



**AARP Testimony on HF 11  
House of Representatives  
Ways and Means Committee  
March 3, 2025**

Chairman Torkelson and Committee Members,

AARP strongly opposes delaying the implementation of the Paid Family Leave Program. We have repeatedly called on lawmakers to support family caregivers, who are the backbone of our long-term care system and play a critical role in caring for their loved ones and delaying expensive nursing home care. The economic contribution of Minnesota's 740,000 family caregivers is estimated to be \$10 billion.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the clear financial contributions of caregivers, their emotionally, physically, and financially strenuous work is not recognized with pay when they need to take time off work to care for loved ones. Implementation of a timely paid leave program will address these concerns. Moreover, paid leave can provide significant benefits to employees and society, such as allowing older Minnesotans to age in place, improving the retention of women's participation in the workforce, and benefiting businesses by reducing turnover, boosting productivity, and enhancing morale.

Delaying its implementation would mean that many family caregivers will miss out on these critical benefits. After many years of working on this important legislation, Minnesota family caregivers expect its timely implementation in January 2026. We also believe the Department of Employment and Economic Development has done the critical work to implement this program. We respectfully ask you to vote no on H.F. 11.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Thomas Elness  
State Advocacy Director  
AARP Minnesota

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<sup>1</sup> AARP Public Policy Institute, "Number of Family Caregivers, Hours, and Economic Value of Caregiving, by State, 2021"



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Rep. Paul Torkelson,

I am writing today in strong opposition to HF11. We are now just over 10 months away from full implementation. Delaying would be cruel to the thousands of Minnesotans who are counting on this leave, and it isn't necessary.

Minnesotans take care of each other. In our communities, families, and workplaces, we step up and help the people we care about. Minnesota Paid Leave will support people when they need time to care for themselves and their loved ones.

Minnesota Paid Leave will help ensure Minnesotans don't need to choose between financial stability and being there for their families. In addition, changing the implementation timeline introduces new uncertainty for small business owners. Main Street Alliance, which represents well over 1,000 small business owners across Minnesota, strongly supports the law which is why we fought so hard to pass it in the first place.

You can watch why here: [https://youtu.be/6ZEIs\\_TAQes?si=pjMN1We9mxX0Hg2x](https://youtu.be/6ZEIs_TAQes?si=pjMN1We9mxX0Hg2x)

**Efforts to delay implementation, even though the state is on track to successfully implement paid leave on January 1, 2026 is an effort to kill it.**

**I urge you to oppose this misguided legislation.**

Shawn Phetteplace  
National Campaigns Director  
Main Street Alliance



February 28, 2025

Chair Paul Torkelson  
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Jamie Gulley  
President

Jigme Ugen  
Executive Vice President

Phillip Cryan  
Executive Vice President

Brenda Hilbrich  
Executive Vice President

Rasha Ahmad Sharif  
Executive Vice President

Chair Torkelson:

As a union organizer and a home care worker, I write on behalf of my union SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa. Our union represents over 55,000 healthcare workers around the state in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and self-directed homecare. We oppose HF11 because it unnecessarily delays a critical benefit.

One year delay may seem like a short time. But if you are a new mother waking up multiple times a night to feed your crying baby, a year is very very long. Now add a full-time job on top of sleepless nights and it gets much *much* longer. It is likely that over 60,000 women in Minnesota will give birth in 2026. Most of them will want to use Paid Leave. Many have made important decisions about finances, marriage, and jobs because they expect to use Paid Leave. HF11 derails those plans.

I know how important the first year of motherhood can be. I got involved in organizing home care workers because I didn't get leave after having a baby when I was a PCA. In 2014, I was pregnant with my youngest daughter Amalia. Like most homecare workers, before we got a union, I didn't have any paid leave at all and I only made \$10.50 an hour. I had worked hard and saved as much as I could, but I could only afford two weeks without a paycheck. That included the 4 days I was in the hospital after my Cesarean Section. So two weeks after major surgery, I was back working as a PCA. Being a PCA is hard physical work when you are in good shape. After surgery it's brutal. No one should have to make that choice, even for just another year.

This delay is unnecessary. Our union works with employers large and small all over the state. We have been talking to employers about the new benefit. Some employers are eager to roll this out and others don't like it. But no employer has told us they can't meet the deadline or that we should not expect it to start on time.

We have also worked closely with the Department of Employment and Economic Development to educate our members. They tell us they can start on time and we have been checking their progress. If there were grounds for delay, we would raise them.

America is the only country with no paid leave for workers. Minnesotans have waited too long already. We don't need to delay anymore. Please vote no on HF11.

