

January 17, 2023

To: Chairs Sen. Jennifer McEwen and Rep. Michael Nelson
Cc: Members of the Senate Labor and House Labor & Industry Finance & Policy
Committees
Re: SF 34 / HF 19 – Earned Sick and Safe Time

We write to express our strong commitment to the health and economic well-being of families and working people in Minnesota. The past few years have shone a spotlight on the underlying weaknesses and inequities within Minnesota's economy: far too many families, particularly families of color, lack the support needed to care for their loved ones or themselves. Together, we have the opportunity to build a family-friendly economy for all Minnesotans and emerge stronger from the public health crisis. We write today to voice our support for Earned Sick and Safe Time ("ESST"), a basic employment standard that allows workers to accrue paid time to care for themselves or a loved one.

As Minnesotans, we care deeply about each other. No matter where we live, we are united by the aspirations we share and the love we have for our families. Every person has inherent worth and dignity. But too many working people are left behind and forced to make impossible economic choices.

For thousands of Minnesotans, ESST provides flexibility so they can meet their highest responsibilities. It ensures people can live and work with dignity. Taking our parents to the doctor's office to get test results. Resting when illness strikes instead of working a double shift. Picking up a sick child when the nurse's office calls in the middle of our shift. Leaving our abuser to get safety or court protection. Dealing with the tridemic that's currently impacting the nation.

It should not cost us so much to balance work and life. No one—particularly essential workers who kept our communities and society functioning during the height of the pandemic and since then—should have to worry about taking care of themselves or a loved one and missing a paycheck or getting fired.

We are better off when everyone has the tools they need to build a good life. Guaranteeing that every working person in our state has access to paid time to care for themselves and loved ones is one of those necessary tools. ESST is also good for public health and small businesses. It limits the spread of contagious illnesses and levels the playing field for employers.

Together we can build a family-friendly economy and build on local and national progress. Four cities in Minnesota—Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Duluth, and Bloomington—have already passed common-sense ESST ordinances. Across the country, 16 states have passed ESST laws.

- ESST provides a basic workplace standard to meet the health and financial needs of Minnesotans when they or a loved one get sick, require care, or need safety from domestic abuse, stalking, or sexual assault;
- Workers may earn up to 48 hours of job-protected paid sick time each year which are accrued over time and may be carried over to the following year.

Let's honor hard work and choose a better, healthier future for all Minnesotans. It is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

Communities Organizing Power and Actions for Latinos

Gender Justice

ISAIAH

Jewish Community Action

Main Street Alliance

Minnesota Budget Project

Minnesota Catholic Conference

SEIU Minnesota State Council

TakeAction Minnesota

Violence Free Minnesota