

# 2017 Policies

## LABOR/MANAGEMENT



Employers must have the **flexibility** they need to provide benefits that are appropriate for their workplace.

### OUR GOALS

#### PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY; DON'T IMPOSE ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL MANDATES

Minnesota employers consistently receive national recognition for providing some of the best places to work. Nevertheless, policymakers in Minnesota continue to propose new one-size-fits-all mandates and regulations seeking to control employers' relationships with their employees. These mandates burden businesses with significant administrative costs, can lead to unintentional errors that could subject businesses to legal action, and interfere in the operations of the workplace.

Minnesota Chamber members provide employees with robust benefits to promote wellness, build high morale, and attract and retain the best talent in a competitive marketplace. Accordingly, we support broadly sharing employers' best practices so all businesses in the state are aware of nonregulatory approaches to workplace rules and employee relations that will help them compete for and retain the best employees.

Employers must have the flexibility to provide benefits that are appropriate for their workplace. Voluntary, flexible policy approaches are far more effective than any one-size-fits-all solution mandated by elected officials.

We support approaches to expand access to paid leave that are voluntary, market-based, offer choices, ensure flexibility, and carefully consider costs and benefits. For example, we support consideration of policy changes to make it more affordable and convenient for private-sector employees to purchase short-term disability policies in the private insurance market.

### OUR KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE 2017 SESSION INCLUDE:

- Oppose new labor mandates.
- Ensure consistent statewide laws.
- Implement fee schedules for care of injured workers in ambulatory surgical center and hospital outpatient settings.
- Share employers' best practices for providing benefits.

## ENSURE CONSISTENT STATEWIDE LAWS

A troubling new trend is for cities to enact their own workplace mandates, creating a patchwork of city-by-city ordinances that presents an even greater administrative burden for employers. Local units of government should not be able to enact their own local minimum wage ordinances or benefit mandates since doing so will disrupt the state employment market and impede hiring and job growth. Accordingly, we support explicit statewide preemption of local government labor mandates.

## REMOVE AUTOMATIC INFLATOR FROM MINIMUM WAGE

Minnesota has the highest minimum wage rates in the Upper Midwest and one of highest in the United States. We support removing the automatic annual increase from the state's minimum wage law. Furthermore, we oppose a city-by-city patchwork of minimum wages.

## ADOPT WORKERS' COMPENSATION FEE SCHEDULES

Stakeholders should complete fee schedule reforms by adopting a fee schedule for hospital outpatient and ambulatory surgery centers. To continue reducing the cost of the workers' compensation system, we support reforms, including to the process of submitting and paying claims.

## CONFORM PREVAILING WAGE TO FEDERAL LAW

The Minnesota Chamber supports changing Minnesota's prevailing wage law so it conforms to federal law. Minnesota ideally would not have a prevailing wage law; local labor market and competition are the best determinates of wage rates paid on state-funded construction projects. However, while Minnesota continues to have prevailing wage laws in place, we support two specific improvements:

- **Change the calculation.** Federal law defines the prevailing wage as the rate paid to the majority of those employed in a job classification. If there is not a majority paid at the same rate, then the average rate is used. State law should mimic this calculation.
- **Change overtime trigger.** Current Minnesota law requires payment of overtime for prevailing wage projects at more than eight hours a day of work or more than 40 hours per week. Due to the nature of many prevailing wage jobs, it would be financially prudent to trigger overtime only at more than 40 hours per week. This allows four 10-hour days before requiring overtime pay, a common industry practice.

## PREVENT ABUSIVE ADA LAWSUITS

Minnesota's businesses value all customers, including those with disabilities. We support continued education of the business community on ADA accessibility requirements. At the same time, abusive lawsuits over technical violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act hurt main street businesses and clog the court system. We support legislation giving businesses an opportunity to fix alleged violations prior to the filing of a lawsuit.