Sincerely yours,

Sumer Spika, Organizer

SS:klh/opeiu#12

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Dear Chair Torkelson and Members,

Violence Free Minnesota, the statewide coalition against relationship abuse, writes in opposition to HF11. Our over 90 member programs provide direct services to domestic violence victims and survivors across the state. These services include shelter, safety planning and counseling, legal systems navigation, and other wraparound services.

Domestic violence victims will benefit greatly from paid safety leave. Research has shown that the vast majority of people who experience domestic violence also endure financial abuse as a part of their experience. Limiting a survivor's economic options limits their opportunities to access safety, and contributes to the establishment and maintenance of the abusive party's power and control over the survivor.

When safety leave is not available for survivors, this creates a threat of financial instability, and prevents survivors from accessing services that can:

- Help address immediate and potentially-life threatening situations;
- Obtain the legal and other assistance needed to flee an abusive situation; *and*
- Secure stability after leaving an abusive relationship, in order to avoid the risk of returning to an abusive situation.

The Paid Family and Medical Leave program establishes vital supports for survivors of domestic violence and should not be delayed. It provides survivors with the employment security and financial protection they need to address the health and safety of themselves and their children. We urge you to vote no on HF 11.

Thank you,  
Guadalupe Lopez  
Executive Director  
Violence Free MN



**Minnesota Coalition**  
FOR FAMILY HOME VISITING

Representative Paul Torkelson  
House of Representatives—Ways & Means Committee  
HF 11 - Delay of Minnesota's Paid Leave Program

Monday, March 3, 2025

**Chair Torkelson and Members of the Ways & Means Committee,**

Minnesota's Paid Leave program is important for **families with infants and young children**, ensuring that new parents are not forced to choose between caring for their children and keeping their jobs. **Minnesotans are already making life-changing decisions based on the promise of Paid Leave.** Postponing this program would disrupt these plans and cause unnecessary hardship at a time when families need stability the most.

The benefits of **Paid Family and Medical Leave** are well-documented:

- **Improves maternal and infant health**, reducing complications and hospital readmissions by reducing parental stress, increasing breastfeeding rates, and ensuring infants receive necessary medical care, which lowers rates of infant mortality and postpartum complications.
- **Increases parent-child bonding**, leading to better developmental outcomes.
- **Supports working families**, especially in low-income communities where unpaid leave is not an option.
- **Strengthens businesses** by lowering turnover, improving employee retention, and boosting productivity.
- **Generates economic savings** by reducing healthcare costs, lowering the need for public assistance, and increasing workforce participation, ultimately strengthening Minnesota's economy and reducing financial strain on families and businesses.

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**Delaying implementation would create additional barriers for families already facing inequities in healthcare access, workplace protections, and financial security.** The Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting urges you to not delay in supporting families and children in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Paula Frisk, MCFHV Chair  
St. David's Center for Child & Family Development,  
Program Director of Parent Child Services  
Mental Health Practitioner/Infant Parent Specialist

MN Coalition of Family Home Visiting (MCFHV),

Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn,  
MN Coalition of Family Home Visiting (MCFHV),  
Coalition Coordinator

Catarina "Cati" Gómez,

Policy Associate



Rep. Paul Torkelson  
Ways & Means Committee

Monday, March 3

Chair Torkelson and Members of the House Workforce & Labor Committee,

Minnesota's prosperity depends on the well-being of its youngest residents and their families. The earliest years of a child's life are foundational for lifelong health, development, and success. **Science is clear: supportive policies that strengthen family stability and promote economic security are critical in shaping positive outcomes for children, parents, and communities.**

The **Prenatal to Three Coalition** is committed to ensuring that every infant and toddler in Minnesota has the best possible start in life, regardless of income, race, or geography. We advocate for policies that address disparities in maternal and infant health, increase family supports, and strengthen economic stability—key factors that directly impact child development and long-term well-being.

For years, Minnesota lawmakers have worked to establish a **Paid Family and Medical Leave** program that will give families the ability to care for newborns, recover from childbirth, and handle medical crises without facing financial hardship. The program, passed in 2023, has been carefully studied, debated, and refined for nearly a decade. It reflects the needs of working families, caregivers, and Minnesota businesses. Yet, **HF 11** now seeks to delay these much-needed benefits, placing unnecessary strain on families who are counting on this support.

Now is the time to **increase support for families—not delay it**. We urge you to **oppose HF 11** and stand with Minnesota's families, infants, and caregivers by ensuring the timely implementation of the state's Paid Family and Medical Leave program.

