



May 3, 2021

The Honorable Eric R. Pratt, Chair  
Senate Jobs and Economic Growth Finance and Policy Committee  
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3219  
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Mohamud Noor, Chair  
House Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy  
379 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Pratt, Chair Noor, and Members of the Conference Committee for SF1098,

The Minnesota Catholic Conference, the public policy voice for the Catholic Church in Minnesota, writes to thank you for your inclusion of the **Earned Sick and Safe Time** and **Emergency Rehire and Retention** language in the House version of the Omnibus Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy bill and ask that both be included in the final Conference Committee Report.

The employer/employee relationship is a reciprocal one that carries with it rights and duties on the part of both actors. An employee is responsible for fulfilling his or her commitments to an employer by providing honest labor that produces good goods and good services. The employer is responsible for treating his or her employees justly and providing good work and fair pay that is consistent with each person's dignity and personal obligations to family. (Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church §§ 2427-36.)

**Support Earned Sick and Safe Time (House Articles 9 and 10)**

Allowing employees to earn one hour of paid earned sick and safe time for every 30 hours worked would not only help family life, but also send the message that children and families are real priorities within our society. Illness in one's life or family is inevitable. Caring for newborns, children, the sick, and the elderly (and being cared for ourselves) is a privileged place in which we grow as persons and in our own humanity. It is an integral part of family life that must be respected and promoted.

Public policy should protect people who must take time away from their jobs to handle serious family responsibilities. Working people need the security to know that they have at least some time to recover from illness or care for family members without forfeiting their means of self-sufficiency and sustenance. We encourage you to stand up for the dignity of the human person and protect the laborer by aligning our state's employment laws with the common good.

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**Support Emergency Rehire and Retention (House Article 11)**

Additionally, we remain supportive of emergency and rehire and retention, or “Right to Recall” as a common-sense concept that protects displaced workers and allows them the opportunity to get their jobs back when hospitality-related businesses rebound. We understand that employers appreciate as much flexibility as possible, but employees affected by COVID-19 restrictions should have first right of refusal when businesses bring back employees.

Many employers, including large businesses, make a commitment to their employees and seek to help them flourish. Unfortunately, other employers use any excuse possible to shed older employees and those higher on the pay scale to hire cheaper labor at entry-level wages. “At-will” employment arrangements can be abused irrespective of business size. Businesses re-opening after the pandemic interruption should recall those long-time employees whose labor helped them build a successful enterprise in the first place.

Employees are not simply commodities from whom employers extract utility. They are persons with dignity who belong to a web of relationships and who have other responsibilities and duties as a result of those relationships. Employers should respect those responsibilities, including the responsibility of caregiving.

When employers fail to protect the dignity and legitimate rights of workers, the state can step in to ensure that there is justice in employment relationships and to create a minimum set of standards that employers are required to meet.

We ask that, as you deliberate, please keep these two articles in mind and include them in the legislation you send to the Governor.

Respectfully submitted,



Ryan E. Hamilton  
Government Affairs Associate

CC: The Honorable Rob Ecklund; The Honorable Liz Olson; The Honorable Kayla Berg; The Honorable Rod Hamilton; The Honorable Jason Rarick, The Honorable Karin Housley, The Honorable Rich Draheim, The Honorable Kent Eken