



February 22, 2021

Representative Dave Pinto
Chair, Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee
503 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Committee:

Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition (PN-3) requests your support for HF 1200. The PN-3 Coalition advocates for strong families and policies that give children the best start in life through policies that address racial, economic and geographic inequities. We believe HF 1200 provides access to important resources that begin to address several of these inequities.

First, Paid Family & Medical Leave can begin to address the maternal and infant health inequities Black and Indigenous women experience in Minnesota. Families with access to longer leave see improved maternal physical health and mental health as well as infant health. Additionally, increased rates of breastfeeding are established, increasing lifelong health benefits for the child.

Second, Paid Family & Medical Leave helps address economic inequities. Providing paid family leave can help alleviate financial stresses families experience as they prepare for the birth or adoption of their child and the beginning days and months of building their family bond and connection. This is also relevant as families struggle to manage the possibility of lost wages while dealing with illness related to the pandemic.

Third, Paid Family & Medical Leave helps address geographic inequities. Access to maternal care in Greater Minnesota is growing increasingly challenging. Many women need to drive hours to receive prenatal care, and some women in Northern Minnesota are forced to leave the state to give birth when experiencing high-risk pregnancies. Paid leave can help them access health appointments without concerns they might lose their job.

We believe HF 1200 provides important resources that can save lives. Young families should not be forced to choose between their health and financial stability.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding our support and and/or request for additional action, please contact our Policy and Legislative Affairs Director, Deb Fitzpatrick at dfitzpatrick@childrensdefense.org or Coalition Coordinator, Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn at Laura@LaCroixDalluhnConsulting.com,

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bharti Wahi".

Bharti Wahi,
Children's Defense Fund
Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Jost".

Nancy Jost,
West Central Initiative
Co-Chair