

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

My name is Rev. Corinne Freedman Ellis and I serve as Minister of Congregational Life at Macalester Plymouth United Church. I also happen to be the mom of a brilliant and wild 20-month-old who has complex medical needs. My own personal experience and the experiences of those with whom I minister lead me to the strong conviction that every single Minnesotan needs paid family and medical leave.

I was lucky to receive 12 weeks of leave at 75% pay when my daughter was born. My friends in similar jobs with similar responsibilities and salaries have received anywhere from 6-16 weeks of leave at anywhere from 0-100% pay. And we are the lucky ones. 1 in 4 women in Minnesota return to work 2 weeks after giving birth. That is not safe, just, or appropriate. Research shows - and my experience corroborates - that shorter, lower-paid leaves place women at a far higher risk for postpartum depression, anxiety, and psychosis. I've had congregation members leave the workforce because they weren't able to access the leave they needed to recover and bond with their babies.

I am concerned about SF4352 because it fails to guarantee paid family and medical leave to every Minnesotan. The most privileged families are already the most likely to have access to leave, which perpetuates this vicious cycle of inequality. If we leave this up to private insurance companies, this will only exacerbate that cycle of inequality. This is a matter of faith for me. It's about showing love and compassion especially to those on the margins, as Jesus did. But even apart from our faith, it just makes sense. A workforce that is able to take time away to heal, bond, and care for family members is a workforce that is happier, healthier, and more productive. Everyone wins.

To our senators: I encourage you all to lead boldly on this issue. We are seeing in the face of COVID-19 that there is an enormous cost to a system that disenfranchises the most vulnerable among us, perpetuates health inequity, and leaves Minnesotans to fend for themselves. I implore you to fight for paid family and medical leave for all.

Sincerely,
Corinne Freedman Ellis
Saint Paul, MN

Dear Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl

I am writing to let you know I believe every working Minnesotan is entitled to Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML). I believe this because I had this benefit when I was working and it allowed me to be with my father at the end of his life. I did not have to choose between my father and a pay check. I am single and my only source of income. I would not have had that amazing opportunity otherwise.

SF4352 does not guarantee PFML to all Minnesotans but continues to leave many workers at the mercy of their employer or insurance company. One thing Covid-19 has taught me is that the "system" was broken long before Covid-19 and this health crisis has shown us that ALL of us can and do get sick....

Minnesota workers should not have to choose between going to work sick or having a pay check. This is ultimately a public health issue.

Minnesotans need the Senate to act boldly and make sure every Minnesotan is treated with respect and dignity...no matter what.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Stoessel
St Paul, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

We believe every Minnesotan no matter what we look like or what's in our wallets deserves paid family and medical leave.

Our concern is that SF4352 does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave to all of us, but instead leaves our ability to care in the hands and whims of private insurance executives.

We ask that the you and the Senate lead boldly to ensure every Minnesotan has access to paid family and medical leave.

Sincerely,
Pam and Bill DeLaittre
Bloomington, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

Dear Mr. Bohl, I am advocating that the senate pass a genuine paid family leave bill now. In this pandemic it has become blatantly obvious such a measure is necessary. Assigning responsibility to privately held Insurance companies who answer to their shareholders is a dereliction of duty by elected officials whose concern should be the well being of their constituents. Thanks you for your consideration, Sincerely, Belle Scott

Sincerely,
Bob And Belle Scott
Minneapolis, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

I am very concerned that SF4352 does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave to all Minnesotans. It leaves the ability to care for loved ones with decisions made by private insurance executives whose first priority is typically their companies bottom lines.

A few years ago, my young daughter was diagnosed with a life threatening illness I was fortunate to have paid family time off. During that time, I often thought about how fortunate I was to be able to be by my daughters side and not worry about not getting paid or losing my job. It took away one stressor during a time of great stress.

I believe that all Minnesotans no who they are or where they work should have paid family and medical leave.

I ask that the Senate make this a reality now. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Karen Klein
Minneapolis, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

As a person of faith, I believe EVERY Minnesotan deserves paid family and medical leave.

As the bill now stands, SF4352 does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave to all of us, but instead leaves our ability to care in the hands of private insurance executives.

The Senate needs to lead boldly to ensure every Minnesotan has access to paid family and medical leave.