Sincerely,

Alisha Porter,  
Children's Defense Funds-MN, State Director.  
MN Prenatal to Three (PN-3) Coalition, Chair

Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn,  
MN Prenatal to Three (PN-3) Coalition,  
Coalition Coordinator

Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Marco Fields, and I'm writing as a Minnesota parent and member of TakeAction Minnesota.

12 weeks of leave would have meant everything for my wife, who, after nearly dying giving birth, had to struggle alone nursing our 1st born. I was lucky and had 2 weeks off from my employer, but that wasn't enough to support my wife through postpartum.

Further, if my wife or kids get sick or hurt, I can't take time off to make sure they get the care and support they need. That causes a lot of anxiety, especially for how active the kids and I are.

Minnesota families like mine can't wait another year for Paid Family Medical Leave.

Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Jackie Lane, and I am here as a parent and representative of TakeAction Minnesota to urge you to support working families by preserving the 2026 launch date of the paid family and medical leave program. The delay, as proposed in this bill, is unnecessary and not in Minnesotans best interest.

After having my first child, Wren, I took out student loans to survive during the 12 weeks I stayed home with her. When combined with 3 months of lost wages and loan interest, my maternity leave totals at a cost of nearly \$17,000—*\$17,000 that I do not have*, to spend time nurturing a child that the state of MN will depend on to fuel our future economy.

Then, at 16 months old, Wren was diagnosed with medical conditions that required three surgeries, three months in a full-body cast, and 3 months of physical therapy 3 times a week, all so she could take her first steps at age 2. I left the workforce to care for her while my partner traveled for work to support us. If paid family and medical leave had existed then, I would not have had to be raising my child alone under these conditions.

Now, despite a string of academic achievements and being accepted into a dual degree masters/PhD program, I am unable to return to the workforce without the security of paid family and medical leave due to my daughter's potential need for additional surgeries. With or without a formal education, how many parents are excluded from contributing their talents and dedication to the workforce based on unpredictable circumstances?

But I am not here just to tell my story. I am here as a leader with TakeAction Minnesota's Minnesota United for Parents. Over the past two years, we have mobilized thousands of parents, and caregivers in support of policies that Minnesota families desperately need—paid sick days, paid family and medical leave, and affordable childcare.

Paid family and medical leave is one of the most meaningful ways we can support working families. I needed this program back in 2020 as much as it is needed in 2026. Thank you.



My name is Arline Datu. I'm a retired business communicator and I live in St. Paul. As a woman of color and person of faith, I believe that every Minnesotan is a child of God and as such, endowed with the right to be treated with respect and dignity. This means that all of us, no matter what we look like or how much we earn, are entitled to have equal access to benefits that only a few now enjoy. Seven years ago, my daughter-in-law gave birth to a son she cared for, for only two weeks without pay, then she had to return to work or lose her job.

Four years ago, my daughter broke her leg in an accident and was out five months from work to give her leg time to heal. With no paid leave, she had no income and had to rely on family and friends to help her pay her rent, bills and groceries.

Recently, I had hip replacement surgery. I live by myself and had to rely on this same daughter to accompany me to surgery and then serve as my home care giver when I was sent home the next day. My daughter took three unscheduled days off without pay to be with me, and then had to go back to work, leaving me to fend for myself. It's not right that individuals can't take time off to care for a newborn or their loved ones when they are sick or disabled without being penalized by having to lose income.

That's why I was overjoyed when Minnesota passed Paid Family and Medical Leave in the 2023 legislative session. It is one of the most important things that the legislature has done for the well-being and health of all Minnesotans. It is imperative that the legislature not tamper with Paid Family and Medical Leave and keep it intact. I urge your committee to do the right thing by Minnesotans and preserve Paid Family and Medical Leave.



February 28, 2025

**RE: Delaying Implementation of Minnesota Paid Family Medical Leave Undermines Health, Wellness and Security of Minnesota Children and Families (House File 11)**

Representative Paul Torkelson  
Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee  
Second Floor Centennial Office Building  
658 Cedar Street  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Chairman Torkelson and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Paid Family Medical Leave is beneficial for the physical health, mental well-being, financial constancy and overall stability of Minnesota families. Whether a family is welcoming a new baby, caring for a sick child, or tending to an ill parent, Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota (CDF-MN) fervently believes caregivers should be able to temporarily shift their focus from earning income to bonding with their infant, holding their child's hand while an IV is placed, or being fully present with their parent who is in hospice. Caregiving, which is rooted in love, is essential to healthy families, prosperous businesses, and a thriving Minnesota.

