



Minnesota Inter-County Association

(651)222-8737 | www.mica.org

Sent Via Email

March 1, 2021

Representative Ruth Richardson
403 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Richardson:

The Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA) shares the values underlying HF1200, and the importance of ensuring all employees have reasonable access to paid leave benefits when needed to care for themselves, their family-members, and to address unanticipated life crisis.

Within those shared values, we respectfully request that HF1200 be amended to allow employers to coordinate the use of accrued paid leave, with any new paid leave benefits.

Member counties typically provide more generous paid time-off benefits than many employers already, and several counties have begun offering additional paid leave akin to the benefits envisioned under HF1200. As constructed, however, HF1200 offers little recognition of benefits employers already provide.

Amending HF1200 to allow employers the option of requiring employees to use at least a portion of an employee's accrued paid leave, before using the new state program, would ensure existing leave benefits continue to be utilized to support employee wellness and effective workplaces. Further, because HF1200 could allow an employee up to 24 weeks of paid leave each year (*12 weeks of medical leave and 12 weeks of paid parental leave*), in addition to accrued leave time, allowing employers broader flexibility to respond to leave requests to avoid potential staff shortages for critical services.

The proposed 'opt-out' provisions of HF1200 would ('may') allow employers to deduct up to 50 percent of the annual premiums paid from employee wages, At the same time, the bill require premiums to be paid for all employees, or no employees if the employer qualifies to substitute a private plan. Recognizing that counties engage with multiple bargaining units, we urge amending HF1200 to require ('must') premiums be shared by the employer and employees, or alternatively allowing the 'opt-out' provisions to be applied to subgroups of employees.

Thank you for considering these concerns as HF1200 progresses through the committee and legislative process.

Sincerely,

Matt Massman, Executive Director
Minnesota Inter-County Association