

## MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE TO ADDRESS PAID FAMILY AND SICK LEAVE THIS SESSION

Democratic lawmakers hope to make paid family and sick leave more than a privilege in Minnesota. This session, Democrats plan to push through legislation offering all workers paid family or medical leave. If passed, the legislation would make Minnesota only the fourth state, along with California, New Jersey and Rhode Island, to offer all workers paid family or sick leave benefits.

The proposed bill would establish a state insurance program that would offer employees up to 80% of their pay for up to 12 weeks of leave to care for a newborn or a family member, or to recover from a serious illness. The cost of the \$461 million proposed program would be paid through a new tax on both employees and employers. Employees would be taxed per week based on income, which employers would match. For example, an employee earning \$44,000 per year would contribute \$1.70 per week, or \$88.40 per year, to the program. A study conducted by the University of Minnesota and the Institute for Women's Policy Research determined nearly 136,000 workers in Minnesota would benefit from the program each year.

Advocates of paid family and sick leave state the program will modernize Minnesota's workplaces and make Minnesota a more attractive state for workers. Currently, only 13% of employees in Minnesota get access to paid family leave.

Critics of the program point to the hardships employers would face by the lack of flexibility of this one-size-fits-all approach. The program would be mandatory for all employers who do not have a matching plan in place. For many small employers, imposing mandatory family and sick leave would create a financial hardship. Republicans who control the Minnesota House state they are working on their own proposal, noting any workable paid family and sick leave measure will require bipartisan support.