

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE**

ADVOCATING FOR MINNESOTA'S HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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By Hanna Zinn • Feb 28, 2025

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Welcome back. The forecast for the next week seems to indicate March will be coming in like a lamb – let's just hope if it goes out like a lion that doesn't include any frozen frustrations. This week I was out sick with the flu but fear not – Angie took the reins and led a talented team to testify on our ProStart funding bill on Wednesday in the House.

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Session Snapshot



The big picture: This week Hospitality Minnesota Education Foundation's ProStart funding bill was heard in the House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee. The bill would appropriate \$500,000 to HMEF's [ProStart programs](#) over the next two years.

- **Why it matters:** ProStart programs across the state benefit from these funds, with past funding allowing our state's program to grow. Two years ago, Minnesota had 5,500 students enrolled in these programs. Today that number has more than doubled to over 13,000 students in 67 programs across the state.

Go deeper: We are thankful to our students and mentors who devote their time and energy to these programs and are so grateful to those willing to testify about their experience. At Wednesday's committee hearing, Chef Mentor Josh Brown at Shakopee High School gave examples of how these programs have changed student's lives, including one student who now owns two quick service franchises.

What they are saying: Rep. Baker, author of the bill, gave a glowing introduction stating: "As a owner/operator in previous times, I know the importance of the back of the house" ... "This is a very successful program for students in high schools all around the state of Minnesota ... and it is proven to changing young people's lives."

Yes, and: Angie Whitcomb, who represented HM and HMEF at the committee hearing also added "These successes demonstrate that when we invest in career and technical education, everybody wins."

- **See for yourself:** Watch the full committee hearing [here](#), and check out the House Session Daily article about the hearing [here](#).

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Did you know: Registration is still open for both the [National Restaurant Association's Public Affairs Conference](#) (April 1-3) and the [American Hotel and Lodging Association's Hotels on the Hill](#) (May 13-14).

- **Act now:** Early-bird pricing for the NRA's [Public Affairs Conference](#) ends today!
- **Questions?** Reach out to [Hanna](#) for more information.

In The News

- [Minneapolis weighs 2% hotel fee for tourism district](#) | Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal
- [Chi-Chi's opening its first Minnesota restaurant this year](#) | Fox 9

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