



HCAPE

HENNEPIN COUNTY ASSOCIATION
OF PARAMEDICS AND EMTS

Chair Baker, Chair Pinto, and Committee Members,

On behalf of the paramedics, EMTs, and emergency medical dispatchers represented by the Hennepin County Association of Paramedics and EMTs, I am writing to express concern with HF 4110 and the proposed amendments to Minnesota Statutes 177.253 and 177.254. We believe that the bill, as currently drafted, introduces significant ambiguity and may create unintended consequences for EMS systems and the workforce that sustains them.

The bill proposes exemptions from rest and meal break requirements in situations where the employee is “the only employee working at that time and location” or during an emergency response.” These provisions lack clear definitions and do not align well with how EMS systems function in practice. EMS delivery is inherently dynamic and mobile. While providers are typically assigned to two-person units, operational demands frequently result in crews functioning independently, moving across jurisdictions, or remaining continuously available. Under the current language, these routine conditions could be interpreted in a way that triggers exemptions far beyond what is intended. Additionally, the term “emergency response” is not clearly defined within this context. Given the nature of 911-based EMS, nearly all field activity could reasonably fall under that definition. Without clear parameters, the language risks being applied broadly, effectively eliminating rest and meal break protections for EMS providers all together.

In previous committee hearings, testimony in support of HF 4110 has pointed to the challenges faced by rural and volunteer ambulance services, particularly when limited staffing makes it difficult to accommodate uninterrupted breaks. We recognize and respect those challenges. However, it was also acknowledged that this issue does not present in the same way within larger or metro-based systems. We believe a more appropriate approach would be a narrowly tailored amendment that addresses the specific needs of rural and volunteer services, rather than a blanket exemption that applies across all EMS systems statewide.

There is also a significant labor relations component that must be considered. Many EMS agencies and unions are currently engaged in ongoing efforts to implement rest and meal break practices through collective bargaining. In many cases agreements have been reached to pause or phase in implementation while operationally sound solutions are developed collaboratively. HF 4110, as written, would remove any incentive or requirement for employers to continue to engage in that process. By creating a broad statutory exemption, the bill effectively eliminates leverage for frontline providers and shifts the issues away from negotiated solutions that are tailored to individual systems.

EMS professionals operate in high-demand, high-stress environments with limited opportunities for rest and recovery. Workforce sustainability, recruitment, and retention are ongoing issues across the state. Policies that weaken basic labor protections risk exacerbating these issues and ultimately impacting patient care and system reliability.

We respectfully urge the committee to reconsider the current language of HF 4110 and pursue a more targeted solution that addresses the specific concerns of rural and volunteer EMS systems as well as the original intent of the bill, while preserving core workforce protections for EMS providers statewide.

Respectfully,

Shane Hallow
President
Hennepin County Association of Paramedics and EMTs

March 25, 2025

Honorable Members of the House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee:

AFSCME Council 5 represents 43,000 working people across the state of Minnesota, including thousands of direct care workers in licensed care settings, hospitals, nursing homes, and secure rehabilitative facilities. Many of our members work directly alongside patients and clients who need substantial, life-sustaining care. It's a job that our members are proud to do in the service of Minnesota's residents.

We write to express our concerns with HF 4110. The bill would punish direct care workers, taking break and meal rights away from workers who are already struggling to meet the demands of providing care while understaffed. This bill shifts the consequences of inadequate hiring, staffing, and scheduling onto the workers, with no additional penalty or obligation for employers to improve staffing conditions. This bill would allow some particularly understaffed settings to take breaks away, at the exclusive discretion of the employer, indefinitely. We'd prefer to improve the market conditions to enable a full complement of staff, like increasing pay for workers in positions that are hard to recruit or retain for. We need to make it easier to work in these physically and emotionally demanding jobs; this bill does the opposite.

Finally, we should acknowledge that frontline, direct-care staff have always exercised professional judgement and discretion while delivering the critical care they provide – this was true before worker protections for guaranteed breaks were enshrined in state statute and it is true today. The notion that frontline, direct-care staff cannot be trusted to exercise judgement should be rejected by this body.

We respectfully ask that you oppose HF 4110.

In Solidarity,

Bart Andersen

Bart Andersen
Executive Director

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

Ethan Vogel
Legislative Director



Dear Chair Baker and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bolan Bigelow, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Minnesota Ski Areas Association (MnSAA), which represents the alpine skiing and snowboarding industry in the State of Minnesota. MnSAA advocates for policies that promote and support tourism, outdoor recreation, and environmental stewardship across our great state.

On behalf of the Minnesota Ski Areas Association (MnSAA) and our member ski areas across the state of Minnesota, I am writing to express our strong support for HF 4110 and the flexibility in employee breaks that this legislation provides.

Let me be straightforward — we absolutely recognize the importance of ensuring our employees are rested, refreshed, and ready to do their jobs well. Our staff are the backbone of our operations, and their wellbeing matters deeply to us. That is not up for debate. However, the nature of our industry presents some very real and unique operational challenges that make rigid, one-size-fits-all break scheduling difficult — and at times, unsafe.

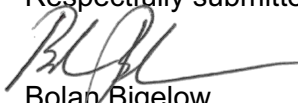
Ski areas operate in a dynamic, fast-moving environment where conditions can change rapidly and guest and employee safety is always the top priority. Consider the nature of our workforce — lift operators who cannot simply step away from a running chairlift, ski patrol staff responding to on-mountain emergencies, snowmakers working through critical weather windows, and instructors in the middle of a lesson with young children on the slopes. Requiring strictly timed breaks in these situations without any flexibility doesn't just create operational headaches — it can create genuine safety concerns for both our guests and our employees.

HF 4110 strikes the right balance. It does not eliminate breaks or diminish their importance — it simply allows for the kind of flexibility that seasonal, outdoor, and operationally complex businesses like ours need to function safely and effectively. Our member ski areas take their responsibility to their employees seriously, and this legislation gives us the tools to honor that responsibility in a way that actually works in the real world.

Minnesota's ski areas support thousands of jobs across the state, contribute significantly to local and regional economies, and provide Minnesotans with the outdoor recreation experiences they love. We urge the committee to move HF 4110 forward and we stand ready to provide any additional information or answer any questions that may be helpful to the committee's work.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact the Minnesota Ski Areas Association with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



Bolan Bigelow
Executive Director

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March 24, 2026

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Chair David Pinto
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Jamie Gulley
President

Jigme Ugen
Executive Vice President

Phillip Cryan
Executive Vice President

Brenda Hilbrich
Executive Vice President

Rasha Ahmad Sharif
Executive Vice President

Dear Chairs Baker & Pinto:

SEIU Healthcare MN & IA represents over 50,000 people who work in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and self-directed homecare. Recent improvements to the break and lunchtime law in Minnesota have greatly improved the lives of our members and the people they care for. Because of the changes, employers are now providing more adequate staffing and workers are able to do a better job. For this reason, our union opposes HF4110/SF4333 which could exempt a significant number of healthcare workers who most need protection.

While the bill attempts to narrowly tailor an exception, we are concerned that the language could in practice be construed very broadly and would be used by employers to pressure healthcare workers into not taking their breaks. There is a long history of this happening in our industry.

No healthcare worker would ever refuse to care for a client, resident, or patient in a genuine emergency. In cases where an emergency requires a worker to skip a break or lunch, the employer should pay the double-time penalty as set in the law.

Sincerely yours,

Rick Varco

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