

# 2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION RECAP

JUNE 2022







# OVERVIEW

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## **2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION ADJOURNED WITH UNFINISHED WORK AND LIMITED GAINS FOR LATINO MINNESOTANS AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR**

The 2022 legislative session adjourned on May 23 with some critical bills passed, but with no agreements on how to invest a historic projected \$9.3 billion budget surplus in major government areas (education, public safety, health and human services, and transportation). Even when both chambers arrived at an unprecedented bipartisan deal to use the state's surplus to cut \$4 billion in taxes, the bills didn't advance since the framework agreement reached between Governor Walz and legislative leaders was not finalized before the session's adjournment.

Although it wasn't mandated by the State Constitution, the Legislature dismissed a momentous opportunity to effect long term impact and make strategic investments to support Minnesota families, students and schools, small businesses and renters, and fund public policy measures while bolstering the state's infrastructure.



# OVERVIEW

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But before the end of the regular session, a key bipartisan agreement benefiting both employers and workers was achieved after many months of negotiations. On the one hand, the deal included the allocation of \$500 million to pay frontline workers affected by the pandemic which will somehow compensate the risky work undertaken by hundreds of Latino workers during the pandemic. The allocation is half of the original funding proposed (\$750 per worker), but it includes a longer list of workers affected by the pandemic. The deal also included spending \$2.7 billion to replenish the state unemployment insurance fund and avoid payroll tax hikes on businesses.

MCLA tracked numerous bills during the session and identified approximately 50 bills in our priority areas (including the Council's recommended legislation) that would have had a positive impact on our communities and other communities of color. Unfortunately, not too many of these provisions were included in the omnibus bills, and those that were included only made it to the House versions. Of all the bills that were signed into law by Governor Walz, only some will have a positive impact on Latino communities if the departments overseeing and administering these funds and policies make sure to include Latino organizations and communities.

## **Some of the new legislation that will have the potential to benefit Latino/a/e communities include:**

- Covid-19: workers' compensation eligibility presumption extended
- Expanding high-speed internet access through a statewide broadband grant program
- Drought relief for farmers
- Creation of a subcabinet and advisory council to combat opioid's addiction
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) research and caregiver support programs appropriation
- Mental health programs connected to schools and youth shelters
- Student data privacy
- Veterans funding with bonuses for military service and veterans' homes
- Non-discrimination in access to health insurance for organ transplants

Unfortunately, after almost two decades of continued legislative work, the efforts from community members and allies to pass driver licenses for all, which is one of the main priorities for Latino families, didn't advance this session.

Conversations between legislative leaders and the Governor are being held for a potential special session in June to act on a series of provisions and omnibus deemed important to address inequities and challenges that affected Latinos and communities of color disproportionately. As of the end of May, the Governor was still hopeful that his office, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate Majority Leader can reach agreements to call a special session.

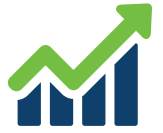
In the meantime, MCLA presents the outcomes of our work at the legislature. All six initiatives led by MCLA were bipartisan in nature and had hearings in most committees, with testifiers from the community directly involved in partnership with the Council. Below are the outcomes of the work led by the legislative team.





## POLICY AREA:

# TAXES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



This session, the Council's legislative agenda included a set of bills that would protect and help grow the economic outcomes of Latinos in Minnesota. The goal for this session was to pass legislation that would directly impact the ability for Latinos to build a better life and financial future. All the bills listed below counted with bipartisan support and were heard in Committee.



## CONSUMER PROTECTION BILLS

The following set of consumer protection bills were not included in the Vehicle Omnibus Bill due in part of a strong opposition from the Minnesota Auto Dealers Association.

**HF2823/SF2622** – This bill would have required used car dealerships to inform consumers if a “kill switch” had been installed in the cars that they are selling, and under which circumstances they would use it. This proposal was heard in the House Commerce Committee and laid over for possible inclusion. At the end of session, the House Commerce Committee did not include this provision in the Omnibus bill.

## LATINO VETERANS BILL

**HF3096/SF2639** – This bill would exclude Latino and other Veterans from paying taxes on their Social Security. This proposal was heard in the Senate Taxes Committee and laid over for possible inclusion. Although not supported by the House Taxes Committee, at the end of session, the Taxes Conference Committee adopted a measure to not tax Social Security income for Minnesota seniors, including the group of Mexican American Veterans that brought this issue to the Council's attention. The session ended without a floor vote on this Omnibus bill in either Chamber.





