

# MINNESOTA WOMEN'S CONSORTIUM

## 2014-2015 Legislative Session Summary

### Parenting:

- **Childcare**
  - *Childcare Assistance*: Expands eligibility for post-secondary childcare grants to students who are not Minnesota residents, but are spouses of Minnesota residents (Omnibus Higher Education Act, SF5).
  - *Basic Sliding Fee Childcare Assistance Program*: Increased investment with budget including \$10 million for the biennium towards reducing the 4,000 family wait list (Omnibus Health and Human Services Policy Bill, HF1535).
- **Child Welfare**
  - *Indian Child Welfare Act*: Changes to Indian Child Welfare Act related matters in Minnesota statute; requires reports of child fatality and near fatality of all children (Omnibus Health and Human Services Policy Bill, HF1535).
  - *Child Protection*: Update to child protection provisions that make the immediate safety of the child and ongoing risk of abuse the primary focus. Identification of parents' protective capacities is a secondary consideration that is not required to be considered (HF8).
- **Child Custody**
  - *Custody and Parenting Time*: Changes to custody and parenting time statute including compensatory parenting time provisions, tax dependency exemptions, uniform deployed parents' custody and visitation, and redrafting of the "Best Interest of the Child factors" (Omnibus Family Bill, SF1191).
- **Topical Analysis and Work groups**
  - *Cooperative Divorce*: Informal discussion groups to be held during the interim to discuss the possibility of allowing spouses

to divorce by completing an online form, with no involvement by attorneys or the court system (HF1348).

- *Child Support*: Interim work group to study changing the method of calculating the “parenting expense adjustment” (adjustment to child support based on percentage of parenting time). This is meant to address the “cliff” that some parents experience in child support and to make it into a curve. The workgroup will also study setting up an ongoing commission on child support that will be discussed next session (Omnibus Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill, SF1458).
- *Paid Family and Medical Leave Program Analysis*: State agencies will analyze the mechanisms needed for what would be the nation’s fourth paid family and medical leave program (Omnibus Health and Human Services Policy Bill, HF1535).