Sincerely,
Vernita and Dale Kennen
Roseville, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

As a woman of color and person of faith, I believe that every Minnesotan is a child of God and as such, endowed with the right to be treated with respect and dignity. This means that all of us, no matter what we look like or how much we earn, are entitled to have equal access to the resources that God has provided and blessed us with. My own daughter-in-law gave birth to her son and had to return to work within days of giving birth because her employer provided no paid leave. That's why I believe that every working person deserves to have paid family and medical leave. And, I'm concerned that SF4352 does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave for all of us. Instead it puts the ability to care for ourselves in the hands of and at the whims of private insurance executives. This is not right. I call on the Senate to lead boldly at this critical time in all our lives to ensure that every Minnesotan has access to paid family and medical leave and doesn't have to make the choice of losing their job or caring for their child or a loved one.

Sincerely,
Arline Datu
Saint Paul, MN

Dear Senators,

If you say you are pro family, then prove you mean what you say. Give ALL FAMILIES paid family and medical leave.

Private insurance companies don't care one bit whether people are paid for family and medical leave, I believe they would look for any loop hole not to pay. I'm concerned that SF4352 will not assure that families get the help they need, when they need it most.

We need to assure that ALL FAMILIES have paid family and medical leave.

Sincerely,
Jeannie Hultman
Inver Grove Heights, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

I believe that every Minnesotan deserves paid family leave and medical leave. Skin color or economic status is not a determining factor. Private insurance companies should not be making this decision. The Senate needs to be bold and caring to make this access possible.

Sincerely,
Audrey Taatjes
Saint Cloud, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

I'm writing to encourage your committee to reject SF4352, because it does not guarantee paid family and medical leave to all of us, but instead leaves our ability to care in the hands and whims of private insurance executives. Instead, I ask you to chart a different course that ensures every Minnesotan--at every job--has access to paid family and medical leave.

I'm a pastor (and head of staff) for a small church in the Morningside neighborhood of Edina. We have paid family and medical leave practices for our staff, but I see among my members how the inability to take time off to care for loved ones or recover from illness creates greater anxiety and sickness, and therefore workplaces that are less safe for the public. As a congregation, we advocate for a future where every Minnesotan--no matter what we look like, where we work, or what's in our wallet--receives paid family and medical leave.

A comprehensive statewide paid family and medical leave policy is how we "do unto the least of these" in the 21st century, as Jesus instructed his followers in the 1st century.

Sincerely,
Oby Ballinger
Edina, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

[[WRITE YOUR TESTIMONY HERE]]

Some Considerations [[JUST FOR YOUR REFERENCE. DELETE THIS SECTION BEFORE SUBMITTING]]

+ Share why you believe every Minnesotan no matter what we look like or what's in our wallets deserves paid family and medical leave.

+ Express your concern that SF4352 does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave to all of us, but instead leaves our ability to care in the hands and whims of private insurance executives.

+ Demand that the Senate lead boldly to ensure every Minnesotan has access to paid family and medical leave.

Sincerely,
Lynn C. Lang
Saint Cloud, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

Paid family and medical leave ~ should every worker right, not a benefit that can be denied at the whim of private insurance executives. Many workers with young children are put into daycare, where it is easy to contract illnesses. We know how aggressive this can be if the children are not adequately cared for, indeed possibly passing the illnesses around to staff and other families. Parents should be able to put their children or family members well being above all else. We say as a society we care for our children. That should never be compromised.

I believe that people of color are most likely to be affected by making a choice to stay home with a sick child or go to work, fearful that the latter is the only option if they want to hold on to their job.

SF4352 does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave to all, but instead leaves our ability to care in the hands and whims of private insurance executives.

I ask that the Senate lead boldly to ensure every Minnesotan has access to paid family and medical leave.

Sincerely,
JoAnn Mason
Saint Paul, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that everyone needs access to healthcare and paid sick leave, from lawyers to grocery store workers. It has also emphasized the inequalities in our current healthcare system. Unfortunately, SF4352 does not help fix these inequalities because insurance companies will be able to decide who is eligible for paid family and medical leave. I urge you to instead pass legislation that ensures that all Minnesotans, no matter their income level, have access to the paid family and medical leave that they deserve.

Sincerely,
Alex Carroll
Saint Paul, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

I believe every Minnesotan no matter what we look like or what's in our wallets deserves paid family and medical leave. The Covid crisis has shown how important it is for people to stay home from work when they are sick - no one should have to choose between getting a paycheck and getting well. In fact, when people are forced to make this choice, it can be detrimental to our collective public health.

I am concerned that SF4352 does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave to all of us, but instead leaves our ability to care in the hands and whims of private insurance executives.

As someone who cared for her husband as he battled terminal cancer 5 years ago, I also know how important it is for people to be able to care for others who are ill. I was lucky to be by my husband's side until he took his last breath in 2015. Others should have that same right to care for the ones they love.

The Senate must lead boldly to ensure every Minnesotan has access to paid family and medical leave.

