weakened, oversight is discouraged, or investigators are prevented from doing their jobs.

For more than 53 years, UCOWF has sounded the alarm on the risks created when public assistance programs move faster than safeguards - and when fraud prevention is treated as a secondary priority rather than a core program function. Our members — representing investigators, auditors, prosecutors, and frontline program integrity professionals across all 50 states — have consistently warned that the erosion of eligibility controls, documentation standards, and interagency data-sharing would ultimately place both taxpayers and truly eligible families at risk.

Minnesota has illustrated this reality in stark terms. UCOWF's affiliate organization, the [Minnesota Fraud Investigators Association](#) (MFIA), has long raised program integrity concerns and sought stronger action to prevent fraud and abuse. Instead, many of these professionals have faced internal resistance — and in some cases harassment, marginalization, or retaliation — from leadership within Minnesota's Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and Department of Human Services (DHS) for simply doing the work the public depends on them to do. These investigators are dedicated public servants who deserved support — not obstruction — as they attempted to stop the very schemes now drawing national scrutiny.

UCOWF President **Keith Miskie** underscored the broader national implications, stating, “What is happening in Minnesota *is what happens when political pressure, administrative policies, a lack of funding, and weakened verification standards collide. The men and women who work in program integrity sounded the alarm for years and were too often ignored or pushed aside. UCOWF stands firmly with the investigators in Minnesota and across the nation who continue to do this difficult work with professionalism and courage. Fraud prevention is not anti-program — it is essential to preserving assistance for the people who truly need it.*”

The failures revealed in Minnesota should not be dismissed as isolated or political; they reflect systemic weaknesses that have grown over time across the nation. UCOWF continues to urge federal and state leaders to take decisive action: restore meaningful verification standards, empower program integrity staff, encourage honest reporting over administrative pressure, and ensure that fraud prevention and eligibility accuracy are treated as foundational — not optional — components of safety-net administration.

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UCOWF remains committed to partnering with policymakers, program leaders, and oversight bodies to ensure that assistance programs are protected for those who truly need them — and that investigators and integrity professionals are respected, supported, and heard.

Keith Miskie
President
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About UCOWF:

Founded in 1972, the United Council on Welfare Fraud (UCOWF) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional association representing welfare fraud investigators, eligibility specialists, auditors, prosecutors, and program integrity professionals across the United States. For more than 53 years, UCOWF has promoted effective fraud prevention, data-driven oversight, intergovernmental cooperation, and the responsible stewardship of public assistance programs to ensure benefits are preserved for eligible households.

For interviews, media, and legislative Inquiries, please contact: ucowfmail@gmail.com

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