



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

ADVOCATING FOR MINNESOTA'S HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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By Hanna Zinn • Feb 14, 2025

Smart Brevity® count: 3 mins...750 words

Happy Friday and Happy Valentine's Day! Hospitality Minnesota had a busy week at the Capitol, testifying in 3 different committees in one day. In this week's GRU I give you all a breakdown of what happened, why it happened, and what's next. I hope you all stay safe in the snow today and have a great weekend.

Registration is LIVE for [Day at the Capitol!](#) Register while there are still spots available!

- Thank you to [Performance Foods](#) for sponsoring this update! [Click here](#) to view all sponsorship options.

Session Snapshot

Hospitality Minnesota made sure our member's voices were heard in three different committees – in just one day.

Up first: On Thursday morning in the House State and Local Government Committee, Angie Whitcomb, President and CEO of Hospitality Minnesota, and Troy Reding, owner of Ally Restaurants, testified in support of [House File 21](#) – Limiting Executive Authority to Declare an Emergency. They spoke of the hardships and uncertainty the industry faced during COVID closures. Watch the hearing [here](#), bill discussion starts at 30:12.



Troy Reding of Ally Restaurants testifies in favor of HF 21, Limiting Executive Authority to Declare an Emergency.

- **Why it matters:** The bill would require a vote of two-thirds in both the House and Senate for the Governor to declare an emergency for longer than 14 days.
- **What's next:** The bill was passed on party lines 7-6 with it now moving to the General Register.

Yes, and: At the same time, I testified in the House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee in support of [House File 11](#) – Delaying the Implementation of Paid Family Medical Leave by 1 year. Watch the hearing [here](#), bill discussion starts at 3:40.

- **Why it matters:** This bill would delay the implementation of the PFML program until Jan. 1, 2027, allowing more time for business owners, and the state agency overseeing the program, to adjust to the new taxes and policies required.
- **What's next:** The bill was passed on party lines 7-6 and will now head to the Ways and Means committee.

Zoom in: On Thursday afternoon, four members of the restaurant industry testified against [Senate File 258](#) – Prohibition of Surcharges at Restaurants. The bill would prohibit all surcharges at restaurants, excluding gratuities and taxes. Watch the hearing [here](#), bill discussion starts at 1:41:07.



Sandra Weise of Finnish Bistro testifies against SF 258, which would prohibit non-gratuity surcharges at restaurants.

- **Member spotlights:** David Benowitz, President of Craft & Crew Hospitality, Soleil Ramirez, Chef and Owner of Crasqui Restaurant, Sandra Weise, Owner of Finnish Bistro, and Dave Sincebaugh, Chief Operating Officer of Cascade Hospitality all shared their experiences running restaurants in Minnesota and the impact surcharges have on their business models.
- **Why it matters:** Key points included how surcharges are used to create equity between front of house and back of house staff, they inequity between small businesses and large businesses on credit card fees, and the restrictions on restaurants already in place that force them to use surcharges. Minnesota is one of seven states without the tip credit, one of four states that prohibits tip pooling, and the only state that does not exempt restaurants from “junk fee” laws.
- **What's next:** Due to the time constraints of the committee hearing, the bill was laid on the table and no member discussion took place. The bill could be taken up at a later date for discussion, but it did not pass out of committee.

Thank you! Hospitality Minnesota extends our gratitude to all our members who testified this week – we absolutely could not do the work we do without you! Testimony from our members is crucial to getting legislation passed, or stopped. If you are interested in testifying, writing letters, or meeting with your legislators – please reach out to Hanna Zinn, hanna@hospitalitymn.com.

Sell Out Alert: 2025 Hospitality Minnesota Day at the Capitol



Calling all advocates: Our [2025 Day at the Capitol](#) is already nearing 90% capacity with just over week and a half left before registration closes on February 26th.

Why it matters: With a lot at stake in an already historic and unprecedented legislative session, you won't want to miss out on sharing your perspective in Saint Paul.

- **Your voice matters:** Our efforts are best championed by our owners and operators. Having your perspective and participation in conversations with legislators is critical to getting our legislative agenda across the finish line.

Act now: This event sold out in record time last year, we recommend those interested to register before the February 26 deadline.

[REGISTER HERE!](#)

In the News

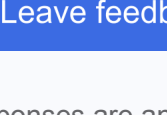


- [U.S. Senator Tina Smith Announced She Won't Seek Reelection](#)
- [MN House Week in Review: February 10-14](#)

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