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The 24-week paid leave program would be funded by new \$1 billion payroll tax

Today, the National Federation of Independent (NFIB), which represents over 10,000 small businesses in Minnesota, is raising alarm over a proposal to establish a state-run, 24-week paid leave program funded by a \$1 billion payroll tax increase.

The proposal requires small employers and others to fund the state paid leave program, allows employees to take up to 24 weeks of leave per year, and would create a new bureaucracy to manage the program. Initial development and staffing costs for the program will exceed \$85 million, according to a 2019 state fiscal

"This unnecessary mandate will only exacerbate staffing and financial headaches for small businesses in Minnesota," said NFIB State Director John Reyn-"After struggling through the pandemic, the last thing Main Street needs is a \$1 billion payroll tax hike. Our small employers care about their employees and are mindful of what they need. They don't need politicians in St. Paul micromanaging their busi-

Small employers are already facing painful economic headwinds – record inflation, skyrocketing energy costs, labor shortages, supply chain disruptions and many have not fully recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the most recent NFIB Small Business Recovery Survey: • 67% are experiencing

staffing shortages

• 77% have lost sales due

We are in the midst of

legislative committee dead-

lines, with the second dead-

line coming up this Friday.

25th, and our final commit-

tee deadline is April 8th.

As a reminder, here is what

• "The first deadline is

for committees to act favor-

ably on bills in the house of

origin." The bills need to pass all of their policy com-

mittees in either the House

or the Senate or it will not

is for committees to act fa-

vorably on bills, or compan-

ions of bills, that met the

first deadline in the other

house." The bill must pass

all of its policy committees

in the other body or it will

for committees to act fa-

vorably on major appropri-

ation and finance bills." It

needs to be passed out of

the finance committee of its

• Just as a reminder, I

serve as the Republican

Lead member on Higher

Education Finance and Policy, Public Safety and

Criminal Justice Reform

Finance and Policy, and

the main fiscal committee,

Ways and Means, which has to pass all of the ma-

jor appropriation and fi-

nance bills before they get

to the House Floor. Finally

I serve on the Subcommit-

tee on Legislative Process

Reform which spent two

and a half months trying to

reform Chapter 12, the Gov-

ernor's emergency powers.

We do not have budget

targets for a supplemental

budget, which we need in

order to pass supplemental

budget bills. We current-

ly have a \$9.3 billion sur-

plus, with a fully funded \$3

billion reserve, or "rainy

day fund". If we are going

to have robust debates on

spending bills, it is past

time to have public bud-

get targets to avoid anoth-

er situation where a three

person "tribunal" decides

the entire supplemental

• "The third deadline is

not move forward.

issue jurisdiction.

• "The second deadline

move forward.

each deadline requires:

to staffing shortages

• 27% say staffing shortages are worse than 3 months ago (only 6% say better)

In response, small employers are doing everything they can to keep up: 95% have increased starting wages, 91% are working more hours, 62% are offering more overtime, and more than a quarter are increasing paid time off and health insurance benefits.

According to the Employee Benefits Research Institute (EBRI), in 2020, 77% of employees were offered paid vacation and 66% were offered paid sick time.

"Small business owners need flexibility to do the best they can for their business and their employees,' added Reynolds. "It's particularly insulting to poli-

ticians propose a \$1 billion tax hike after failing to stop Unemployment Insurance tax increases caused by the pandemic and government shutdowns.

While the Paid Leave Payroll Tax starts at .6% of wages up to \$147,000 per year, it could increase to any amount necessary to cover claims in future years. Due to higher than expected utilization, Washington State's paid leave program increased its payroll tax by 50% for 2022.

"The massive surge in unemployment claims during the pandemic showed us how quickly these types of programs can become overwhelmed," said Reynolds. "Based on low assumptions about the average worker using the program, it seems almost certain costs will exceed expectations and the payroll tax will go up in future years.'



NEWS FROM THE CAPITOL

Sen. Bruce Anderson

Friends and neighbors,

This week at the Capitol, a bill I authored this session was heard in the Senate Jobs and Economic Growth Finance and Policy Committee. S.F. 3987 would help Minnesotans with disabilities continue to have access to quality job placement services and on the job support services through the Extended Employment (EE) program.

