

May 10, 2023

Chair Mann, Chair Richardson, and Members of the Conference Committee for HF 2 - Paid Family Medical Leave Act:

On behalf of the 29,000 members and family members of Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Minnesota and North Dakota, I am writing in support of HF 2 — the Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) Benefit Insurance Program.

Like the vast majority of Minnesotans, most of our members don't have access to PFML benefits. This means that every day, our members could face the impossible choices between losing a paycheck or caring for a new child, an aging loved one, or themselves.

It is time for workers in all industries, including construction workers, to have access to benefits that allow them to take time off to bond with a new baby, recover from a serious injury, or care for a loved one facing their final days. No different than their friends and neighbors who are employed by Fortune 500 companies, construction workers should not have to choose between their job and their family's health.

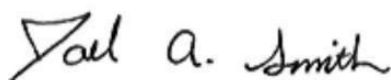
As you may know, since January we have been working to assess how this proposed legislation will impact our members, our health and welfare funds, and Minnesota's construction industry. Thank you for providing us the time and opportunity to figure out how to make the proposed program workable. We appreciate the authors and stakeholders agreeing to the targeted collective bargaining waiver provisions for the construction industry regarding reinstatement rights and maintenance of health insurance. HF 2, with these amendments, will allow our members to take advantage of the benefits of the remaining provisions.

Based on conversations with Laborers' District Councils from states with PFML programs from the West Coast to the East Coast, we are confident the proposed PFML program will be beneficial to our members, the construction industry, and all working Minnesotans. HF 2 has the potential to address several important issues related to women's health, gender justice and racial justice. The proposed PFML program will help Minnesota address its workforce shortage and boost economic growth for the entire state.

Most importantly, the proposed PFML program will allow our members and all working Minnesotans to care for their families and themselves. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, construction workers are seven times more likely to die by suicide or of an opioid overdose than workers in any other profession. When workers have access to leave, they are more likely to seek medical care and support when they need it, which can help prevent serious health problems from becoming worse. This bill will contribute to the health and well being of all Minnesotans.

Thank you for your consideration. We urge you to vote "Yes" for the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act.

Respectfully,



Joel Smith
President and Business Manager