CDF-MN analyzes and evaluates many policies and programs through a two-generational lens. Addressing and supporting the needs of both children and their parents and/or caregivers results in healthier outcomes for Minnesota's youngest members and their families. Paid Family Medical Leave is a two-generational program that will:

- Strengthen bonding and foster secure attachment between parents and their infants;
- Support the healthy growth and development of children;
- Promote family connectedness, especially during times of crisis and uncertainty;
- Reduce stress and financial strain on parents and caregivers; and
- Maintain employment continuity and family economic stability.

Minnesotans value the vocations of parenting and family caregiving. Indeed, this belief provided the impetus for the creation of the Paid Family Medical Leave program. Delaying its implementation would undermine the health and well-being of many Minnesotans who would otherwise be able to access the program in ten months. We respectfully urge you to maintain the current Paid Family Medical Leave law and uphold its January 1, 2026 implementation date. Requiring families to wait until at least 2027 to access paid leave would place an undue hardship on many parents and caregivers attending to the health and wellness of cherished family members.

Thank you for thoughtfully considering CDF-MN's opposition to House File 11 and placing the well-being of children and families at the center of your discussions and decision-making. We're grateful for your service.

Together For Children,

/s/ Alisha Porter  
Children's Defense Fund – Minnesota  
State Director

/s/ Alexandra Fitzsimmons, Esq.  
Children's Defense Fund – Minnesota  
Senior Policy Director



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February 28th, 2025

Dear Chair Torkelson and Committee Members:

Gender Justice envisions a world where everyone can thrive regardless of their gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Step by step, we're creating that world by dismantling legal, structural, and cultural barriers that contribute to gender inequity. We work to ensure that people of all genders have a meaningful right to bodily autonomy, safety, health, and opportunity.

We are writing in opposition to delaying implementation of Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML). Gender Justice supports PFML being implemented in its entirety and its inclusion of a strong family definition. As an employer, as a co-parent and as a member of the LGBTQ community, the implementation of PFML will provide critical support that Minnesotans need.

Paid Family and Medical Leave is a crucial step toward gender equity in Minnesota, ensuring that no one has to choose between caring for their loved ones and maintaining financial stability. Historically, caregiving responsibilities have disproportionately fallen on women and marginalized genders, reinforcing economic inequities and limiting career advancement. By guaranteeing paid leave, we recognize caregiving as essential labor and help close the wage gap, support LGBTQ+ families, and create a more just and equitable workforce. Everyone, regardless of gender or income, deserves the time to heal, bond with a new child, or care for a sick loved one without fear of losing their job or paycheck. Paid Family and Medical Leave moves Minnesota toward a future where all families thrive, and no one is left behind.

As Executive Director of Gender Justice, I am also an employer at our small nonprofit. As an employer, PFML provides non-profits with the support needed to offer paid leave to my employees, helping us attract and retain the employees we need to meet our mission.

All Minnesotans deserve time to care for themselves and family members, whether it's for a new baby, an unexpected illness, an aging parent, or someone in their chosen family who is facing a medical emergency. PFML will help make this a reality for so many more. I respectfully urge you to vote against any delay in the implementation of PFML. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Megan Peterson".

Megan Peterson  
Executive Director, Gender Justice



February 28, 2025

Chair Torkelson and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

As the state's labor federation, we represent unions and their members in every corner of the state and across industries in the public sector, private sector, and building trades. Together, we long advocated for the creation of this program to meet the needs of our members and all working people in the state to take care of themselves and their families. We are writing to communicate our strong opposition to HF11 to delay implementation of the Paid Leave law by one year.

The need for workers to have Paid Family and Medical Leave was discussed and debated at the Legislature for nearly a decade. It had dozens of committee hearings over the years and was heavily negotiated before final passage in 2023 and again with a cleanup bill in 2024.

This year, DEED testified about their implementation and buildout of the Paid Leave program over the course of two Workforce committee hearings and answered committee members' questions. Those hearings showed this program is on track to roll out as planned on Jan. 1, 2026, and no evidence was surfaced that would suggest otherwise. And in the Workforce hearing on HF11, proponents who testified in support of this bill largely focused their comments on opposition to the program or elements of the program rather than why it should be delayed.

We believe this proposal is really an effort to rollback or dismantle the Paid Leave program before it even gets off the ground. Please vote no on HF11.

Best regards,

Melissa Hysing  
Legislative Director





**Re: HF 11 - Delay of Minnesota's Paid Leave Program**

February 27, 2025

Dear Chair Torkelson, Lead Stephenson and members of the Ways & Means Committee:

ISAIAH is a statewide nonprofit organization consisting of faith communities, childcare centers, Black barbershops, youth and other community-based constituencies working towards racial and economic justice.