The EE is a great program that provides people with

"Community Dental Care,

a Minnesota Health Care

Programs community clin-

ic established to provide

dental services for under-

served populations, an-

nounced they will open a

new dental clinic in sum-

... ages and abilities in

comprehensive

the region. The clinic will

dental care to all people,

increasing access to oral

health services for thou-

sands of Central Minneso-

ta residents with the most

In 2020, I carried a bill

to provide \$1.4 million for

infrastructure for the clin-

ic, which was ultimately

included in the 2020 bond-

ing bill. Community Dental

Care raised an additional

\$1.1 million to cover the

equipment and start-up

costs, funded by donations

from the Delta Dental of

Otto Bremer Trust, Blue

Cross and Blue Shield of

Minnesota, UCare, Medica,

PrimeWest Health, Health-

Partners, Allina Health

Buffalo Hospital and Cen-

traCare Monticello Hospi-

tal. Community Dental Care

is also seeking an addition-

al \$150,000 in donations to

cover the remaining bud-

The clinic will increase

access to dental care for

thousands of people in our

community on Medical As-

sistance and will be located

in the Wright County Gov-

ernment Center. The bill

was supported by our sur-

rounding counties, as well

is looking for staff. If you

are interested in working

there, you can visit Commu-

nity Dental Care's career

Additionally, the clinic

as Health Partners.

Minnesota

geted costs.

Foundation,

State Rep.

Marion O'Neill

Legislative

Update

mer of 2022. As

to feel connected to their community through gainful employed through a sheltered workshop.

Due to drastic increase munity.

ment. Another organization that would benefit from this bill is the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute (CKRI), which serves people with disabilities and those recovering from serious injuries such as a brain injury, stroke. CKRI has 57 locations throughout Minnesota, including a local branch

port of this funding increase and the important role it would play in fur-

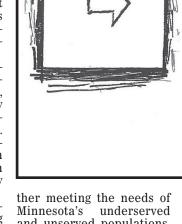
disabilities the opportunity work. I know firsthand how beneficial this program is as I have a daughter who is

in marketplace hourly wages, EE providers are struggling to maintain adequate staff levels. For this reason, my bill would increase EE funding by \$2.285 million for fiscal year 2023 and beyond for a total of \$33.8 million for fiscal years 2024 through 2025. This additional support would be very beneficial to many organizations across Minnesota, including Functional Industries in our own com-

Located in Buffalo, Functional Industries has been providing vocational services to people with barriers to employment for more than four decades. And in this week's Jobs Committee, Lisa Parteh, vice president of community engagement, shared how important EE services are to the people they serve. And especially coming out of the pandemic, Functional Industries has found more people are receiving jobs in their communities, and therefore, in need of additional support to maintain their employ-

in Buffalo.

CKRI shared their sup-



Minnesota's underserved and unserved populations. CKRI also shared how this funding will help providers respond to current employee workforce shortages, as well as general employer

It is a privilege to carry this bill this session to support people living with disabilities.

I want to hear from you, my constituents, on issues that are important to you. Please feel free to reach out to my office with any concerns or ideas you may have. As session moves forward, I will keep your thoughts and concerns in mind as legislation comes before me. You can contact my office at sen.bruce.an derson@senate.mn or 651-296-5981.

Sincerely, **Bruce Anderson**



(Editor's Note: Sending your letter to us by email speeds up our production work because we spend less time typesetting. Whenever possible, please send letters to the editor by email to editor@thedrummer.com or ads@ thedrummer.com, attention Tom or Emily. Please include address and daytime phone number. Thank you.)

To The Editor

I have done my share of traveling and crossed many a railroad crossing. I have never ever found any of them as bad as Buffalo's. The crossing on County Road 12 will take your axle out if you're not careful. The one by Culvers is not any better. When is the RR going to fix them?

I was told they "Fixed" the one by Culvers; it is actually worse. Don't give me any balonev about not being able to fix them when every other town can. Another question, Why are the trains still laying on the horn when this is a "no" horn town? I think we need a city council that will stand up to the RR; currently we don't have one.

Gary Marketon





Minnesota Senate District 30

Sen. Mary Kiffmeyer

Nuclear Power: Affordable, Clean, and **Renewable Energy for Minnesota**

Friends and neighbors, We live with nuclear pow-

er in our back yard and know the benefits and that it has many advantages but few drawbacks. Nuclear is a zero-emission, carbon-free clean energy source. In fact, in just 2019, nuclear energy allowed the United States to avoid more than 476 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Nuclear energy creates an enormous amount of energy using a very small amount of fuel. This results in a small land footprint, which produces more electricity on less land than any other source such as wind or solar.

is a concern Safety brought up in discussion on nuclear power. However, the facts and statistics show it is actually the safest form

of energy production available.

