



children's defense fund minnesota

Dear Members of the Senate Jobs and Economic Growth Finance and Policy Committee:

We would like to express our strong support for the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance provisions included in SF 4091.

There is perhaps no policy that the state could adopt that would have such a profound three generation impact on the state and its workforce. In other US states, similar programs are leading to the following outcomes critical to our state's economic future:

- Healthier births and babies, improved child development and more stable home environments and families during the critical first 1,000 days of life when 80% of brain development occurs, creating the best start possible for Minnesota's future workforce.
- Greater labor force participation and employer attachment for mothers and less reliance on public programs.
- Quicker recovery from major illnesses and better management of chronic conditions that drive absenteeism in the workforce.
- Increased support for elder caregiving, a common reason women are forced to prematurely leave the workforce.
- Attracting top talent to businesses of all sizes and locations, as younger workers demand greater work-family balance and commensurate benefits.

Far from a radical, risky endeavor, the provisions in SF 4091 build on successful programs in other states and Minnesota's own Unemployment Insurance system. The approach taken is the proven one in states across the country and the world. Its not only the right thing to do if you profess to value families, small businesses and economic growth, but it's also the smart thing.

At Children's Defense Fund Minnesota our mission is to ensure every child has a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start and a moral start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities, with special attention to those children facing the steepest barriers. A Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance program that covers every child and family is critical to achieving that mission. With Minnesota's significant budget surplus and growing evidence about the possibility and power of the approach included in SF 4091, there is no better time to move ahead. Minnesota children, families, workers and employers deserve no less and our future depends on it.

Debra Fitzpatrick
Policy and Research Director