

Progress and Protection:

ALIGNING AI INNOVATION WITH WORKER WELFARE

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is poised to transform the workplace, offering opportunities for innovation while presenting significant challenges for Minnesota's workers. A recent survey highlights the disconnect between employer expectations and worker experiences: 96% of business executives believe AI will boost productivity, but 77% of workers already using AI tools report increased workloads and decreased productivity.

This disparity underscores the urgent need for sound regulation that ensures AI benefits both businesses and workers. "Progress and Protection" examines AI's impact on Minnesota's workforce and offers policy guidelines to ensure its implementation promotes equitable outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

- ◆ **500,000 Minnesota workers—17% of the workforce—are at high risk** of having their job altered by AI, with roles in agriculture and software development among those most impacted.
- ◆ Minnesota ranks **10th nationally** and **2nd in the Midwest** for workforce vulnerability to AI.
- ◆ AI disproportionately affects workers in **Greater Minnesota** and industries with **lower union density**, creating an opportunity for organized labor to engage with workers newly exposed to economic insecurity and previously resistant to workplace organizing.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure AI drives innovation without undermining worker welfare, lawmakers should adopt proactive policies that balance business productivity with worker protections. These recommendations draw from effective models introduced and passed in other states.

- ✓ **Strengthen Collective Bargaining Rights** - Empower workers to influence AI adoption in their workplaces, ensuring technology complements their roles rather than replacing them.
- ✓ **Support Worker Training and Transition Programs** - Expand access to training opportunities, hiring preferences, and benefits for workers replaced by AI, enabling them to transition into stable, high-quality jobs.
- ✓ **Regulate AI Invasiveness and Use in Important Decisions** - Limit the utilization of AI in hiring, surveillance, and performance monitoring to prevent discrimination and protect worker privacy.
- ✓ **Build a Long-Term Governance Framework** - Develop infrastructure for ongoing evaluation of AI's workforce impact, enabling policymakers to adapt and respond to new challenges effectively.

AI is being rapidly adopted and holds the potential to reshape Minnesota's workforce. Policymakers, businesses, and labor leaders should work together to ensure Minnesota leads the nation in building an economy that aligns AI innovation with worker welfare, creating a future that benefits everyone.

For the full report visit northstarpolicy.org



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