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PRESS RELEASE

IFPTE Member Awarded 2021 Union Plus Scholarship

Winners Honored for Achievement and Union Values

Washington, D.C. – Union Plus recently awarded \$250,000 in scholarships to 199 students representing 37 unions, including one winner representing the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE). This year’s group of scholarship recipients includes university, college, and trade or technical school students from 42 states. The IFPTE winner is:

- **Nikko Bilitza of Washington, D.C.** Bilitza, who is a member of IFPTE Local 70, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

“During a time of continued disruption and hardship for many families, Union Plus is glad that we are once more able to share a higher than usual scholarship award amount to help union families offset the cost of college education,” Union Plus President Mitch Stevens said. “We are proud to support this year’s exceptional group of 199 winners as they pursue higher education in a new environment after a year of largely virtual schooling.”

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Union Plus | 1100 First Street, NE □ Suite 850 □ Washington, D.C. 20002 □ Phone (202) 293-5330 □ unionplus.org

Meet the 2021 IFPTE Honoree

Nikko Bilitza

*American University (AU), Washington, D.C.: Bachelor of Arts, political science (2016)
School Without Walls High School, Washington, D.C. (2013)*

Nikko is an organizer with DC Jobs with Justice and leads the Just Pay Coalition, an alliance of labor unions and community organizations with the mission to expand worker protections in Washington, D.C. He will pursue a master's degree in public policy with hopes of becoming a policy analyst or researcher for a labor union or state legislature. Nikko's undergraduate research and coursework allowed him to develop critical thinking skills and the ability to effectively analyze quantitative and qualitative data. He received the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Grant Award to organize a community-oriented educational event about the work of various federal agencies. Nikko led a Maryland state delegate campaign in 2017 and managed the 2018 victorious campaign of Emily Gasoi for the D.C. State Board of Education.

As an IFPTE Local 70 executive board member and shop steward, Nikko hopes to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to begin the next phase of his career while in graduate school. "Graduate study of public policy will ground me in the theoretical approaches and contemporary issues in public policy analysis, while also allowing me to develop a robust knowledge of my specific interests through elective courses on inequality, poverty, and labor market policies," Nikko said. "I am grateful for everything I have learned from my IFPTE brothers and sisters. I hope that through my career in public policy I can continue to contribute to the labor movement through pro-worker policies and legislative campaigns."

Activities, honors, and employment: Democratic Socialists of America National Electoral Committee; Metro DC Democratic Socialists of America; Karl Popper Prize for National and Global Affairs honorable mention; AU honors graduate; AU Tuition Exchange Scholar

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Learn More About the Union Plus Scholarship Program

The Union Plus Scholarship Program, now in its 30th year, awards scholarships based on outstanding academic achievement, personal character, financial need, and commitment to the values of organized labor. The program is offered through the Union Plus Education Foundation.

Since starting the program in 1991, Union Plus has awarded more than \$5 million in educational funding to more than 3,400 union members, spouses, and dependent children. Union Plus Scholarship awards are granted to students attending a two-year college, four-year college, graduate school, or recognized technical or trade school. The selection process is very competitive, and this year 5,008 applications were received from 67 unions and all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, two U.S. territories, and six Canadian provinces.

Visit unionplus.org/scholarship for applications and benefit eligibility.

About Union Plus

Union Plus, founded by the AFL-CIO in 1986, uses the collective buying power of America's 12.5 million union members to deliver top-quality benefits and services at competitive prices to working families. In addition to the scholarship program, Union Plus offers the Free College program, which makes it possible for union members and their families to earn an associate degree completely online at no cost. As a complement to the Free College program, Union Plus offers the Bachelor's Degree Completion program, providing union members and their families a no-cost option to complete their bachelor's degree completely online. Union Plus also provides a wide range of money-saving programs, including discounts on wireless services from AT&T, the only nationwide unionized wireless carrier; insurance protection; savings on travel and recreation; and more. For additional information, visit unionplus.org.

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