

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD  
BEFORE THE NEW MEXICO HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**HB 6 “PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT”**

**January 24, 2024**

**Awesta Sarkash  
Public Policy Director, Small Business Majority**

Thank you, Chair Thomson, Vice Chair Herndon, Ranking Member Jones, and members of the committee.

My name is Awesta Sarkash and I am the Public Policy Director for Small Business Majority, an organization that empowers America’s diverse entrepreneurs to build a thriving and equitable economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss HB 6, which would create a state-run paid family and medical leave program.

During my time conducting outreach across the state, I’ve spoken with countless small business owners who struggle with workforce retention because they cannot afford to offer benefits to their employees, and they are not alone. As such, small business employees often leave to work at larger businesses, sometimes in other states, undercutting our small business economy here in the Land of Enchantment.

This is a trend we are seeing across the state. Earlier this month we released [research](#) that found New Mexico small businesses overwhelmingly support (85%) the creation of a state-run paid family and medical leave insurance program. Additionally, the survey found two-thirds of New Mexico small businesses support paid family and medical leave because they believe it is the right thing to do, not just as an employer but as someone who cares about the people who work for them.

Passing HB 6 will bolster New Mexico’s economy by providing small business owners with access to the benefits they need to attract a robust workforce. We urge you and the other members of the committee to vote yes on HB 6 to create a paid family and medical leave program and support the small business community.

Thank you.