

March 8, 2021

To: Speaker Hortman, Leader Gazelka
Cc: All Legislators
Re: Earned Sick and Safe Time – HF 7

We write to express our strong commitment to the health and economic well-being of families and working people in Minnesota. The COVID crisis has shone a spotlight on the underlying weaknesses and inequities within Minnesota's economy: far too many families—particularly families of color—lack the support needed to care for their loved ones or themselves. Together, we have the opportunity to build a family-friendly economy for all Minnesotans and emerge stronger from this public health crisis. We write today to voice our support for Earned Sick and Safe Time ("ESST"), a basic employment standard that allows workers to accrue paid time to care for themselves or a loved one.

As Minnesotans, we care deeply about each other. No matter where we live, we're united by the aspirations we share and the love we have for our families. Every person has inherent worth and dignity. But too many working people are left behind and forced to make impossible economic choices.

For thousands of Minnesotans, ESST provides flexibility so they can meet their highest responsibilities. It ensures people can live and work with dignity. Taking our parent to the doctor's office to get test results. Getting a COVID test. Resting when illness strikes instead of working a double. Picking up a sick child when the nurse's office calls in the middle of our shift. Leaving our abuser to get safety or court protection.

It shouldn't cost us so much to balance work and life. No working person, particularly essential workers who are making our society function during this pandemic, should have to worry about taking care of themselves or a loved one and missing a paycheck or getting fired.

We're better off when everyone has the tools they need to build a good life. Guaranteeing that every working person in our state has access to paid time to care for themselves and loved ones is one of those necessary tools. ESST is also good for public health and small businesses. It limits the spread of contagious illnesses and levels the playing field for employers.

Together we can build a family-friendly economy and build on local and national progress. Three cities in Minnesota—Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Duluth—have already passed common-sense ESST ordinances. Across the country, 10 states have passed ESST laws.

- ESST provides a basic workplace standard to meet the health and financial needs of Minnesotans when they or a loved one get sick, require care, or need safety from domestic abuse, stalking, or sexual assault;
- Workers may earn up to 48 hours of job-protected paid sick time each year which are accrued over time and may be carried over to the following year;
- Employers are allowed to require certification if an employee uses more than three sick days in a row.

Let's honor hard work and choose a better, healthier future for all Minnesotans. It's the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Accion Latinx (COPAL)
CTUL
CWA Local 7250
East Central Area Labor Council
Gender Justice
ISAIAH
Jewish Community Action
Land Stewardship Project, Land Stewardship Action Fund
Main Street Alliance of Minnesota
Minnesota AFL-CIO
Minnesota Budget Project
Minnesota Catholic Conference
Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Minnesota Nurses Association
OutFront Minnesota
SEIU Local284
SEIU MN State Council
SOAR Career Solutions
TakeAction Minnesota
Tubman
UFCW Local 1189
Unidos MN
Violence Free Minnesota