No matter where we live or what we look like, Minnesotans believe in caring for one another. Yet the vast majority of Minnesotans don't yet have access to paid family & medical leave benefits. That's why ISAIAH was so proud to partner with a broad array of community, labor, faith, nonprofit, health and small business organizations to fight for the paid family and medical leave bill that was passed and signed into law in 2023.

Few programs or policies in Minnesota have been as thoroughly studied, planned, researched, vetted, debated, discussed, deliberated and voted on as Paid Family and Medical Leave. In 2015 a study was commissioned by the legislature. In 2016, the Senate passed Paid Family Leave. In 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 the House passed Paid Family and Medical Leave, before finally both chambers passed it in 2023 and sent it to be signed by the Governor. In 2024 the House even broke previous records of deliberation on this policy with an eight-plus hour floor debate on the Paid Family Leave "clean-up" bill.

As hundreds of business owners, medical professionals and personal caregivers testified in dozens of hearings over the past decade, the need for this program is urgent and the benefits numerous. In addition to giving workers and families a measure of economic peace of mind during life-changing events, Paid Leave makes our world a better place in so many ways. To name just a few, research shows that Paid Leave:

- Improves the health of babies and new moms
- Increases father's involvement in children's lives
- Helps elders age in place, reducing strain on nursing homes and assisted living facilities
- Paid leave increases women's participation in the workforce
- Reduces reliance on public assistance programs, and
- Benefits business by lowering turnover, boosting productivity, and enhancing morale.

Minnesota's Paid leave program will help smaller businesses afford a benefit they mostly cannot afford to provide on their own. This in turn can make them more competitive with larger employers and appealing to a new generation of employees.

From child care to elder care, Minnesotans know there is a crisis in caregiving, and are excited for Minnesota Paid Leave to become fully implemented just over 10 months from now. Many



Minnesotans are already making life-changing decisions based on the Paid Leave program being so close to fully implemented.

Minnesotans are relying on that program as they make crucial decisions about starting or expanding a family, whether to enter or leave employment, searching for child care options, undergoing medical procedures or caring for aging or seriously ill loved ones. In this time of challenges facing families, we should be doing all we can to increase supports rather than diminish or delay them. We urge you to resist any efforts that would delay or impede a launch of Minnesota's nation-leading paid family and medical leave program, and we respectfully request your vote against HF 11.

Sincerely,

Lars Negstad, Policy Director



LEUKEMIA &  
LYMPHOMA  
SOCIETY

March 3, 2025

The Honorable Paul Torkelson  
Chair, Ways and Means Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Current Paid Leave Law Implementation Dates

Dear Chair Torkelson and members:

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) urges your committee to support the current implementation dates for Minnesota's paid family and medical leave law.

Paid medical leave helps blood cancer patients pursue medical treatment earlier. It helps them manage that treatment without fearing job loss or financial disaster. It helps the parents of children with cancer focus on their child's care. Minnesotans need this bill to go into effect, without delay, for these reasons and more.

Without access to job-protected paid medical leave, cancer patients and caregivers can face crushing choices between their physical and emotional health and well-being. A 2021 American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network survey found that half of cancer patients, a third of cancer survivors, and roughly half of caregivers experienced financial hardship resulting from lack of paid leave access.<sup>1</sup>

It is estimated that more than 40% of working cancer survivors have had significant changes in employment because of their condition, including switching to part-time status or retiring early. These changes are more likely to happen to women and minority individuals.<sup>2</sup> A March of Dimes study by The Institute for Women's Policy Research found that paid leave policies result in 20% fewer women leaving the workforce.<sup>3</sup>

Not having paid leave can be life-threatening for cancer patients. One study found that 59% of colorectal cancer patients without paid leave had to leave their jobs after a cancer diagnosis and suffered long-term economic consequences.<sup>4</sup>

Minnesota's comprehensive paid leave policies would help relieve these pressures. Our policies would allow workers to pursue medical treatment earlier and manage treatment without worrying about

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<sup>1</sup> American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. (n.d.). Paid Leave is an Important Component of Cancer Care for Working Patients, Survivors and Caregivers. *Fightcancer.Org*. Retrieved September 10, 2021, from <https://www.fightcancer.org/sites/default/files/Paid%20Leave%20External%20Factsheet%20Final%2010-23-20.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> De Moor JS, et al. Employment Outcomes Among Cancer Survivors in the United States: Implication for Cancer Care Delivery. *J Nat Canc Inst*. May 2021; 113(5): 641-644. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jnci/djaa084>

