



Date: March 12, 2025

From: Primrose Schools of Minnesota

To: Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee

Subject: Urgent Reforms Needed for PFMLA to Protect Childcare Access

Dear Members of the Committee,

We support House File 1976 (HF1976), which proposes changes to the Minnesota Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (PFMLA). We believe adjustments are essential to Minnesota's childcare providers, schools, and small businesses, ensuring the law is implemented in a way that balances the needs of employees with the operational realities of these vital services.

While we recognize the importance of paid leave, the current structure of PFMLA presents significant challenges for childcare providers. As written, the program could increase staffing shortages, financial strains on both employees and providers, and operational instability. Without key modifications, PFMLA could ultimately reduce access to affordable childcare and force providers to limit services or close their doors.

By supporting HF1976, we see an opportunity to refine PFMLA, ensuring that it protects both workers and the sustainability of childcare centers. Thoughtful changes will help maintain a stable and accessible childcare system, benefiting Minnesota families.

Licensed childcare centers operate under strict state regulations that require Rule 3-qualified caregivers in every classroom. Unlike other businesses, we cannot simply shift employees or rely on temporary staff. When a caregiver is absent, classrooms must close—disrupting families and reducing access to high-quality childcare.

The Minnesota Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (PFMLA), as currently structured, presents significant challenges for childcare providers. Requiring centers to maintain a "bench" of substitute teachers is logistically and financially unfeasible. Tuition costs would rise, workforce shortages would worsen, and classroom instability would negatively impact children's development. Moreover, PFMLA's overlap with the Earned Safe & Sick Time (ESST) law compounds these staffing challenges.



To ensure the viability of childcare while still supporting workers, we feel adjustments are necessary, we recommend you consider:

1. **Reduce Leave Duration:** Limit PFMLA to 12 weeks instead of 20 and restrict eligibility to once every five years to stabilize the workforce.
2. **Tighten Eligibility & Benefits:** Refocus PFMLA on those with urgent needs to prevent unnecessary strain on small businesses.
3. **Require Advance Notice:** Employees should provide earlier notice before taking leave to allow centers time to adjust staffing.
4. **Use Existing PTO First:** Employees should exhaust employer-provided paid leave before accessing PFMLA benefits.

Childcare providers play a vital role in supporting working families and the economy. Without these critical adjustments, PFMLA may unintentionally reduce access to affordable childcare, forcing more parents—especially women—out of the workforce. We urge lawmakers to consider these reforms to balance employee benefits with the operational realities of childcare.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Primrose Schools of the Twin Cities Franchise Owners