

February 12, 2025

Chair Baker and Members of the Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee:

AFSCME Council 5 is a public and private sector labor union representing 43,000 workers in Minnesota. We advocate for excellence in services to the public, dignity in the workplace, and opportunity and prosperity for all workers.

For more than a decade AFSCME has proudly advocated in favor of establishing a statewide, paid-leave insurance program to help workers afford their lives during predictable and unpredictable life events such as starting a family or taking care of themselves or a loved one facing a major medical incident. We respectfully write in opposition to H.F. 11 which delays the implementation of the nation-leading Paid Leave program passed last biennium.

Minnesotans overwhelmingly support Paid Leave and have waited long enough for this common-sense, economic protection. Throughout the decade of advocacy for Paid Leave, a recurrent theme from our members who testified in support was the struggle to afford their lives while starting a family or facing a major medical event.

We heard from mothers who delayed having their second or third child for four or five years because their employer-provided parental leave and PTO accruals were not adequate, as it can take several years to accrue enough time to care for a child after birth. They wanted to have their children closer in age but could not afford to. Minnesotans are relying on this program taking effect next year; family planning decisions have already been made with the assumption this program will be available.

To some, Paid Leave may seem like a novel luxury. There was a time the weekend and the 40-hour work week were viewed the same way. Please support the full and timely implementation of the Paid Leave program to help make Minnesota the best state to work and raise a family.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ethan Vogel".

Ethan Vogel
Legislative Director