

Saint Paul, January 17, 2023

Dear Chair Michael Nelson and members of the Labor and Industry Finance and Policy committee:

The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs strongly supports the passage of HF19 relating to employment, providing for earned sick and safe time for all Minnesotans, including Latino workers residing and working in the State.

Getting sick, having a new baby, or caring for a relative who has a serious health condition could have serious economic consequences for Latinos without paid sick and safe family time. On average, Latinos are paid less and have less access to credit and savings than the rest of the population. More than a quarter (27%) of Latino households have no net savings or assets to draw on during an unexpected loss of income. The labor force participation rate for Latino Minnesotans is very high. The share of people over age 16 who are working or actively looking for work is generally high for Latinos, and while white Minnesotans and Black Minnesotans have seen decreases in labor-force participation, the rate for Latinos grew.

Despite their high levels of labor force participation, Latinos lag behind other groups in earnings, benefits, and job quality. The concentration of Latinos in low-wage jobs leaves them with few employee benefits and constrains their ability to achieve economic security. This is especially true for Latina women, who are concentrated in low-wage industries and occupations, earning on average just \$5.38 an hour, compared to \$15.96 per hour by White men.

Even though the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) provides some guarantees for eligible workers who need time off from work to care for their own illness, care for a new child, or to care for a seriously ill family member; a large percentage of Latino workers are ineligible for FMLA protections. All these factors indicate that Latinos play a key role in Minnesota's economy, but they receive little or no protection in their workplace. They also earn less than the average worker and are unable to save enough to support themselves during times of illness or of family calamity. Latino workers in Minnesota deserve equitable access to earned sick and safe time, and other work protections.

The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs strongly supports the adoption of HF19 and encourages this committee to vote for the passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Rosa Tock, Executive Director