



February 28, 2022

Chair Mohamud Noor  
Members of the House Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Committee  
*Via Electronic Delivery*

**Re: Support for Paid Family Medical Leave; Safety Leave for Survivors, HF1200**

Dear Chair Noor and Members of the Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Committee:

Violence Free Minnesota (VFMN) submits this letter to express our support for HF1200 and to highlight the need for safety leave protections for survivors of domestic abuse. VFMN is a statewide coalition of 90-member programs working to end relationship abuse. VFMN member programs provide direct services and support to survivors of domestic and sexual violence throughout the State of Minnesota.

Surviving abuse and navigating its aftermath is dangerous, traumatic, expensive, and time-consuming. Survivors need time to address their medical and safety needs, such as accessing healthcare, attending counseling, obtaining legal services, meeting with an advocate, and/or relocating their housing. These are essential for immediate safety and to help survivors sustain stability after leaving a violent situation. Yet, when survivors take these steps to protect and care for themselves and their children, they often run the risk of losing their employment or much needed wages as a result of missing work. This is a serious contributing factor to the dynamics of financial abuse, and can force a survivor to choose between leaving an abusive situation or facing potential homelessness and the loss of other basic needs.

Not having safety leave available for survivors, 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.

HF1200 establishes vital supports for survivors of domestic abuse. Paid safety leave 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 pass this much needed legislation as a step towards ensuring stability for survivors.

Sincerely,

Guadalupe Lopez  
Executive Director  
Violence Free Minnesota

Katie Kramer  
Policy Director  
Violence Free Minnesota