

February 1, 2025

Dear Chair Westrom, Chair Putnam, and members of the Minnesota Senate Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee:

Unidos Minnesota is a women-led, multi-racial, state-wide organization building power for Minnesota working families to advance social, racial, and economic justice. Unidos MN opposes S.F. 310, which would modify employee definitions for purposes of earned sick and safe time. The outlined changes will affect a swath of low-income working families living in historically disinvested regions of the state.

Unidos MN is accountable to a base of mixed-status Latinos across the state who work in lower wage, higher turnover jobs. This community is more likely to experience occupational segregation than any other major ethnic group. According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Latinos are most likely to hold jobs in crop and animal production (12.4%), administrative and services to buildings and dwellings (8.1%), and the hospitality industry (7.2%). Latinos employed in these occupations earn less than the median income average of their white counterparts and already lack access to paid sick leave at disproportionate rates.

Reversing the progress we have made on sick and safe time legislation is not the path forward. The changes included in S.F. 310 will undermine not only rural Latinos but many families across the state whose members work in lower-wage, higher-turnover jobs and urgently need access to work-place protections. According to the National Partnership for Women and Families, 38 jurisdictions nationwide have adopted paid sick days laws, including 14 states. The positive impact showed a 5.5 to 6.5 percent decrease in general flu rates. Additionally, in Connecticut, paid sick days led to a faster decline in occupational injuries and illnesses compared to rates for those same occupations in New York and nationally.

The data demonstrating the progress achieved through sick leave laws only emphasizes their importance nationwide. Hence, continuing the implementation of earned sick and safe leave policy in Minnesota remains essential, as it contributes to addressing the structural and institutional barriers that existed prior to a pandemic that only exacerbated existing inequities.

Essential workers deserve a dignified and safe workplace. Please oppose S.F. 310.

Should you have any questions, please contact me or our Policy Director, Sara Lopez. Sara can be reached by email at sara@unidos-mn.org or by phone at (507) 581-4211.

Respectfully submitted,

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