



MINNESOTA
COUNCIL ON LATINO AFFAIRS

ADVISE AND INFORM
ON LEGISLATION
AND POLICY WITH
LATINO
MINNESOTANS



MID SESSION LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY
2020

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TAXES AND CONSUMER PROTECTION



MCLA Main Priorities

HF 3420 / SF 4150

Regenerative poultry processing facility and industrial park appropriation.

- This bill counts with strong bipartisan support.
- This bill had a hearing in the House of Representative and was laid over for inclusion.
- This bill is set to be heard in the Senate after the legislature reconvenes.

HF 4218 / SF 4434

Bonding-Regenerative poultry industrial park.

- This proposal counts with bipartisan support.
- This bill is awaiting hearings in the House and Senate.

HF 1323 / SF 565

Veterans income modification for Property Tax Refund.

- This bill counts with bipartisan support.
- This bill is awaiting hearings in the House and Senate.

HF 3721

Including ITIN users into our Homestead program.

- This bill counts with bipartisan support.
- This bill is awaiting a hearing in the House of Representative and has yet to be introduced in the Senate.

HF 4146

Motor vehicle transactions required to be conducted in single language.

- This bill counts with bipartisan support.
- This bill is awaiting a hearing in the House of Representative and has yet to be introduced in the Senate.



COVID-19 RESPONSE



In addition to the proposals listed above, we have engaged in the following:

- Provided feedback to Rep. Michael Howard's bill (DFL-50A) which creates a disaster assistance fund to help with rent and mortgage payments and limits late fees and evictions during a public health emergency.
- Collaborated with ILCM and Latino LEAD alongside House and Senate members on potential legislation to create a relief fund for Minnesotans that are not eligible for Unemployment Insurance under current requirement.
- Working with MDH officials and Governor's staff to ensure that the COVID-19 Hotline is accessible to Spanish-speakers.
- Working with Governor's staff and officials from different cities to ensure that we have a clear understanding of the role of law enforcement during the Stay at Home order period.
- Working with Governor's staff to ensure that undocumented Minnesotans will have access to healthcare if infected with COVID-19.
- Working with DEED officials and Governor's staff to ensure that youth workers have access to unemployment insurance.



MCLA PRIORITY:

Spoken Language Health Care Interpreters Registry System Bill HF1400/ SF875

The bill creates a statewide standard for training and testing, with three categories for increased professional recognition in a new Registry system that will replace the current roster managed by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Its purpose is to reduce disparities in health care outcomes for patients with limited English proficiency (LEP). **Mid-Session Outcome:** The bill was heard in the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee, and re-referred to the Government Operations committee, and the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Division.

COVID-19 RELATED BILLS:

COVID-19 Public Health Response Planning and Preparation SF3813 / HF 4275

On March 9th, this bill was introduced and was geared to appropriating federal funds (\$4,622,000 for the use of the Commissioner of Health, and \$20,889,000 transferred in fiscal year 2020 from the general fund to the public health response contingency account to help combat COVID-19 through public health measures. **Mid-Session Outcome:** This bill was passed and approved by Governor on March 10th

Health care response account and provider grant and loan program created HF3980/SF4334

The bill signed by Gov. Tim Walz, provides two funding pools:

- \$50 million under the state's public health response contingency account, which has rules built in that would allow the money to get where it's needed quickly; and
- \$150 million which would be used to make grants. Grants could only be accepted under the condition that providers agree not to bill uninsured patients for the cost of screening, testing, or treatment of COVID-19. They would also be required to accept the median network rate as payment in full, and not bill patients any amount in excess of the in-network cost-sharing provider rate.

COVID-19; workers' compensation claims presumption provided for specified employees, report required HF4537/SF4458

The bill addresses workers' compensation claims for employees who contract COVID-19 during their duties as health care workers — including home health care workers — paramedics, emergency medical technicians, police officers and firefighters. Passed 130-4 by the House and 67-0 by the Senate. The Commerce and Labor and Industry departments project the bill's cost to range from \$320 to \$580 million. That money may come from a federal aid package that's estimated to bring about \$1.87 billion to the state.

