



Rep. Ruth Richardson
403 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 1, 2021

Dear Representative Richardson,

On behalf of the 835 members of the League of Minnesota Cities, we would like to share the following comments on your bill, HF1200, which would provide for a paid family and medical benefit insurance program.

Last biennium, the League offered comments on a similar paid family leave bill that progressed through the legislature. While several of our concerns have been addressed in HF1200, below are issues that remain.

The opt out provision does not provide for a subgroup of city employees to opt out. Cities negotiate with multiple collective bargaining units and one unit may want to opt out while another may want to utilize the program and subsequently pay the tax to do so. We suggest adding language which allows a bargaining unit of employees to opt out of the program if their benefits meet the requirements of the bill. Additionally, it is unlikely that any city would be approved for an opt out given the amount of leave allowed by the program. So while our members provide comprehensive, thorough benefits and leave programs, it is extremely unlikely that any city would be able to meet the threshold established in this language to opt out.

Total of 24 weeks of paid leave. The bill allows an employee to take both 12 weeks of medical leave and 12 weeks of paid parental leave in the same year. This may make it very difficult to provide essential city services by police and fire. We suggest amending the bill to allow an employer to deny leave in situations that create an undue hardship to the employer.

Requirement to use employer-provided paid leave before applying to DEED. An employee who uses the leave provided by this program could return to employment and immediately take additional paid leave or vacation, thereby extending beyond the 12 (or 24) weeks allowed by this proposal. It is also unclear how this program would interact with the earned sick and safe time provisions of the legislation, with which the League has concerns. We suggest adding language which allows employers the option to require the use of all or most of an employee's accrued paid leave before utilizing the state program.

Two week waiting period for notification from the DEED. It will be very difficult for an employer to assist an employee needing to take leave and accommodate the leave if neither the employee nor employer know whether the application has been approved by DEED for two weeks after leave has been applied for. We suggest amending the bill to require DEED to respond within five working days to an application for paid leave.

Thank you for considering these remaining concerns as your bill progresses through the committee process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary N. Carlson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Gary Carlson
League of Minnesota Cities