Sincerely,
Kathy Gremillion
St Louis Park, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

I am retired so this does not personally affect me. However, when one suffers the consequences of not being able to care for a new or adopted child, personal illness, or care of elders in a family then we are all affected to some degree.

It is often those who work for small companies who are mostly affected. Many of the large companies have plans that will cover necessary leave, however, not always with pay so it becomes a burden for those as well adding to anxiety, stress, mental well-being...all of these things affect one's ability to be the caregiver. Everyone deserves paid family and medical leave.

I feel that SF4352 gives our ability to care for one another in the hands and whims of private insurance executives and simply gives them the ability to sell another product. A product that most people will not be able to afford.

Please hear the pleas of many Minnesotans and lead boldly to ensure every Minnesotan has access to paid family and medical leave.

Sincerely,
Judy Rhein
Saint Paul, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

[[WRITE YOUR TESTIMONY HERE]]

Some Considerations [[JUST FOR YOUR REFERENCE. DELETE THIS SECTION BEFORE SUBMITTING]]

Every Minnesotan no matter what we look like or what's in our wallets deserves paid family and medical leave. Race, religion, sexual orientation and privilege should not be the driving factors

I am concerned that SF4352 does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave to all of us, but instead leaves our ability to care in the hands and whims of private insurance executives.

I urge the Senate to lead lead boldly to ensure every Minnesotan has access to paid family and medical leave.

Sincerely,
Ann Beane
Minneapolis, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

The Senate needs to lead the way on paid family leave and paid sick leave for all. Not just the right of corporations to force people to buy their own policies and be at the mercy of the insurance industry. The proposed bill does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave for all. This is needed all the time, not just in times of crisis as at the present.

Thank you.

Janet B. Humphrey

Saint Paul

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

This latest crisis has clearly illustrated the dire need for paid family and medical leave. The poorest among us are suffering disproportionately because they have no paid leave. SF 4352 doesn't guarantee paid family and medical leave at all. What it does is allow private insurers to be the decision makers.

Some Considerations [[JUST FOR YOUR REFERENCE. DELETE THIS SECTION BEFORE SUBMITTING]]

- + Share why you believe every Minnesotan no matter what we look like or what's in our wallets deserves paid family and medical leave.
- + Express your concern that SF4352 does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave to all of us, but instead leaves our ability to care in the hands and whims of private insurance executives.
- + Demand that the Senate lead boldly to ensure every Minnesotan has access to paid family and medical leave.

Sincerely,
Patricia Wasser
Minneapolis, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

I believe that everyone needs to have the assurance covered by law that they have the capability of receiving paid family medical leave. Leaving this important coverage to the whims of the insurance companies is not a secure way to make certain that workers are covered. Minnesotans need a comprehensive, equitable system which allows them to take care of themselves as well as their families during times of sickness.

The risk of inequities if SF4352 were to become law leaves too many ambiguities for the employees. The Senate should pass a state-wide publicly funded plan which serves the needs of families not the insurance companies.

Sincerely,
Coralie Hunter
Saint Paul, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

COVID-19 has stripped the veneer from our safety net leaving gapping holes for all to see. All Minnesotans, no matter who we are, where we come from, or where we work, need access to Paid Family and Medical Leave: time to bond with a new baby, stay at home when we or a member of our family are ill, or to care for an aging parent. No one should have to choose between family or a pay check.

However, SF4352 that you are considering does nothing to guarantee PFML. Rather it leaves our well-being in the hands and whims of private insurance companies.

I urge you and your fellow Senators to ACT BOLDLY and pass a comprehensive, statewide, publically administered Paid Family and Medical Leave Program that puts us and our families first. The PFML bill passed in the Minnesota House last session would be a good model to follow.

Sincerely,
Kathy Robey
Little Canada, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

After seeing the desperation in families during our present health and financial crisis, and even before this time, seeing my nieces struggle with their families at times of childbirth and countless family illnesses, I urge you to pass paid family and medical leave assurance. I say ASSURANCE, to distinguish from a false INSURANCE, that I sense to be the reality of SF4352. Having been a former classroom teacher, I know of innumerable crisis for children and parents due to this lack of protection. Please do not pass something into law that pretends to be what it isn't. We need an ethical and family focused health care system that we can rely on and trust. Thank you. I beg the Senate to vote strongly in support of real change.

Kathleen Wallenta
Minneapolis, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

I am a retired Human Resources manager and see it mandatory in this era for a short term disability and family leave provision be made available to all the workers of our fine state. As written, SF4352 has holes where private insurance can write out exceptions.

Boldly lead. Close those gaps so that ALL our citizens have the benefits which I and you have had.

Thank you in advance.