## POLICY AREA:

# TAXES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**HF2824/SF3835** – This bill would have required that used car dealerships have the price of the vehicle accessible to consumers prior to them expressing interest in said vehicle. The price can be displayed on the windshield, available online, or in some other way. This proposal was heard in the House Commerce Committee and laid over for possible inclusion. At the end of session, the House Commerce Committee did not include this provision in the Omnibus bill.

**HF2825/SF2624** – This bill would have eliminated the bait-and-switch practice that Latinos have become victims to when buying a vehicle by requiring that a used car sale transaction be conducted entirely in the language in which it was started. This proposal was heard in the House Commerce Committee and laid over for possible inclusion. At the end of session, the House Commerce Committee did not include this provision in the Omnibus bill.



## COSMETOLOGY BILL

**HF3155/SF3363** – This bill would create a new Hair Technician License in the state of Minnesota. This is a critical need for Latino cosmetologists that have identified it as their main barrier to becoming licensed to practice in the state of Minnesota. If passed, this bill would remove barriers for the Minnesota Latino population towards becoming licensed Hair Technicians and would allow Latino salon owners to have fully licensed staff. This bill was included in the House and Senate State Government Omnibus bills. The State Government Conference Committee adopted our amended version of the proposal which would make the new Hair Technician license available one year sooner than originally proposed and ensured that new barriers would not be created. Unfortunately, the session ended without a floor vote on this Omnibus bill in either Chamber. We are hopeful that the Governor will call for a Special session and the legislature will vote on this bill.

Additionally, the Council was also active in the efforts to provide a one-time compensation to Frontline workers. Our involvement was to ensure that industries where lower-income Latinos have a high participation are recognized as essential and that ITIN users would be included in the program. This was approved by the House and Senate and signed into law by Governor Walz. The Council continues its activities and has partnered with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry to provide feedback on the application and implementation process.





**POLICY AREA:**  
**EDUCATION**



For the 6th successive year, the three State Ethnic Councils (SEC) and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), under MCLA leadership, worked together in strong partnership with the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers (TOCAIT) to advocate for the Increase Teachers of Color Act of 2022.

ITCA 2022 is a set of comprehensive and interconnected policy provisions and investments that are necessary to address the persistent shortage of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color teachers in Minnesota. If Minnesota students today had equitable access to teachers who reflect students’ diversity, there would be 22,000 BIPOC teachers instead of the fewer than 3,000 we have today.

Through multiple collaborations, MCLA provided both chamber’s committees on Education and Higher Education with several joint letters of support for ITCA, as well as written and oral testimony during the committee hearing process. This support was supplemented by regular meetings with all three bill authors as well as committee chairs in both legislative bodies. Part of our strategy for this session was the cloning of the bill for the Senate (SF3804 Sen. Abeler, SF3132 Sen. Kunesh) to increase bipartisan support.

Of the four omnibus packages, the House Omnibus for E-12 (Chair Davnie, HF4300) was the most comprehensive iteration of ITCA. In Higher Ed, both chambers had the same iteration of ITCA.

E12 Budget Proposals	2022 ITCA Proposed for FY23	House Proposed for FY23	Senate Proposed for FY23	Gov. Proposed for FY23
Grow Your Own grants	\$27M	\$20.5M	\$0	\$20M
Collaborative Urban & Greater MN Educators of Color grants (CUGMEC)	\$3M	\$0	\$0	No increase
Concurrent Enrollment—Intro to Teaching grants	\$1M	\$0	\$0	No increase
Closing Educational Opportunity Gaps grant	\$5M	\$0	\$0	No increase
Higher Ed Budget Proposals				
Underrepresented Student Teacher grants	\$2.5M	\$1M	\$1M	No increase
Aspiring Teachers of Color Scholarship Program	\$10M	\$0	\$0	No increase

**Source:** MCLA based on the Coalition of Teachers of Color analyses, Gov office data release and House bill summary comparisons

# POLICY AREA: EDUCATION



## SESSION OUTCOMES

After several hearings in the House E12 and Higher Education committees and no Senate hearing, ITCA's fate laid in the hands of Conference Committees which began in early May. In partnership with the Coalition, MCLA adopted a guidance-focused strategy in support of ITCA provisions. Unfortunately, no agreement had been made by the time the deadline for the 2022 session and no bill was passed. At this time, it is clear that a Special Session would be required, and we are confident that all parties will return to complete unfinished business.