Nuclear waste of spent fuel rods (in the latest research) includes re-cycling and reusing them as an effective source for additional energy. And in this week's Sen-

ate Energy and Utilities Finance and Policy Committee, we heard several presentations on nuclear energy from industry experts who further highlighted its advantages.

One such testifier, Dr. Ashley Finan, director of the National Reactor Innovation Center led by Idaho National Laboratory, spoke to nuclear energy safety and management.

Kiffmeyer

Continued on Page 6



By Emily Vojtech



Outstanding women in Minnesotaend of Women's History Month

Minnesota Property taxes May 90 down:

As March comes to an end, so does Women's History Month. To close out the month, I wanted to take the time to recognize some outstanding women in Minnesota. These are just some of the many inspiring wom-en from Minnesota from the past and present. Hopefully these women will continue to inspire the future women of Minnesota. The women listed below are in no particular order.

Judy Garland- One of the most recognizable names from Minnesota. Judy Garland was famous for her role as Dorothy Gale in M.G.M's film "Wizard of Oz" (1939). Garland was born in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Her childhood home still stands in Grand Rapids as the Judy Garland Museum paying tribute to her and her life.

Judy Garland lived from 1922 to 1969 and per-formed pretty much her entire life. Along with her acting career, Garland was a very talented singer with a beautiful voice. One of my favorite Christmas songs is her version of "Have Your-self a Merry Little Christmas.'

What is most inspiring to me about Judy Garland, is that although she faced a lot of adversity and poor treatment throughout her career, she still worked extremely hard and became one of the most iconic performers of all time. Watching her movies and hearing her sing, you would never guess what was going on behind the scenes. She showed a lot of strength throughout her entire life.

Lindsey Vonn- Burnsville native, and skiing champion, Lindsey Vonn has been an amazing athlete to watch throughout her career. She is one of two women to earn four World Cup Championships (2008, 2009, 2010, 2012). She was named the US Olympic Committee's Sportswoman of the Year in 2010.

According to USA Today, she established the Lindsey Vonn Foundation to provide scholarships, fund camps, and provide inspiration to girls and young women.

The most inspiring thing to me about Lindsey Vonn is her amazingly long and successful skiing career. She made her Olympic debut at 17-years-old and just recently retired in 2019. She was a fierce competitor and seemed to always show great sportsman-

Growing up, I was always looking for female athletes to look up to, and Lindsey Vonn was one of my top ones. She is one of the most influential women in athletics.

Lindsey Whalen- An-

other outstanding athlete from Minnesota that has kept most of her basketball career local. Whalen was a basket-ball star, and now Head Coach of the Minnesota Gopher's Women's Basketball Team, where she played in college. In high school, Whalen played at Hutchinson High School (Hutchinson, MN).

Whalen was a first round WNBA draft pick in 2004 and ended up playing eight years of her professional career with the Minnesota Lynx.

While at the University of Minnesota, attendance at women's basketball games grew during Whalen's career. According to her college statistics, she became The University of Minnesota's alltime leading scorer in 2004. She finished her colligate career with 2,285 points. Her jersey number, 13, was retired at the University of Minnesota in 2005.

Throughout her career she earned many championships and set records in women's basketball.

What is most inspiring to me about Lindsey Whalen is her commitment to the sport and her home state. When she first obtained the head coaching job at the University of Minnesota, she was also still playing in the WNBA, juggling two huge commitments. She has been a huge inspiration to me as an athlete and a coach.

Gigi Marvin- One of the many Gopher women's hockey players that I looked up to growing up has been one of the best to play the game. Marvin grew up playing in Warroad, and received the Let's Play Hockey Ms. Hockey award during her high school career in

Marvin went on to play for the University of Minnesota Women's Hockey team. She is the sixth all-time scoring list with 87 goals, and had 108 assists in her career, leading her total points to be 195 points in her college

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this summer! According to Community Dental Care,

clinic opening in our area

New Area Dental Clinic

There is a new dental Paul, MN 55155.

Please Contact Me

website.

As always, if you need assistance on an issue pertaining to state government or have concerns or ideas about leaislation, my office is available to you. You can e-mail at rep. marion.oneill@house.mn or call my office at 651-296-5063. You can also write a letter to me. My office address at the Capitol is 357 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, St.