Employee Isolation and Quarantine Protections HF3532/SF4194

This bill would help those infected with COVID-19 and needing to be in isolation and quarantine receive certain help like waivers to defer federal loans, be helped accommodate work from home, and would be helpful for Latino Minnesotans that may be at most risk performing essential work. **Mid-Session Outcome:** This bill was referred to Health and Human Services Finance Policy committees in the House and Senate but has not had any hearings



OTHER BILLS:

Emergency Insulin Assistance Program Establishment SF 3164 /HF 3100

This bill establishes both emergency and long-term programs for diabetic Minnesotans who may find it difficult to afford insulin. Diabetes is a crucial problem for the Latino community as they are at a higher risk of developing diabetes. Some insulin varieties have tripled in price over time and often those who have diabetes, namely type one, already struggle to afford the rising price. **Mid-Session Outcome:** This bill passed in the House with a 75-52 vote. It was referred to Health and Human Services Finance and Policy in the Senate. A virtual conference committee unanimously approved a compromise in the language of the bill which is expected to pass when the session reconvenes on April 14. The agreement still leaves some people behind by requiring diabetics or their guardians to show proof of Minnesota residency with an identification card, driver's license or permit meaning if a minor's parent is undocumented, they wouldn't be able to participate.

Health Disparities Disabilities Inclusion HF 3079/ SF 2947

MCLA supports this bill that would add disabilities to the focus of health disparities adding certain populations to community grants targeting health disparities. This would add the Commission of the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing to the state community partnerships plan. This bill would allow grants to be awarded to populations of color and American Indian communities. **Mid-Session Outcome:** This bill was first heard in the House Health and human Services Policy, referred to the Senate Health and Human Services Finance and Policy committees, and received its second reading on March 9th in the House.

Establishing Rural Training Programs HF 3966/ SF 3107

This bill seeks to establish University of Minnesota rural training programs for physicians and nurses to create a grant program to increase rural access to prenatal care and appropriating money for clinic and community hospitals in rural communities. **Mid-Session Outcomes:** This bill was referred to Health and Human Services Policy Committee in the House and in the Senate, it was referred to the Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee.

Children's School Linked Mental Health Grants SF4263

This bill would appropriate money for school-linked mental health grants and would allocate \$10,381,000 to the Department of Human Services. **Mid-Session Outcome:** This bill was introduced but has not had any hearings.

Nonprofit Organizations Assisting Communities in Healthy Living Initiatives HF 4394

This bill appropriates money for grants to nonprofit organizations to equitably educate, guide, and assist people and communities, especially diverse, multicultural, senior, disables or other disadvantaged communities, through health living initiatives. **Mid-Session Outcome:** This bill was referred to the Health and Human Services finance division committee of the House and of the Senate but has not had any hearings.

To expand MN Care eligibility HF 4118 /SF 4154

Mid-Session Outcome: referred to health and human services finance and policy committee in the Senate and Commerce in the House but has not had a hearing.

EDUCATION



MCLA has been focused on developing a comprehensive approach, grounded in community recommendations, that emphasizes a holistic method in our work in addressing the achievement and opportunity gaps. These four-core pillars of focus in the area of education are:

- Early Childhood Development and Education
- Addressing the Achievement Gap Inside of the Classroom
- Addressing the Achievement Gap Outside of the Classroom (ie. wrap around services and supports for families)
- College Readiness and Addressing Access Barriers to High Level Education

Our four-core pillars guide MCLA's intentional efforts in working more broadly with decision makers to identify short-term and long-term strategies needed to address the educational disparities that have persisted for over two decades in Minnesota.

Several initiatives and policy proposals that MCLA tracked and supported during the session were key agenda items prioritized by the Minnesota House of Representatives, such as the Increase Teachers of Color Act, English Language Learner program funding, and trauma-informed professional development for teachers. There was significant attention placed on efforts and initiatives to close the state's persistent achievement and opportunity gaps.