It is unfortunate that the needs of our community are considered "controversial" thus being removed from the E12 bill. It is that approach that prevents Minnesota from closing the achievement gap. Access to equitable education is a fundamental

right that should be attainable by every child in Minnesota. There was a missed opportunity to help with the teacher workforce shortage by not fully funding the Grow Your Own, CUGMEC, Concurrent Enrollment—Intro to Teaching grants and the Closing Educational Opportunity Gaps grant. Helping with the teacher workforce shortage is one way to help with one of the mental health components the teachers are experiencing due to the workload increase from having to take on other assignments.

Other missed opportunities that did not involve money was the adoption of the following policies:

- World's Best Workforce which amends statute to expect that districts strategic plans focus on closing opportunity gaps for students and employees.
- Curriculum Policy: new statute prohibits





## POLICY AREA: EDUCATION



discrimination or discipline for educating about persons from protected classes.

- Licensure Rules and Probationary Periods: amends statute to attract TOCAIT from other states and reduce probationary period to 1 year for teachers with at least 3 consecutive years in a single district or charter school.

### OUTCOMES IF ITCA PROVISIONS HAD PASSED

As of 2021 there were 2,500 teachers in Minnesota with a Tier 2 license, 539 of those are BIPOC teachers. If the provisions in ITCA that address the barriers for these teachers to move up to Tier 3, we would have been able to retain those 539 teachers in our school systems as they would no longer need to be let go after they were no longer able to renew their license after their 3rd term.

Based on [data and analysis](#) by the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSBI), currently, the number of Tier 2 teachers actively holding an assignment (working in an instructional capacity in a public school) is 1,911. There are, however, 2,533 people holding a Tier 2 license or permission. In other words, there

are 622 Tier 2 teachers who are not currently teaching in the public schools' systems.

The same PELBSI analysis indicates that there are about 4,500 Tier 1, Tier 2, OFP, IPP teachers who are filling assignments left by Tier 3 and Tier 4 licensed teachers who are not serving in an instructional capacity (maybe they are administrators, left the profession, or are in charter/private schools).

Also, PELBSI states that if 15% of Tier 3 and Tier 4 teachers with active licenses were to re-enter the profession, it would displace all Tier 1 and Tier 2 assignments. In other words, Tier 1 and Tier 2 teachers are filling more than 10,000 assignments. Specifically to Tier 2, Tier 2 teachers are filling nearly 4,000 assignments with 1,911 teachers.

If this trend continues, it will have a catastrophic impact on all students in Minnesota. The need to pass legislation such as ITCA would have a positive impact on the teacher shortage. MCLA strongly urges for action to be taken before we lose more teachers, especially teachers of color who are leaving the classroom at a higher rate due to lack of support and continued barriers in place.

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## OTHER BILLS

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Other bills that did not pass this year and need to be reconsidered in future sessions:

- The creation of an Office for New Americans in the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
- A needed Office of Enterprise Translations in the Department of Administration
- Translation services for the Legislative Coordinating Commission
- Grants for the Healthy Child Development Program
- Main Street Economic Revitalization (grants and loans for development or redevelopment of real property or capital improvements)
- Expansion of Minnesota Care to include more vulnerable communities regardless of immigration status
- Paid Family and Medical Leave
- Drivers Licenses for All

## CONCLUSION

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As Minnesota becomes more diverse with most of the state population's growth coming from communities of color, the needs of Latino families continue to increase after two years of pandemic and a shaky economy despite a projected budget surplus and relatively low unemployment levels. In this new context, if we truly believe that we cannot go back to a "normal" pre-pandemic situation, state government needs to play a crucial role in investing in the state's residents and future workforce. We need to be visionary and bold for Minnesota to remain economically competitive, and a place that welcomes and retains its human and social capital. More equitable and inclusive concerted efforts at the legislature are needed to secure the wellbeing of the generations to come.



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