

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE**

ADVOCATING FOR MINNESOTA'S HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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By Hanna Zinn • Mar 21, 2025

Smart Brevity® count: 2.5 mins...668 words

**Welcome back.** Hospitality Minnesota was back in action at the Capitol this week with two committee hearing appearances – and an update to one of our legislative agenda items. I'm always interested to hear from our members how our work at the Capitol impacts you, and how you can be more involved! Testifying, writing letters, and having constituent meetings with legislators are effective tools our members can use to help pass our legislative agenda.

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## Session Snapshot



**First up:** On Tuesday in the House Education Policy committee, Joe Henry, Executive Director of Lake of the Woods Tourism and HM Board Member, joined me in testifying against a bill that would authorize school districts to start classes before Labor Day.

- **Why it matters:** The bill, [House File 1124](#), would authorize school districts to begin classes before Labor Day for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years. This legislation has been ongoing for decades, and HM remains committed to protecting our tourism and resort industries already short summer season.

**Go deeper:** In 2010, a previous [program authorized](#) 25 Southwestern Minnesota school districts to start classes before Labor Day. [Findings](#) from the program saw no improvement in student test scores.

- **What operators are saying:** Resort and tourism businesses say they depend on every weekend they have of the summer season, with many families taking trips over Labor Day as the last weekend of summer.

**What's next:** The bill was laid over for possible inclusion in a future omnibus bill. Watch the full committee hearing [here](#) and read the House Session Daily article [here](#).

**Also this week:** Hospitality Minnesota Education Foundation's ProStart funding bill was heard in the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee. [Senate File 993](#) 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 over 70 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 Senators heard from ProStart alumni turned mentor for Cambridge-Isanti schools Lauren Schreder, current ProStart student Ava Smith, and ProStart alum Noah Rosenberger.

- **What electeds are saying:** Senator Pratt, whose district includes Shakopee Schools, noted the importance of this program being a pipeline to the workforce for young people. "These kids are doing amazing work. ... It's not just about cooking; it's about the entire industry."

**What's next:** The bill was laid over for possible inclusion in a future omnibus bill. Watch the full committee hearing [here](#).

**One fun thing:** This week saw the introduction and passage out of committee a liquor omnibus bill. The bill, [Senate File 2511](#), includes HM's policy proposal for a new Statewide Social District authorization. The legislation would give cities the authorization to implement a social district.

- **Why it matters:** Hospitality Minnesota has partnered with business associations across the state to get this policy to where it is now. We could not have gotten the bill to this point without a joint effort between convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce, and other key stakeholders.

**What's next:** The omnibus bill was passed by the committee and now heads to the Senate's general orders list, which means it can be taken up on the Senate floor at a future floor session. Watch the full committee hearing [here](#).

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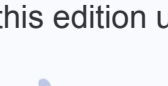
**Did you know:** Registration is still open for both the [National Restaurant Association's Public Affairs Conference](#) (April 1-3) and the [American Hotel and Lodging Association's Hotels on the Hill](#) (May 13-14).

- **Questions?** Reach out to [Hanna](#) for more information.

**Thank you reading!** Check out past [GR Updates](#) here.

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