<sup>3</sup> Jones, Kelly and Wilcher, Britni. Reducing Maternal Labor Market Detachment: A Role for Paid Family Leave. Working paper, Department of Economics. *American University*. 2019. <https://doi.org/10.17606/emgb-at97>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

maintaining their employment to afford such medical treatment.<sup>5</sup> Across the whole population, access to paid leave is associated with decreased all-cause mortality rates.<sup>6</sup>

LLS opposes the delayed implementation dates contemplated in HF11 and supports a future where every working Minnesotan can access paid leave protection when needed. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dana Bacon  
Senior Director, State Government Affairs  
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
[dana.bacon@lls.org](mailto:dana.bacon@lls.org) | 612.308.0479

***Our Mission***

*The mission of LLS is to cure blood cancer and improve the quality of life for the more than 1.3 million people in the United States living with blood cancer, and their families.*

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<sup>5</sup> Boesch D. Quick Facts on Paid Family and Medical Leave. *Center for American Progress*. February 5, 2021. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/news/2021/02/05/495504/quick-facts-paid-family-medical-leave/>

<sup>6</sup> Paid Sick Leave Laws. *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps*. June 3, 2020. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/paid-sick-leave-laws>



February 27, 2025

Chair Paul Torkelson  
House Ways and Means Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
Centennial Office Building, Fl. 2  
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[harry.kennedy@house.mn.gov](mailto:harry.kennedy@house.mn.gov)

RE: Opposition to HF 11 and any delay of Minnesota's Paid Leave Law

Dear Chair Torkelson and members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

A Better Balance (ABB) is a national legal advocacy organization with four regional offices dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace and helping workers meet the conflicting demands of work and family. Our organization provides legal and policy support to paid family and medical leave campaigns throughout the nation, and we have worked on all of the paid family and medical leave laws that are now or will soon be in full effect. In addition to our legal research and drafting of paid leave laws, we have significant experience with paid family and medical leave implementation and enforcement.

ABB stands in strong opposition to HF 11, which would delay the implementation of Minnesota's Paid Leave Law to January 1, 2027. This would deprive the residents of the state access to paid family and medical leave, which Minnesotans have been working toward for over a decade, for yet another year. After dozens of hearings in which hundreds of Minnesotans spoke out to support paid family and medical leave, the legislation finally passed in 2023 and was modified further in 2024. Families and caregivers in Minnesota are expecting the program to begin in January 2026, and this current timeline provides adequate time for workers, employers, and the Department of Employment and Economic Development to prepare for implementation. There is no clear and justifiable reason for delay based on the experience of other states.

Delaying the implementation of the Paid Leave Law would also put Minnesota behind other states that have passed and successfully implemented paid family and medical leave legislation on a timeframe that is similar to the current implementation schedule for Minnesota's program. Currently, Minnesota's implementation timeline is on par with that of other states. HF 11 would lengthen Minnesota's startup and implementation beyond the average timeline for all states without pre-existing temporary disability insurance programs.

Most significantly, delaying implementation of the Paid Leave Law will cause real harm to Minnesotans. An additional year without implementation means an additional year of Minnesotans in need of paid leave being forced to choose between caring for themselves and loved ones or their financial security. It also means an additional year of extra burden on the

state's other safety net programs for families who could remain out of poverty if they had access to paid family and medical leave. HF 11 would keep Minnesota's small businesses struggling to compete with large corporations and keep women's workforce participation falling behind for another year. Minnesotans deserve the benefits that the Paid Leave Law's implementation will bring to their families, their health, their businesses, and the state's economy, and they are already waiting long enough.

A Better Balance reiterates its firm opposition to HF 11 and supports maintenance of the current Minnesota Paid Family Leave Law implementation timeline. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, I can be reached at [fhameedburne@abetterbalance.org](mailto:fhameedburne@abetterbalance.org).

Sincerely,

Fatimah Hameed-Burne, Senior Staff Attorney



March 3, 2025

Professional Distinction

Personal Dignity

Patient Advocacy

Representative Paul Torkelson, Chair  
House Ways and Means Committee  
Centennial Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Torkelson, DFL Lead Stephenson, and Members of the Committee,

With 22,000 members, the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) is the leading voice for professional nursing in the State of Minnesota. As leaders in labor and health care, we are a voice for frontline hospital nurses around the state who deal with the impacts of a lack of paid family and medical leave not only as workers ourselves, but also the consequences it has on the health outcomes of the patients that nurses care for. When workers can take time to care for themselves or loved ones, which absolutely requires a state-supported program in order to protect workers' access to paid leave given the experiences of our own members, they are not only healthier but also more likely to be able to return to work and stay on the job.