Dave Borton
Como Park
St Paul

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

Given what we are currently experiencing, and will for the unforeseeable future, regarding Covid 19, we need the Senate lead boldly to ensure every Minnesotan has access to paid family and medical leave. SF4352 does not guarantee paid family and medical leave for all of us.

We all do better when we do better.

Sincerely,
Joan Haan
Saint Paul, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

I am a family practice physician and understand the deep need Minnesota has for paid family leave. It is only a small fraction of Minnesotans that work for companies that have paid maternity and paternity leave. There is an abundance of scientific knowledge on early brain development that shows how important those first few months are to the developing brain. Early bonding and attachment sets up a lifetime of improved emotional health. The reverse is also true that insecure attachment brings on impaired emotional and cognitive processing difficulties. We need to invest in prevention , not in expensive intervention strategies.

We are seeing in our current coronavirus tragedy that lack of spending early on prevention is causing massive spending on the back treatment and mitigation end. The same is true for early infant health. We can spend a small amount up front or more money on interventions, prisons and other expensive back end programs.

I am tired of politicians not acting on scientific knowledge, on planning for the future and making smart investments. Please support family leave for all Minnesotans.

Karen Hulstrand , MD

Sincerely,
KAREN HULSTRAND
Stillwater, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

I have been told of the proposal that there be an opportunity for folks to purchase insurance to make up the income they lose when taking family and medical leave.

This is not feasible. The people who have the smallest incomes are the ones who need it most. There is no extra money in their wallet or budget to cover insurance costs.

Every Minnesota who is working to provide for themselves and their families deserves paid medical and family leave; otherwise they are left with a hard choice -- do I go to work when I am sick because I need the money for food, or medicine for my child (and in time of COVID possibly passing that disease on to someone else)? Does my loved one lack the care they need because I am working?

SF4352 does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave to all of us, but instead leaves our ability to care in the hands and whims of private insurance executives.

Minnesota can do better than that! The Senate needs to lead boldly to ensure every Minnesotan has access to paid family and medical leave.

Sincerely,
Evelyn Burry
Northfield, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

Please pass a Paid Medical and Family Leave bill that is accessible to all Minnesotans and publicly funded, not funded by insurance companies. The workers who need this bill are most often underinsured or unable to pay for such a benefit in their insurance. Paid FML must not be passed-on to insurance companies. Workers without this benefit often go to work when they are ill and make others ill. And if they stay home because they are too ill, they have no income.

Sincerely,
Barbara Thomalla
Vadnais Heights, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

I am writing to express my deepest concern that the Senate of Minnesota pass a public statewide system that pays for family and medical leave. I have a disabled son who when sick and not able to attend his day training program demands that either I or my wife need to be home. He is 43 years old and this has been our life for that many years. For nine years my aging parents whom I moved to Minnesota from Wisconsin lived in an assisted living facility with the last three years being in memory care. There were many days that either I or my wife needed to be with them because of one of them being ill and the care at the facility always being stretched to the limit and beyond.

For the years that I/we were working, we were fortunate to have employers who allowed us to us time off or our own sick time to care for our family. My wife was less able than I. I support this kind of public system because I know how important it is to be able to be with family when they are ill and not fear that my employment is in jeopardy. Every citizen of this state deserves the same level of ability to care for their family as I/we have had. This current period of virus pandemic ought to bring home very clearly what the need is and there should be no negative votes to support a bill that is a public system which is jointly paid for by employer and employee. This is the only fair way to insure this policy will work.

Sincerely,

James R. Zentner
Inver Grove Heights, MN

Dear Senate Committee Administrator Timothy Bohl,

Minnesotans need a comprehensive, equitable system that allows them to care for themselves and their loved ones when they are sick. My understanding of the above proposed bill shifts the burden of this to the individuals that are currently not afforded this benefit in the form of insurance premiums. This is not a realistic or equitable solution. How can the underemployed afford new insurance premiums? The proposed solution benefits the insurance industry not the individuals.

Please consider the people of Minnesota, not the insurance businesses, when you vote on this issue. I invite you to lead boldly in a manner that would make your ancestors proud of your care for the underserved. Thank you.

Sincerely,
christopher hughes
Arden Hills, MN

Chair of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protections

I believe that family members need paid family and medical leave to care for family during this pandemic. In the long term this preserves employment and helps the economy. Not everyone has the option to work from home. In many cases childcare is not available. Families are taking responsibility for their children's distance education.

I believe every Minnesotan no matter what we look like or what's in our wallets deserves paid family and medical leave.

SF4352 does nothing to guarantee paid family and medical leave to all of us, but instead leaves our ability to care in the hands and whims of private insurance executives.

Barbara Taylor

Saint Paul MN