



Re: HF 11 - Delay of Minnesota's Paid Leave Program

February 13, 2025

Dear Chair Baker and members of the House Workforce & Labor Committee:

ISAIAH is a statewide nonprofit organization consisting of faith communities, childcare centers, Black barbershops, youth and other community-based constituencies working towards racial and economic justice.

No matter where we live or what we look like, Minnesotans believe in caring for one another. Yet the vast majority of Minnesotans don't yet have access to paid family & medical leave benefits. That's why ISAIAH was so proud to partner with a broad array of community, labor, faith, nonprofit, health and small business organizations to fight for the paid family and medical leave bill that was passed and signed into law in 2023.

Few programs or policies in Minnesota have been as thoroughly studied, planned, researched, vetted, debated, discussed, deliberated and voted on as Paid Family and Medical Leave. In 2015 a study was commissioned by the legislature. In 2016, the Senate passed Paid Family Leave. In 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 the House passed Paid Family and Medical Leave, before finally both chambers passed it in 2023 and sent it to be signed by the Governor. In 2024 the House even broke previous records of deliberation on this policy with an eight-plus hour floor debate on the Paid Family Leave "clean-up" bill.

As hundreds of business owners, medical professionals and personal caregivers testified in dozens of hearings over the past decade, the need for this program is urgent and the benefits numerous. In addition to giving workers and families a measure of economic peace of mind during life-changing events, Paid Leave makes our world a better place in so many ways. To name just a few, research shows that Paid Leave:

- Improves the health of babies and new moms
- Increases father's involvement in children's lives
- Helps elders age in place, reducing strain on nursing homes and assisted living facilities
- Paid leave increases women's participation in the workforce
- Reduces reliance on public assistance programs, and
- Benefits business by lowering turnover, boosting productivity, and enhancing morale.

Minnesota's Paid leave program will help smaller businesses afford a benefit they mostly cannot afford to provide on their own. This in turn can make them more competitive with larger employers and appealing to a new generation of employees.

From child care to elder care, Minnesotans know there is a crisis in caregiving, and are excited for Minnesota Paid Leave to become fully implemented just over 10 months from now. Many



Minnesotans are already making life-changing decisions based on the Paid Leave program being so close to fully implemented.

Minnesotans are relying on that program as they make crucial decisions about starting or expanding a family, whether to enter or leave employment, searching for child care options, undergoing medical procedures or caring for aging or seriously ill loved ones. In this time of challenges facing families, we should be doing all we can to increase supports rather than diminish or delay them. We urge you to resist any efforts that would delay or impede a launch of Minnesota's nation-leading paid family and medical leave program, and we respectfully request your vote against HF 11.

Sincerely,

Lars Negstad, Policy Director