The Minnesota Department of Health's 2019 white paper on Paid Parental Leave cites that "Access to paid parental leave is linked to fewer infant deaths, increased breastfeeding duration, and improved birth and developmental outcomes. Paid parental leave is also associated with improved maternal mental health, including a decreased likelihood of exhibiting depressive symptoms or psychological distress." We know that when people have access to this important benefit, the advantages extend beyond individual workers and their families and into our larger society, workforce, and economy. MDH goes on to state "Research shows that paid leave has many economic benefits as well. It increases the likelihood that workers will return to work after childbirth, improves employee morale, reduces costs to employers through improved employee retention, and improves family incomes." Nearly everyone needs paid family or medical leave at some point in their lives, whether to care for a new child, an aging parent, or themselves. This is why MNA supported the passage of the original legislation in 2023, and why we opposed attempts by corporations, industry associations, and other employer groups that actively sought exemptions and every form of carveout possible under the sun last biennium.

This year, more than 15,000 union MNA nurses will enter into contract negotiations with some of the largest healthcare systems in our state. Even the possibility of a year-long implementation delay for the Paid Leave program creates a threat to nurses as we go into negotiations, and it gives the hospitals yet another year to retaliate against nurses that want to use the paid leave they have earned (which happens – regularly). A delay would be bad for our union, and for organized labor more broadly, as it tilts the scales drastically in favor of the employers. And it would be an affront to the thousands of Minnesotan families, many carrying out family-planning today in anticipation of this program being launched, who would all be negatively impacted.

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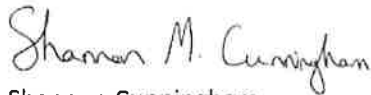
Web: [www.mnnurses.org](http://www.mnnurses.org)



AFL-CIO

No delays and no carveouts to the program are necessary. The same scare tactics used in 2023-24 to kill PFML are now being used to weaken it before it even launches, and an arbitrary delay of one-year only gives more time for those intent to kill the program entirely to work to do so. Those scare tactics were not valid then, they are not valid today, and we hope the Legislature will stand strong – and stand with labor unions, working families, and the overwhelming number of Minnesotans who support the program across the state – by maintaining the program as it is currently written in law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannon M. Cunningham".

Shannon Cunningham  
Director of Governmental and Community Relations  
Minnesota Nurses Association



February 27, 2025

House Ways and Means Committee

**RE: Opposition of HF 11 - Minnesota Paid Leave Law implementation delayed by one year**

Dear Chair Torkelson and members of the Committee,

On behalf of Caring Across Generations, I am writing to express our **strong opposition to HF 11** which would delay implementation of Minnesota's Paid Leave Law by one year, and any other attempts to delay or weaken paid leave policies in the state.

Caring Across Generations is a national campaign of family caregivers, care workers, disabled people, and aging adults working to transform the way we care in this country so that care is accessible, affordable and equitable— and our systems of care enable everyone to live and age with dignity.

Workers in Minnesota need and deserve a paid family leave policy that allows them to take care of themselves and their families without having to sacrifice their jobs or paychecks. Efforts to pass paid family and medical leave have been underway since 2014, with dozens of hearings and public input making it clear that Minnesotans want, need, and deserve paid time off to care. The legislation was passed in 2023 and already modified in 2024, and the Department of Employment and Economic Development is on track to implement it on time on January 1, 2026.

About 80 percent — about 2.5 million workers — in Minnesota currently lack access to paid family and medical leave. Even unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act is inaccessible for 62 percent of Minnesotans.<sup>1</sup> The lack of paid leave exacerbates the state's economic and care challenges — from the rising cost of living to an aging population, with devastating costs for Minnesotans and their families, public health and the economy.

Paid leave supports a strong, healthy, and thriving future for Minnesota's families and small businesses. Family caregivers need comprehensive paid family and medical leave

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<sup>1</sup><https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/paid-leave-means-a-stronger-minnesot-a.pdf>



to care for themselves and for their loved ones. Paid leave means people — especially women, who are more likely to be caregivers — aren't forced to leave the labor force to care for their families or health. And we know that paid leave works for small businesses. It levels the playing field for small employers who cannot afford to pay family and medical leave to their employees out of pocket, often putting them at a competitive disadvantage. It lowers turnover costs through greater retention, boosting productivity and morale in the workplace.<sup>2</sup>

Please put families first by rejecting HF 11 and any other attempts to weaken paid family and medical leave for Minnesotans. Minnesota's care needs can't wait longer. When workers are healthy and have the paid time to care for themselves and their loved ones, all of us prosper, and Minnesota becomes an even better place for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kathy Mendes", is written over a light gray circular background.



