

March 22, 2021

To the honorable members of the House Tax Committee:

On behalf of the 43,000 workers represented by AFSCME Council 5, we write to express our support for HF 1335, which establishes a fifth tier for income taxes. We also want to thank Representative Her for carrying this vitally important legislation; meeting the needs of all working families in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring stability in our state budget long term requires bold leadership and investing in programs and services.

Fully recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic will require across the board investments to alleviate the direct and secondary impacts the virus has had on our economy and society. Essential workers who have been on the front lines of this fight, businesses impacted by mitigation measures, school employees at all levels working to make up for lost time, our decimated child care provider network, our transportation and communications infrastructure are a few examples which require massive, long-term investments. One-time federal stimulus aid, though helpful, is not a long-term solution.

This proposal will make our tax system for income tax more progressive by asking those who have benefited the most to pay a little bit more. Pandemic millionaires can afford to help our entire state recover from COVID-19.

It will also help provide the stability in our state budget to make popular investments to help working people such as Paid Family and Medical Leave, Earned Sick and Safe Time, affordable child care, health care and prescription drugs, and investments to ensure safety in all workplaces.

The past year has exacerbated health, economic, and employment disparities across race, gender, and geography, and our members are calling on the legislature to make substantive reforms so all of us can recover from COVID-19. We know that in order to rebuild without leaving anyone behind, we must get the wealthy to pay their fair share.

Please pass HF 1335 so we can invest in a more equitable future for Minnesota.

In Solidarity,

Handwritten signature of Julie A. Bleyhl in black ink.

Julie Bleyhl, Executive Director

Handwritten signature of Ethan Vogel in black ink.

Ethan Vogel, Legislative Director