



## SUMMARY OF THE ACT AND SUBSEQUENT IMPROVEMENTS

(HF2536, 2014 Session Law Chapter 239 unless noted)

### Reduces the gender pay gap

- Requires businesses with 40 or more employees seeking state contracts over \$500,000 to ensure compliance with existing equal pay laws. Businesses must state that average compensation for female employees is not consistently below average compensation for male employees within similar major job categories.
- Allows employees to voluntarily discuss their compensation without fear of retaliation from their employer.
  - 2023 law change: Prohibits employers from asking about or considering an applicant's past or current pay during the hiring process.

### Increases income for working women and their families

- Raises the minimum wage to \$9.50 by 2016 with annual adjustments for inflation (HF2091, 2014 Session Law Chapter 166)
- Expands support for employers, workforce organizations, and others to recruit, prepare, place and retain women in high-wage, high-demand nontraditional occupations and apprenticeships.
  - 2016 law change: Prioritizes funding for the Women and High-Wage High-Demand Nontraditional Jobs Grant for programs that assist and encourage women of color.
- Provides funding to WomenVenture and Women's Business Center of Northeast Minnesota to help women develop high economic impact businesses in nontraditional industries.

### Expands access to affordable, high-quality child care

- Provides an additional \$4.65 million for early learning scholarships and removes the \$5,000 cap (HF3172, 2014 Session Law Chapter 312)
  - 2023 law change: Invests \$300 million in child care and early learning, supporting providers, businesses and families.

### Expands family and sick leave for working families

- Expands unpaid leave under the Minnesota Parental Leave Act from six to 12 weeks and allows use of leave for pregnancy-related needs.
  - 2023 law change: Expands eligibility for unpaid parental leave to employees who work for employers of all sizes regardless of how long the employee has worked for the employer.
- Allows employees to use existing earned sick leave to care for a grandchild, mother-in-law, or father-in-law.
  - 2023 law change: Requires employers to provide earned sick and safe time. Proposed as part of WESA in 2014, an employee earns one hour of sick and safe time for every 30 hours worked and can earn a maximum of 48 hours each year unless the employer agrees to a higher amount.
  - 2023 law change: Establishes a statewide paid leave insurance program effective Jan. 1, 2026, to provide partial wage replacement for up to 12 weeks of medical leave for one's own serious health condition and 12 weeks of family leave for bonding with a new child or caring for a family member with a serious health condition, capped at 20 weeks in a year.

### **Establishes and strengthens workplace protections for pregnant and lactating employees**

- Requires employers with 21 or more employees to provide reasonable accommodations (seating, food and water breaks, limits to heavy lifting) or position transfer for pregnant workers.
  - 2021 law change: Expands the right to a pregnancy accommodation to employers with 15 or more employees.
  - 2023 law change: Expands the right to a pregnancy accommodation to employers of all sizes and expands the statutory list of example reasonable pregnancy accommodations to include a temporary leave of absence, a modification to work schedule or job assignment and more frequent or longer breaks.
- Provides enforcement of workplace protections for nursing mothers to express milk during unpaid break times within the Department of Labor. Requires the lactation space be a place other than a bathroom and include access to an electrical outlet.
  - 2021 law change: Prohibits an employer from reducing an employee's compensation for time taken to express milk.
  - 2023 law change: Provides a right to break times to express milk regardless of the child's age and ensures employees can choose when to express milk based on their needs.
  - 2023 law change: Employers must notify all employees of the rights of pregnant and lactating employees when hired, when an employee makes an inquiry about or requests parental leave and in an employee handbook if one is provided.

### **Protects women from discrimination in the workplace**

- Requires equal employment treatment for pregnant women and parents under the Minnesota Human Rights Act.
- Adds enforcement authority and prohibits retaliation against employees for asserting their workplace rights.
  - 2023 law change: Strengthens anti-retaliation provisions for nursing mothers, pregnancy accommodations, wage disclosure, sick time, and pregnancy and parental leave laws.

### **Addresses economic consequences of domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault**

- Expands unemployment insurance eligibility currently available to survivors of domestic violence to include survivors of stalking and sexual assault.
- Allows survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence or stalking to use existing paid sick time to obtain services.
- Provides additional housing protections for survivors of violence (HF 859 2014 Session Law Chapter 188).

### **Enhances retirement security**

- Requires a report from Minnesota Management and Budget on the potential for a state-administered plan for workers without access to workplace retirement savings plans, along with other alternative private sector options.
  - 2023 law change: Proposed as part of WESA in 2014, establishes Minnesota Secure Choice, a state-facilitated retirement savings program, to allow private sector employees without an employer-sponsored plan to contribute toward individual retirement accounts.