



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

ADVOCATING FOR MINNESOTA'S HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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By Hanna Zinn • Sep 26, 2025

Smart Brevity® count: 3 mins...806 words

Welcome back. I hope you've all enjoyed the first week of fall and are just as amazed as I am that next week is October already! This week I'm breaking down developments in the ongoing Minneapolis worker training policy, Paid Family Bonding Leave guidance, and a piece of legislation we're watching at the federal level aimed at creating new H2-C visas.

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Local Lookout



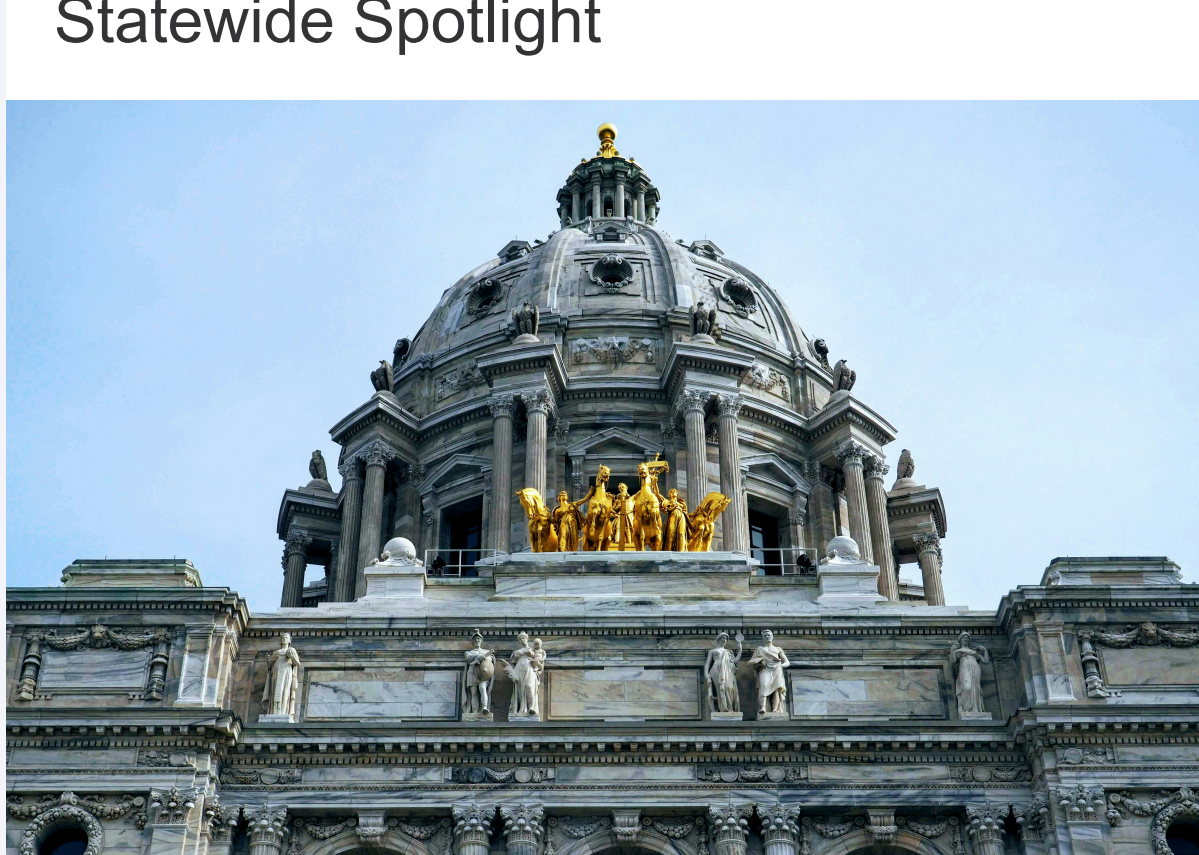
Some background: At the last City Council meeting, Council Vice President Aisha Chughtai announced her intention to introduce an amendment that would add mandatory training to the ESST ordinance. Today, that ordinance was officially introduced.

Why it matters: The ordinance language, which has not been posted publicly yet, is titled to address enforcement provisions and exemptions in the current ordinance which passed two weeks ago.

- Yes, and:** It's anticipated this ordinance will aim to codify mandated employer-paid training by certified worker organizations in the city based on recommendations from the Workplace Advisory Committee's [memo](#) from June.

What's next: The ordinance was assigned to the Public Health & Safety committee, and it is expected to be on the October 1st agenda. During this meeting, the ordinance will be discussed by council members, and a public hearing date will be scheduled.

Statewide Spotlight



The big picture: With less than 100 days until the Minnesota Paid Leave program begins, I want to highlight a policy in the program employers may or may not be aware of: Bonding Leave. Bonding leave is accessible to all employees beginning January 1 and is only available during the first year after a child's birth, adoption, or foster placement.

Why it matters: Bonding leave applies retroactively to a child born in 2025 – meaning employees who welcome a child this year are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of leave within the first year of that child's life beginning on January 1.

