



April 20, 2021

Senator Eric Pratt  
Chair, Jobs and Economic Growth  
Committee  
3219 Minnesota Senate Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Mohamud Noor  
Chair, Workforce and Business  
Development Committee  
379 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Conference Committee Members,

As the state labor federation of more than 1,000 local unions who represent more than 300,000 working people throughout Minnesota, we are writing to ask you to prioritize workplace safety, labor standards, and pandemic relief for working people as you put together a Jobs omnibus bill.

The following provisions that are only in the House version reflect these priorities:

- A Paid Family and Medical Leave social insurance program providing job protection and partial wage replacement for workers taking up to 12 weeks of leave to care for their own or a loved one's serious medical condition or to bond with a new child.
- Repeal of the law excluding high school students from eligibility for UI.
- Ends the exclusion of hourly school employees from eligibility for UI.
- Extends COVID-related emergency UI measures to September 4, 2021.
- The Emergency Rehire and Retention Act to ensure laid-off workers in industries hit hard by the pandemic can get their jobs back.
- OSHA federal penalty conformity to maintain an effective state program.
- OSHA operating adjustment to add needed staff for enforcement.
- Makes OSHA citations public information.
- The Safe and Skilled Workforce Act to require outside contractors at oil refineries to have apprenticeship-level training to ensure workplace and community safety.
- Safe Workplaces for Meat and Poultry Processing Workers to provide needed protections for workers in a dangerous industry.
- Earned Sick and Safe Time so workers can take paid time off when they are sick or in a dangerous situation.
- The Essential Workers Emergency Leave Act to provide paid quarantine leave for workers on the front lines of the pandemic.
- Funding to implement and enforce new workplace safety and paid leave laws.

In addition, we are opposed to the following Senate provisions that undermine workplace safety and labor standards:

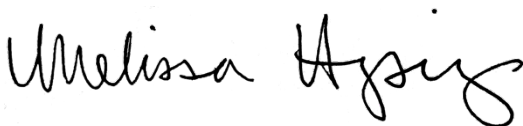
- Rolls back key components of the 2019 Wage Theft Prevention Act that ensure workers know what they are supposed to be paid, and that penalties are sufficient to deter employers from violating the law.
- Exempts certain buildings from the requirement to have dedicated anchorages for window cleaners' safety.
- Requires legislative approval of Executive Order restrictions on businesses now and in future public health emergencies. This restricts the Governor's ability to ensure workplace safety when the Legislature fails to act in an emergency.
- Allows business to operate with no capacity limitations in the current pandemic if they have a plan and make a "good faith effort" to operate safely and limits penalties for violations of Executive Orders. This undermines workplace safety.
- Makes changes to UI eligibility that could negatively impact workers who did not seek and accept employment that would put their health and safety at risk during the pandemic or who had a COVID-19 Leave of Absence in 2021.

We are also concerned about the following Senate provisions added to the bill in Finance that never had a committee hearing:

- Zeroes out funding for the Public Employee Relations Board.
- Makes high school students' eligibility for UI contingent on having a \$750 million positive balance in the trust fund.
- Eliminates penalties for a first nonserious OSHA violation, retroactive to August 2020, expiring the day after termination or rescission of certain Executive Orders.

This pandemic has made it clearer than ever that working people need expanded access to unemployment benefits, stronger workplace safety protections, and paid leave to take care of themselves, their loved ones, and to protect public health. We hope conference committee members will prioritize the needs of Minnesotans hit hardest by the pandemic.

Sincerely,



Melissa Hysing  
Legislative Director





**CC:**

Senator Jason Rarick  
Chair, Senate Labor committee

Senator Karin Housley

Senator Rich Draheim

Senator Kent Eken

Representative Rob Ecklund  
Chair, House Labor committee

Representative Liz Olson

Representative Kaela Berg

Representative Rod Hamilton



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