

Tim Walz Claims He Fired People Amid Fraud Scandals—But Won't Name Names

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Tyler O'Neil , Daily Signal

Embattled Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, when announcing his decision not to run for reelection, said Monday that he has fired people for failing to combat his state's many fraud scandals, but his office has declined to list the bureaucrats fired.

"We've fired people who weren't doing their jobs," he wrote in a statement Monday, in the context of combatting fraud.

The Daily Signal reached out to Walz's office for a list of bureaucrats fired amid the fraud scandals, but the governor did not respond by publication time.

State Rep. Patti Anderson, a Republican and vice chair of the Fraud Prevention and State Agency Oversight Policy Committee, told The Daily Signal she is "unaware of anyone who has been fired in regard to the ongoing fraud."

Of Walz, she said, "I think he's assuming that people are going to take his statement at face value and not look and see the fact that he hasn't terminated a single person that allowed the fraud to happen."

Anderson served as state auditor from 2003 to 2007, and then as commissioner of employee relations under the state's last Republican governor, Tim Pawlenty. She told The Daily Signal, "It's impossible that Walz himself wasn't aware" of the fraud and alleged attempts to enable it.

"These things don't just happen," she said.

Walz's tenure has been tainted with several fraud scandals, most notably a \$250 million fraud scheme where the Minneapolis nonprofit Feeding Our Future reported fake food distribution sites while collecting federal child nutrition assistance. The office of U.S. Attorney Daniel N. Rosen has charged at least 78 defendants connected to the scheme, and 56 of them have pleaded guilty.

Authorities have also filed charges in a \$14 million fraud case involving an autism program and a multi-million dollar fraud case involving housing stabilization services.

One federal prosecutor has estimated Medicaid fraud in the state to have exceeded \$9 billion.

Anderson said that whistleblowers, who have spoken with her committee, approached bureaucrats at many levels of Walz's administration but were rebuffed. In a previous statement to The Daily Signal, the state's Department of Human Services denied claims of retaliation against whistleblowers.

Bill Glahn, a policy fellow with the conservative-leaning Center of the American Experiment, noted that many staff have left Walz's administration since the first indictments in the Feeding Our Future fraud scandal in 2022, but added that Walz did not fire them; he instead allowed their appointments to expire.

"The governor now claims credit, well after the fact, for holding his appointees accountable for not stopping the fraud," Glahn told The Daily Signal. "However, that's not how these events were portrayed at the time."

With Glahn's help, The Daily Signal identified three bureaucrats who left Walz's administration after the first indictments in the Feeding Our Future fraud scandal were issued in September 2022. Walz did not state that fraud had anything to do with their departures.

1. Heather Mueller

Heather Mueller, former commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education, claimed before a state Senate committee that a judge ordered the department to resume payments to Feeding Our Future despite serious fraud concerns. The judge released a rare public statement emphatically denying any such order.

Minnesota Senate Majority Leader Jeremy Miller, a Republican, publicly called on Mueller to resign in September 2022.

Two months later, Gov. Walz and Lt. Gov. Petty Flanagan announced that Mueller had "chosen not to seek reappointment" in Walz's second term.

In a press release thanking Walz's cabinet for their service, the governor's office gave Mueller a glowing endorsement.

"The governor and lieutenant governor are grateful for Dr. Mueller's continued focus on helping all Minnesota students have access to a world-class education," the release states.

2. Jodi Harpstead

Jodi Harpstead, commissioner of the Department of Human Services, also left Walz's office amid the Feeding Our Future scandal, but Walz made no mention of fraud related to her departure:

"I want to extend my deepest thanks to Commissioner Harpstead for answering the call of public service five and a half years ago," Walz said in a [Jan. 13, 2025, press release](#). "I am proud of her work running the most complex and wide-ranging agency in state government."

3. Eric Grumdahl

On Sept. 17, ahead of a hearing before the fraud prevention committee in which top housing regulator Eric Grumdahl was scheduled to testify, the agency notified the committee that Grumdahl had been terminated. The Department of Justice has brought fraud charges in housing cases.

A spokesperson for Grumdahl's former office confirmed his [ouster to CBS News](#), and cited a law stating the reasons for an employee's separation are not public data.

According to [Minnesota statutes](#), disciplinary action against a bureaucrat is considered public information if the bureaucrat resigns or is fired amid charges.

Rep. Kristin Robbins, a Republican and chair of the fraud committee, said at the time that she was "stunned" to hear the news.

"This is yet another example of DHS and the Walz administration dodging accountability for their failures," [Robbins said](#).