April 21, 2023

The Honorable Liz Olson, Chair　　　　　The Honorable Pat Garofalo, Republican Lead
House Ways and Means Committee　　　　House Ways and Means Committee
479 State Office Building　　　　　　　479 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155　　　　　　　　　　St. Paul, MN 55155

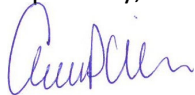Dear Chair Olson, Republican Lead Garofalo, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Greater Mankato Growth, the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development organization representing more than 900 members in the Greater Mankato region, I write to express concerns with HF2/SF2, the proposed Paid Family and Medical Leave legislation.

At a time when Minnesota has a record $17.5 billion surplus, this proposal creates a vast new state agency and will raise payroll taxes by $1 billion annually. If passed, it will be the nation's most generous and expensive state-run leave program and the biggest workplace mandate in state history. Most concerning is that this bill will interfere with an employer's ability to tailor benefits the meet the unique needs of their industry and workplace. A one-size-fits-all approach ignores the diverse needs of each employer across the state.

The mission of Greater Mankato Growth (GMG) is to support and promote the economic growth and vitality of our members and the regional marketplace. We are blessed in Greater Mankato to have hundreds of world-class employers who are dedicated to recruiting and retaining workers in the most challenging labor market in a generation. These employers are meeting the moment – increasing wages, adding benefits, and flexible work policies. It's these customized benefit strategies that are at risk with this proposal.

Adding burdens and barriers for employers could have negative unintended consequences on our future growth. We urge you to oppose HF2/SF2 in its current form and encourage you to work with business and industry to develop a workable plan.

Respectfully,

Andy Wilke
Greater Mankato Growth