



April 27, 2021

Letter to Jobs/Workforce Conference Committee, SF1098

Senators Pratt, Rarick, Draheim, Housley & Eken, and Representatives Noor, Ecklund, Berg, Olson and Hamilton

Dear Conferees:

On behalf of our coalition of small business, faith, labor, health and community organizations representing nearly one million Minnesotans across the state, we ask you to support the Paid Family and Medical Leave insurance program as created in the House version of SF1098.

Minnesotans believe in caring for one another. Yet the vast majority of Minnesotans don't have access to paid family & medical leave benefits. This means every day, Minnesotans face impossible choices between losing a paycheck or caring for a new child, an aging loved one, or themselves. Our current system is costly to workers, families, businesses, and our economy. Paid Family and Medical Leave is overwhelmingly popular across party lines and has already passed in 9 other states (CA, RI, NJ, NY, WA, MA, CT, OR & CO) plus the District of Columbia.

The Paid Family & Medical Leave program created in this bill would create a statewide social insurance program that would provide up to 12 weeks of partial wage replacement for medical leave (including pregnancy), so Minnesotans can take care of themselves. In addition it would provide up to 12 weeks of partial wage replacement for family leave, so Minnesotans can take care of their loved ones such as a new child or ailing spouse. It would create a partial wage-replacement benefit on a progressive scale at 90%-55% of an employee's salary (66% on average), while protecting job and healthcare benefits, so Minnesotans can experience economic security during their leave.

The program keeps costs low for all by creating a large statewide risk pool and equally share costs between employers and employees, with both contributing 0.3% on employee earnings. For a median worker and their employer, this costs about \$3 per week. The program is built on a model similar to Minnesota's leading Unemployment Insurance administration under the Department of Employment and Economic Development, which would ensure program stability for employees, employers, and the state.

As dozens of business owners, medical professionals and personal caregivers have testified in numerous House committee hearings, the need for this program is urgent and the benefits would be numerous. In addition to giving workers and families a measure of economic security

during life- changing events, Paid Family and Medical Leave programs can improve maternal and child health, increase paternal involvement in children’s lives, and help elders age in place while ensuring their caregivers remain employed. They retain women’s participation in the workforce, reduce reliance on public assistance programs, and benefit business by lowering turnover, boosting productivity, and enhancing morale. Paid leave programs help smaller businesses afford a benefit they might not be able to provide on their own, which in turn can make them more competitive and appealing to a new generation of employees.

Minnesotans know there is a crisis in caregiving and a Paid Family and Medical Leave insurance program is overdue. We urge your support.

Sincerely, Minnesotans for Paid Family & Medical Leave Coalition

## Coalition Members

- AARP
- AFSCME Council 5
- AFSCME Council 65
- Children’s Defense Fund – Minnesota
- Communications Workers of America State Council
- Education Minnesota
- Elders for Infants
- Family Tree Clinic
- Gender Justice
- Greater Minnesota Worker Center
- Hispanic Solutions Group
- ISAIAH
- Jewish Community Action
- JustUsHealth
- Land Stewardship Project
- Main Street Alliance of Minnesota
- MAPE
- Midwest Doulas
- Minnesota AFL-CIO
- Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition
- Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Minnesota Doctors for Health Equity
- Minnesota Nurses Association
- Minnesota Public Health Association
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society of Minnesota
- Northstar Policy Institute
- Open Access Connections
- OutFront Minnesota
- Planned Parenthood
- Prenatal to Three Coalition
- SEIU-Minnesota State Council
- Simpson Housing Services
- Superior Small Batch
- Take Action – Minnesota
- Thriver LLC
- Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha
- UFCW Local 6
- UFCW Local 663
- UFCW Local 1189
- UNITE HERE
- Vital Aging Network
- Working America
- Workutopia Consulting LLC

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