



small business voices. small business values.

02.14.2022

House Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Committee

Statement of KB Brown

Owner, Wolfpack Promotionals and Alpha Wear Apparel

Minneapolis, MN

Main Street Alliance member

My name is KB Brown and I own Wolfpack Promotionals and Alpha Wear Apparel on Broadway in North Minneapolis. It is a full service print shop, strategic marketing firm, and apparel provider. I am also a member of Main Street Alliance, a network of small business owners working towards an equitable and resilient small business economy by creating strong communities. Like owners of other small businesses from across the state -- rural, suburban, and urban, Black, brown and white -- I lack the safety net small business owners need to thrive.

I had surgery last May and according to my doctor's orders, I was supposed to limit my movement. However, I had to go back to work after the surgery sooner than I should have and now I've developed complications.

I know it's putting my health at risk, and that my customers would be willing to wait for their products, but, as a small business owner, there's no safety net for me. If I don't work, I don't eat. My monthly bills for the shop and my home total over \$4,200 a month. I can't afford not to pay them.

While I could lean on my community for support, I should not have to do that. Just like we collectively pay for roads, we need a public care infrastructure to support our small businesses, families and communities as well. If we had a full Paid Family & Medical Leave program in place, it would make a world of difference for me and other small business owners. I would pay a small cost and be able to access a 90% wage replacement for me when I need it. This would enable me to close the shop temporarily, focus on recovering, and keep up with these expenses.

Small businesses in all types of industries across the state would benefit, and those who want to go into business for themselves would be more likely to do so, with a safety net like this in place. I urge members of the committee to pass House File 1200. Thank you.