On the Senate side, there was significant emphasis placed on literacy with focus placed on the pre-k through grade 3 age group in the E12 Finance and Policy committee. The emphasis on literacy in the early grades is prudent as it is widely accepted by education experts, researchers and educators that a child's ability to read by third grade is a key indicator of how the child will perform throughout the rest of their educational experience.

The impact on policy and legislation this session and the foreseeable future will presumably be focused on the response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ultimate outcomes and impact that the pandemic will have on our nation and state is still yet to be determined. However, the governor and legislators have been working diligently in a bipartisan manner to mitigate the loss of life and other detrimental outcomes for Minnesotans across the state.

Key educational provisions in **HF4531/SF4451**, passed in both houses on March 26, 2020, include:

- Suspension of Work Study Statute and Minnesota Rules, to all allow payments of State Work Study funds to students during declared disasters or a Peacetime Declaration/State of Emergency
- Temporary suspension of SELF rules to provide flexibility to administer the loan program to meet the needs of students, borrowers and cosigners.
- For qualified childcare providers, propose grants of \$4,500 for providers serving children. Family childcare center who are able to serve children for more than 10 hours to accommodate emergency workers could receive an additional \$1,000.

It is anticipated that issues to be addressed in education include but are not limited to providing for compensation for hourly school employees and allowing entities that contract with schools to provide services to be reimbursed for paying their employees, as a result of COVID-19 related school closures.

EDUCATION



2020 INCREASE TEACHERS OF COLOR ACT

MCLA has maintained its leadership role in advocacy on this proposed legislation. Coordinated efforts with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH), Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (CAPM), in addition to the TOCAIT coalition, help lead to prioritization of this legislation on the house side. Since 2017, the top priority in education uniting the four Councils has been the need to increase the percentage of teachers of color and American Indian teachers in Minnesota.

On February 19, 2020, **HF3201** was heard in the House Education Policy Committee as one of the first bills to receive action in this committee this session. Furthermore, HF3201 was the first bill to be heard in the Education Finance Division and received equal bipartisan support. As of March 30, 2020, there has been no hearing on any ITCA bills in the respective committees in the senate.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING FUNDING

While the EL student population continues to grow, the state has lagged in meeting the demand of the necessary resources to support our EL students. **HF448** is a significant step in addressing challenges that exist for educators in ensuring our EL students receive the equitable support needed. Key provisions of this proposed legislation are:

- Increase in funding from current \$704 per EL student to \$1400 per EL student per year
- Increase in multipliers for schools with high EL populations from the current \$200 to \$1000 per student
- In total, this bill would increase funding the current \$59million in EL funding to \$142million annually, ensuring proper supports are in place and build capacity of existing programs that work for EL students.

On February 27, 2020, the Education Finance Division heard HF448 and laid over for possible consideration to the chair's omnibus bill. As of March 30, 2020, no action has been taken on the senate version of the bill.

TRAUMA-INFORMED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOL STAFF

HF3556 is a significant step in the right direction. Key provision in this legislation include:

- Providing grants to eligible districts fund trauma-informed and systematic professional development for all staff who work with students, including all principals and administrators, to support students with adverse childhood experiences, and to promote restorative practices and non-exclusionary discipline in schools.
- Prioritization of the grants must be given to schools within districts with large discipline disparities identified by the Department of Human Rights.
- Plans to implement trauma-informed support programs may include: training in trauma-responsive practices, training about adverse childhood experiences, extra profession development days, or other outreach to students or families who have experienced trauma

On March 3, 2020, HF3556 the Education Finance Division heard the bill and moved the bill to be considered in the chair's omnibus bill. MCLA submitted a letter of support to committee members ahead of them meeting. As of March 30, 2020, SF3638 has not been on an agenda in the Senate E12 Finance and Policy committee.



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