



Capitol Watch

Legislative Update From the Minnesota Grocers Association

Date: March 13, 2025

To: Andrew Fleming, ACOSTA - Sales & Marketing

Capitol Check Out Call – Join Tomorrow

The MGA Government Relations Team invites you to join us for a discussion on the latest updates from St. Paul. Our bi-weekly Capitol Check Out calls will keep you informed on key developments from the 2025 legislative session. Each call lasts up to 30 minutes and will be recorded for easy sharing with your team. You can access this session's recordings [HERE](#).

These calls are now being held virtually via Microsoft Teams. Contact [Steve Barthe](#) to receive the meeting link and recurring calendar invite.

This Week

On Tuesday, Democratic candidate David Gottfried won the special election for District 40B, defeating Republican Paul Wikstrom with 70.15% of the vote to 29.75%. With this victory, the Minnesota House of Representatives will be officially tied at 67-67 after Gottfried is sworn in next week. Once the House is membership is officially even, a power-sharing agreement that was reached earlier this session will take effect. In the new 67-67 split, committees will have both a GOP and DFL co-chair, and each committee will have an equal number of GOP and DFL members. A bipartisan vote will be required to move any bill forward from committee. However, Rep. [Lisa Demuth](#) (R - Cold Spring) will remain the House speaker for the entire two-year session.

Meanwhile, committee work continues at a rapid pace. With just three weeks until the first committee deadline, committees have been holding hearings with packed agendas to address the backlog of bills assigned to them. This pace is only expected to increase as we approach the deadlines scheduled for the first week of April. The MGA Government Relations Team is hard at work engaging with lawmakers and making sure that industry is represented as bills related to industry are considered. Please watch for further updates and opportunities to assist our work via calls to action or providing testimony.

Paid Leave Debate Continues

Thursday morning, the House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee considered [HF1976](#), authored by Rep. [Dave Baker](#) (R - Willmar) the bill would make significant changes to the pending Paid Leave Law, including:

- Would require a 50/50 employee/employer split on the PFML payroll tax;
- Redefining "covered employment" to exclude individuals covered by certain collective bargaining agreements until specific conditions are met;
- Narrowing the definition of "family member" for the purposes of this law;
- Increasing the maximum number of days for seasonal employees from 150 to 180 days;
- Modifying the maximum length of benefits based on employer size:
 - 12 weeks for employers with more than 50 employees
 - 6 weeks for employers with 50 or fewer employees

The bill was laid over for future consideration. During the hearing, Rep. Baker expressed hope that this bill would serve as the foundation for discussions on potential changes to the current program, which is set to begin on January 1, 2026.

Thank you to [Dan Klassen](#) with Kowalski's Market for representing industry and testifying in favor of the bill! Dan's testimony can be watched [HERE](#).



Earned Sick and Safe Time Changes Considered

A bill that would make numerous changes to the existing Earned Sick and Safe Time law was considered in the House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee Wednesday. Rep. [Isaac Schultz](#) (R - Elmdale Township) is the sponsor of [HF1325](#) which looks to make the program more flexible, Schultz says that he says would make commonsense changes to the program and benefit Minnesota employers. The bill was laid over for future discussion. Among the changes included in the bill are:

- exempting workers under age 18;
- part-timers who work fewer than 25 hours per week, 20 weeks per year, or 520 hours per year;
- reduce required ESST payout for employers of 25 or fewer employees at half their normal rate while they are out;
- exempt businesses from ESST requirements during their first year of operation;
- offer a narrower definition of family, excluding adult children, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles and in-laws; and
- change accrual rate of ESST at one hour for every 40 hours worked – As opposed to 1 for every 30 hours under current statute.

Electronic Waste Program Moving Quickly in the Senate

A bill that would create a statewide program to facilitate the recycling on circuit boards, batteries, and electrical products has been fast-tracked in the Senate. Similar to last year's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for paper and packing products, [SF1690](#), authored by Sen. [Rob Kupec](#), (DFL - Moorhead) would require the creation of a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) to administer and fund recycling of batteries and almost any products that have a plug-in.

This type of PRO for electronic products has not been attempted anywhere else in the country and the MGA opposes establishing another statewide stewardship program while we still don't know all the ramifications of EPR program that is still being implemented.

Lottery Retailer Background Check Changes Proposed

The MGA submitted written testimony in support of a provision introduced by the Minnesota Lottery in both bodies this week. The bill aims to clarify which lottery retailer employees are subject to background checks. [HF1697/SF1891](#), authored by Rep. [Jim Joy](#) (R - Hawley) and Sen. [Andrew Lang](#) (R - Olivia), defines "Responsible Lottery Officials" as officers, directors, or owners overseeing Minnesota Lottery ticket sales, specifying that only these individuals will need to complete an FBI background check. This clarification helps eliminate confusion and ensures compliance with the background check requirements. Without this update, new recommendations from the State Auditor could mean that nearly every employee at a lottery retailer, even those with no involvement in lottery sales, would have been required to undergo a background check.

Support the Food PAC of Minnesota Online Donations Now Accepted!

With the upgrade to the MGA website, PAC supporters can now make their contributions online. You can do so by scanning the QR code below or clicking [HERE](#). **Contributions are only accepted from personal funds.** Contact [Steve Barthel](#) with any questions.



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[Patrick Garofalo](#), President and [Steve Barthel](#), Director of Government Relations, are here to assist. Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

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