



The League of Minnesota Cities, Association of Minnesota Counties, and the Minnesota Inter-County Association appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on SF 2476, which prohibits an employer from penalizing an employee because the employee declines to attend, participate, or listen to an employer-sponsored meeting or communication on religious political matters. While we understand the intent of the bill, we are concerned that the language of the bill could result in unintended consequences related to public employment.

The bill contains a broad definition of “political matters,” to include “elections for political office, political parties, proposals to change legislation, proposals to change regulations, proposals to change public policy, and the decision to join or support any political party or political, civic, community, fraternal, or labor organization.”

There is no distinction between public and private employers in the bill. Our concern is that participation in meetings – both internal and public – to discuss public policy, regulations, proposals, and elections administration, are within the regular scope of work for public employees by nature of working for a unit of government. A strict interpretation of the bill language could hamper the ability of cities to direct and oversee the work of employees whose duties involve working on public policy as a normal course of business.

We would request that clarifying language be added to the bill related to public employee job duties, which necessarily involve meetings and participation in discussions of proposals to change regulations, public policy, and legislation.

We appreciate your consideration of these concerns and are happy to work with all parties as the bill moves forward.

Sincerely,

Brooke Bordson, League of Minnesota Cities  
Matt Hilgart, Association of Minnesota Counties  
Matt Massman, Minnesota Inter-County Association