

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Minnesota House File 2 and Senate File 2 addressing the need for Paid Family and Medical Leave in our state.

My name is Toni Kay Mangskau. I live in Rochester and am a volunteer for AARP, Isaiah and the National Patient Advocate Foundation.

Through the years, I have been caregiver for 5 family members. I shared caregiving responsibilities with my siblings when my dad was diagnosed with end stage heart and lung disease and when my mom was diagnosed with cancer. When my parents' health started to decline, I became the guardian for my developmentally disabled brother. He has ongoing, significant health issues. I officially became a member of the sandwich generation. Caring for my kids with disabling health issues, aging parents and brother. I have done all of this while working full-time.

My role as a family caregiver has been a financial strain. During a 9-month period in 2017, I went without one-third of my yearly income due to unpaid time off from work. I have had to file for bankruptcy in the past.

In addition to the financial strain, there's also been an emotional strain. When my mom was in hospice, my family and I were so burnt out with trying to juggle work and figuring out who could afford to miss work. With all of this juggling of our work schedules, my mom died alone without family at her bedside. My belief is if we would have had a Paid Family and Medical Leave law in place, my family would have been at her side in her last moments of life.

Unfortunately, my family's story is not uncommon. I work with cancer patients and their families and hear of the same type of experience. Senate File 2 will help ensure that every working Minnesotan can access paid leave protection when needed. This includes our neighbors striving to enter the workforce through the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

I, like so many others, would do anything for loved ones. The value of a family's emotional support and presence during a loved one's illness cannot be measured, and it should not be degraded or punished by the fear of financial difficulty.

It's time for Minnesota lawmakers to pass a paid family and medical leave program that is **comprehensive, accessible and not dependent on whether your employer can offer it**. So many family caregivers are counting on you.

Toni Kay Mangskau
Rochester, MN.