Kathy Mendes  
Policy Associate  
Caring Across Generations

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<sup>2</sup> <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/paid-leave-good-for-business.pdf>



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 FamilyValuesAtWork  
 @FmlyValuesWork

## LETTER IN OPPOSITION TO HF 11

House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee

February 12, 2025

Submitted by Family Values @ Work

Chairperson of the House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee,

I am writing in opposition to H.F. 11. My name is Preston Van Vliet and I am the Leading State Policy Organizer with Family Values @ Work, a national paid leave advocacy organization that has Network Members in over two dozen states, including Minnesota. As a national leader in the fight for paid family and medical leave, we recognize that delaying the implementation of Minnesota's paid family and medical leave program would harm not only Minnesotan families but also the broader national movement for equitable workplace policies.

The passage of the paid family and medical leave in 2023 was a landmark achievement for Minnesota, positioning the state as a leader in paid leave policy. However, H.F. 11 threatens to unravel that progress by postponing the start of contribution collection and benefit claims by a year. This delay will have devastating consequences for workers and families who have been counting on these benefits to balance their responsibilities at work and home.

## A National Crisis Requires Urgent Implementation



The need for paid leave has never been more urgent. Across the country, millions of workers are forced to make impossible choices between their health and their livelihood. Research has shown that access to paid family and medical leave reduces financial hardship, improves health outcomes, and fosters economic stability. The Urban Institute has found that implementing paid leave programs can significantly reduce poverty, particularly among low-wage workers and communities of color. Minnesota should accelerate—not delay—this vital program.

## Economic and Public Health Consequences of Delay

Delaying the paid family and medical leave program will have profound economic and public health repercussions. According to actuarial studies commissioned by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, the program is expected to receive over 130,000 claims in its first year alone. The over 100,000 Minnesotans in need of leave will be left without support when they need it the most.



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 FamilyValuesAtWork  
 @FmlyValuesWork

Paid leave is an essential tool for boosting workforce participation, particularly among women and caregivers. States that have implemented robust paid leave policies have seen increased workforce retention, higher earnings for workers, and reduced reliance on public assistance programs.

## Conclusion

Delaying the paid family and medical leave program is not just a Minnesota issue but a setback for the national paid leave movement. At Family Values @ Work, we have seen firsthand how timely and equitable implementation of paid leave policies transforms lives and strengthens communities. Minnesota has the opportunity to lead the way in building an economy that values caregiving and ensures no worker has to choose between their job and their health.

We urge you to reject H.F. 11 and uphold Minnesota's commitment to supporting its workers, families, and businesses.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

For more information, please contact:

Preston Van Vliet (they/he)  
[preston@familyvaluesatwork.org](mailto:preston@familyvaluesatwork.org)  
Leading State Policy Organizer  
[Family Values @ Work](#)





February 28, 2025

The Honorable Representative Paul Torkelson  
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee  
658 Cedar Street  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF HF 11

### [STANCE: UNFAVORABLE]

**The National Partnership for Women & Families appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition of HF 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 combating 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> National Partnership for Women & Families. (2025, January). *Paid Leave Means a Stronger Nation*. Retrieved 28 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.<sup>2</sup> Paid leave helps improve health outcomes and helps working people remain economically secure and connected to their jobs.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> If they need care, about nine out of ten older adults would prefer to get it at home or with friends or family.<sup>7</sup> 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.

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<sup>2</sup> National Partnership for Women & Families. (2025, January). *Paid Leave Means a Stronger Minnesota*. Retrieved 28 February 2024, from <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/paid-leave-means-a-stronger-minnesota.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> 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 28 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 28 February 2025, from <https://injury prevention.bmj.com/content/22/6/442>

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> See note 3.

<sup>6</sup> See note 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Paid family and medical leave is good for businesses and making Minnesotans wait also 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.<sup>8</sup> 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 leave legislation after Minnesota and will fully implement their program before Minnesota does if HF 11 is passed.<sup>9</sup> We urge the legislature not to move forward with HF 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](mailto:bwilliams@nationalpartnership.org)

Sincerely,



Brittany Williams  
Economic Justice Policy Counsel

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<sup>8</sup> National Partnership for Women & Families. (2023, October). *Paid Family and Medical Leave Is Good for Business*. Retrieved 28 February 2025, from <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/paid-leave-good-for-business.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> National Partnership for Women & Families. (2024, July). *State Paid Family & Medical Leave Insurance Laws*. Retrieved 28 February 2025, from <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/state-paid-family-leave-laws.pdf>

