



February 12, 2025

The Honorable Representative Dave Baker
Chair, House Workforce, Labor and Economic Development Committee
658 Cedar Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF H.F. 11

[STANCE: UNFAVORABLE]

The National Partnership for Women & Families appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition of H.F. 11. This bill would delay the implementation of Minnesota's paid family and medical leave program and leave Minnesotans without paid leave benefits for an additional year. Doing so would leave thousands of working families without critical support to provide the care their families need and hurt Minnesota's economy.

The National Partnership is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group that has more than 50 years of experience in combatting barriers to opportunity for women workers, such as advocating for the Family and Medical Leave Act and continuing to push for a national paid family and medical leave program. The National Partnership works for a just and equitable society in which all women and families can live with dignity, respect, and security; every person has a fair chance to achieve their potential; and no person is held back by discrimination or bias. Through our legal and research support, we have worked tirelessly alongside partners to advocate for paid family and medical leave for all workers.

At some point, nearly everyone will need to take time away from work to deal with a serious personal or family illness, or to care for a new child. Most working people in the United States – 73 percent, or 106 million people nationwide – do not have paid family leave through their jobs.¹ Without the ability to receive income, many workers must forgo taking leave or put their economic stability in jeopardy in order to care for a family member, a new child or their own health.

Paid family and medical leave is essential to healthy families and communities and a one-year delay would greatly hurt the 79 percent of all Minnesota households with

¹ National Partnership for Women & Families. (2025, January). *Paid Leave Means a Stronger Nation*. Retrieved 11 February 2024, from <https://nationalpartnership.org/report/paid-leave-means-map/>

children — more than 991,000 homes — with parents who report to work, and about 64,000 children that are born in Minnesota each year.² Paid leave helps improve health outcomes and helps working people remain economically secure and connected to their jobs.³ Maintaining the current paid family and medical leave program implementation timeline benefits families, businesses, and Minnesota's economy.

Access to paid parental leave also encourages fathers to use leave for bonding and caregiving. And when fathers take leave after a child's birth, they are more likely to be involved in the direct care of their children long term.⁴ More than 80 percent of men believe that men and women should share care responsibilities equally, but men only make up about 40 percent of caregivers for disabled and older adults.⁵ Men want to participate more in caregiving, but unsupportive policies and stigma hold them back. Minnesota's paid family and medical leave program would allow fathers to care equally for their loved ones and care for themselves sooner.

Paid leave also means older adults and disabled people can give and receive care, and our care workforce is more resilient. Currently, Minnesota's caregiving needs are growing. Nearly one-quarter of Minnesota workers are 55 and older, and in the next 25 years, the number of Minnesotans who are 65 and older will grow by 263,000.⁶ If they need care, about nine out of ten older adults would prefer to get it at home or with friends or family.⁷ Paid leave reduces nursing home use and can help recruitment and retention of care workers. Minnesota's paid family and medical leave program helps family caregivers and disabled people (who are often caregivers themselves) manage their health and care needs while maintaining their income and employment. Requiring families to wait an additional year leaves caregivers without the critical support they have long awaited.

² National Partnership for Women & Families. (2025, January). *Paid Leave Means a Stronger Minnesota*. Retrieved 11 February 2024, from <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/paid-leave-means-a-stronger-minnesota.pdf>

³ Appelbaum, E., & Milkman, R. (2013). *Unfinished Business: Paid Family Leave in California and the Future of U.S. Work-Family Policy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; Setty, S., Skinner, C., & Wilson-Simmons, R. (2016, March). *Protecting Workers, Nurturing Families: Building an Inclusive Family Leave Insurance Program, Findings and Recommendations from the New Jersey Parenting Project*. National Center for Children in Poverty Publication. Retrieved 3 February 2025, from <https://www.nccp.org/publication/protecting-workers-nurturing-families/>; Kleven, J., Luo, F., Xu, L., et al. (2015, November 28). Paid family leave's effect on hospital admissions for pediatric abusive head trauma. *Injury Prevention*. Retrieved 3 February 2025, from <https://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/22/6/442>

⁴ Nepomnyaschy, L., & Waldfogel, J. (2007). Paternity Leave and Fathers' Involvement with their Young Children: Evidence from the American Ecls-B. *Community, Work and Family*, 10(4), 427-453.

⁵ See note 3.

⁶ See note 2.

⁷ Ibid.

Paid family and medical leave is also good for businesses and making Minnesotans wait hurts Minnesota's small businesses. With paid leave, businesses stand to benefit from a more stable, productive workforce. Benefits include: lower turnover costs through greater retention, higher productivity, and higher morale.⁸ Paid leave programs benefit small businesses in particular. Small businesses often have trouble matching the more generous leave benefits offered by larger employers – potentially resulting in a hiring disadvantage. When paid leave is administered through a public paid leave insurance program, it levels the playing field and helps small businesses compete for talent. Small employers benefit in particular because the cost of leave is shared.

As it stands, Maine passed paid family and medical leave legislation after Minnesota and will fully implement their program before Minnesota does if H.F. 11 is passed.⁹ We urge the legislature not to move forward with H.F. 11. Delaying implementation will harm thousands of families and businesses in Minnesota. Minnesotans should be able to utilize the necessary time from their jobs to welcome a new child into their family, care for a seriously ill family member, or recover from their own serious health issue. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact Brittany Williams, Economic Justice Policy Counsel at the National Partnership for Women & Families at bwilliams@nationalpartnership.org

Sincerely,



Brittany Williams
Economic Justice Policy Counsel

⁸ National Partnership for Women & Families. (2023, October). *Paid Family and Medical Leave Is Good for Business*. Retrieved 11 February 2025, from <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/paid-leave-good-for-business.pdf>

⁹ National Partnership for Women & Families. (2024, July). *State Paid Family & Medical Leave Insurance Laws*. Retrieved 11 February 2025, from <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/state-paid-family-leave-laws.pdf>