



Values of the DFL

February 9, 2026

Republicans and Democrats in Minnesota held party caucuses last week, featuring straw polls in the governor's race. Grassroots politics!

"Caucus attendees can also vote on potential changes to the party's platform," The *Minnesota Reformer* [informed](#) readers before the big night, reporting [afterwards](#) that caucusgoers "approved a bevy of resolutions to alter the DFL's party platform, including abolishing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, defunding the Department of Homeland Security and assuring people have access to gender-affirming care."

Then I discovered that Democrats — called the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) in Minnesota — allow noncitizens to participate and vote in their caucuses.

Four years ago, a three-judge appeals court panel [ruled](#) that the "criminal penalties of Minnesota Statutes ... which punish unlawful voting as a felony, do not apply to voting in precinct caucuses."

That led then-DFL Party Chair Ken Martin to [announce](#): "Our party can finally live its values." Responding to reporters, Martin had [explained](#) at the time that "we are governed under our own First Amendment freedom of association rights and we can determine whoever we want to participate in the party."

Okay. "Immigrants who aren't U.S. citizens can caucus and become convention delegates," a change approved unanimously by the party's executive committee, according to *Minnesota Public Radio News*.

"By opening the front door to historically excluded neighbors," [argued](#) Emilia Gonzalez Avalos, a noncitizen union organizer from Mexico, the DFL is "making sure that those affected by the issues in our platforms have a say in the process and can grasp power to truly hold our own side accountable to our shared vision."

There are many things in my house, upon which I don't let my neighbors vote. The DFL is free to do as it wishes in its own elections.* We are free to take note.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

* This from the *Minnesota Reformer* is [interesting](#): "As the Office of Secretary of State makes clear, these are party-run functions, but the results of the straw polls will be posted on the Secretary of State's website." If state law doesn't apply because the parties are private associations, then why is the Secretary expending resources to report the votes?