January 11, 2023

The Honorable Members of the Senate
Committee on Jobs and Economic Development
Minnesota Senate Building

Professional Distinction

Personal Dignity

Patient Advocacy

Chair Champion and Committee Members,

With 22,000 members, the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) is the leading voice for professional nursing in the State of Minnesota. As leaders in labor and health care, we are a voice for frontline hospital nurses around the state who deal with the impacts of a lack of paid family and medical leave with both the patients they serve and as workers who often do not have access to that benefit themselves. We urge you to support SF 2, the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act of 2023.

Decades of research and data demonstrate what nurses experience every day in their work: when families have access to paid family and medical leave, they have better health outcomes and can more fully participate in their lives. The Minnesota Department of Health's 2019 white paper on Paid Parental Leave cites that "Access to paid parental leave is linked to fewer infant deaths, increased breastfeeding duration, and improved birth and developmental outcomes. Paid parental leave is also associated with improved maternal mental health, including a decreased likelihood of exhibiting depressive symptoms or psychological distress."

We know that when people have access to this important benefit, the advantages extend beyond individual workers and their families and into our larger society, workforce, and economy. MDH goes on to state "Research shows that paid leave has many economic benefits as well. It increases the likelihood that workers will return to work after childbirth, improves employee morale, reduces costs to employers through improved employee retention, and improves family incomes."

Nearly everyone needs paid family or medical leave at some point in their lives, whether to care for a new child, an aging parent, or themselves. MNA believes that individuals should be able to work *and* care for themselves and their families, and that the paid family and medical leave insurance program included in this bill is a fair, common-sense solution that allows them to do both.

In addition to understanding the impact these policies will have on the health and well-being of Minnesotans, these are also policies that nurses personally deal with in their own profession. Many nurses do not have access paid family and medical leave therefore are regularly postponing starting families or working without pay to care for relatives and themselves. These policies will help to retain nurses while maintaining the well-being of the those who take care of Minnesotans when they are at their sickest.

For the health and economic well-being of patients and nurses across the state, we urge you to support SF 2, the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act.

Sincerely,

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Minnesota Nurses Association

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