Here's an example of how that works from the Minnesota Paid Leave [website](#):

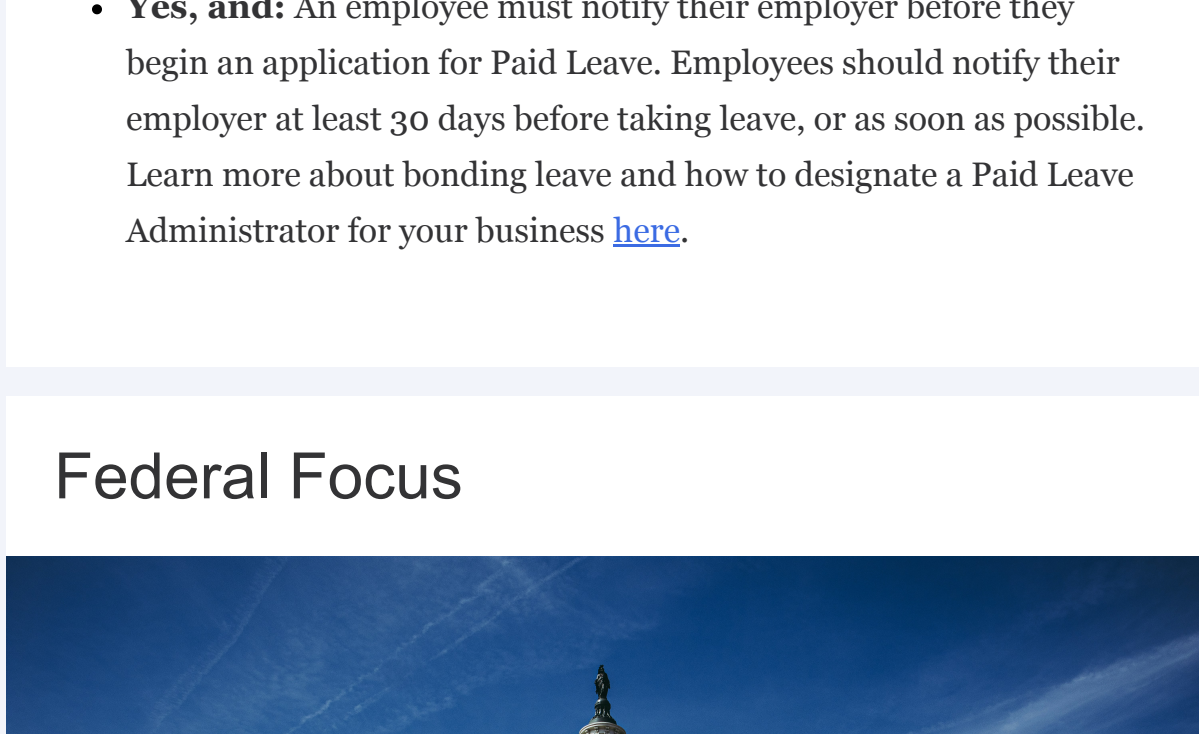
Examples: How leave works if you are welcoming a child in 2025

Child arrives	Bonding Leave must be taken by	Bonding Leave time available
June 1, 2025	June 1, 2026	Up to 12 weeks (the maximum under the law)
March 1, 2025	March 1, 2026	Up to 8 weeks (the time between January 1, 2026, and March 1, 2026)

The bottom line: Employees are eligible to take all leave at one time, meaning employees could take up to 20 weeks of paid leave if their application is approved by the office.

- Yes, and:** An employee must notify their employer before they begin an application for Paid Leave. Employees should notify their employer at least 30 days before taking leave, or as soon as possible. Learn more about bonding leave and how to designate a Paid Leave Administrator for your business [here](#).

Federal Focus



The big picture: Rep. Lloyd Smucker (PA-11) introduced bipartisan legislation to address critical workforce shortages, while safeguarding employment opportunities for workers. Our national partners AHLA and NRA both issued [statements](#) praising the legislation for creating another tool for employers to use in the current workforce shortage.

- By the numbers:** The bill, named the [Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act](#), would create a new H2-C nonimmigrant classification for workers coming to the United States to take non-agricultural “low skilled” positions. These visas would be valid for 3 years, with two additional three-year renewals. These visas would only be available for positions in areas where the unemployment rate is 7.2% or less, and only where employers can demonstrate that a job has gone unfilled for three straight months or for 60 days within a 90-day period.

What they're saying:

Logging perspective: AHLA President and CEO Rosanna Maietta commented on the legislation stating:

“This commonsense legislation supports small businesses, strengthens our workforce, and ensures we can continue delivering world-class service.”

Restaurant perspective: Sean Kennedy, Executive Vice President for Public Affairs at the National Restaurant Association similarly praised the legislation saying:

“This year, restaurant operators are forecast to create 200,000 new jobs, but with a shortage of people in the U.S. workforce, it will be a challenge to fill those jobs. There is no silver bullet that will solve the industry's recruitment challenge, but the Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act creates one opportunity to address the issue.”

What's next: While Washington continues to focus on the looming government shutdown deadline, not much is known about how this bill will move forward. We will continue to monitor and update our readers about any new developments.

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2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES PANELIST SPOTLIGHT

Todd Hill
Founder and President, Capitol Hill Strategies

Representative Dave Baker
Co-Chair of the Economic, Workforce Policy and Finance Committee

Senator Grant Hauschild
Vice Chair, Labor Committee

Tony Kwilas
Owner, T.K. and Associates

MODERATED BY HOSPITALITY MINNESOTA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS DIRECTOR HANNA ZINN, MPP

Calling all advocates: Join [Hanna Zinn, MPP](#) as she leads our 2026 Legislative Priorities Panel for the [2025 Hospitality Conference](#) at the [Greysolon Ballroom by Black Woods](#) in Duluth on October 7!

- Who you'll hear from:** Featured panelists include [Todd Hill](#) ([Hill Capitol Strategies](#)); [Tony Kwilas](#) (T.K. & Associates); Representative [Dave Baker](#); and Senator [Grant Hauschild](#).

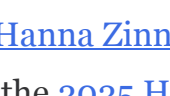
What to expect: Attendees of this panel will hear directly from a bipartisan group of policy experts and lawmakers as they breakdown recent wins and the road ahead for Minnesota's hospitality industry.

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