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April 4, 2024

House File 4598 (Long)

Dear Chair Klevorn and House State and Local Government Committee Members,

The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) represents over 10,000 small businesses across Minnesota. Our mission is to promote and protect the right of our members to own, operate, and grow their businesses.

NFIB Minnesota opposes the changes in Article 1 to the timing and manner of legislative sessions. A March 2024 NFIB survey found **87 percent of small business owners support keeping Minnesota's citizen-led legislature and oppose a year-round legislature.**

Since our state's founding, the Minnesota Legislature has been a citizen-led body where people with an increasingly wide range of life experience are shaping our government. The proposed changes would make it difficult or impossible for small business owners, farmers, teachers, and most other working people to serve their neighbors in St. Paul.

Going full-time does not mean more responsible governance. California lawmakers entered this year facing a [\\$73 billion projected budget deficit](#). New York also has a sizeable budget deficit.

In addition to bloated budgets and large deficits, full-time legislatures are more expensive to operate. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, the average full-time legislature pays lawmakers \$82,358 – 60% more than in Minnesota – per year and employs 1,250 full-time staff. In the four states that NCSL identifies as fully year-round (CA, MI, PA, NY), the average annual lawmaker salary is \$112,000, or more than double the current salary here.

Last year, lawmakers gave themselves additional floor time within the 120-day constitutional limit by redefining 'legislative day'. If the legislature still struggles to get its work done on time, it should look to other part-time states that have adopted rules to encourage prioritization and timely completion by requiring more advance scheduling and limiting per diem after key dates.

The other provisions in this legislation merit separate consideration. We urge the committee to remove the full-time legislature language from this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John L. Reynolds', is written above the typed name.

John L. Reynolds
Minnesota State Director
National Federation of Independent Business
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