



P.O. Box 14720
Minneapolis, MN 55414
T: (651) 645-4097
www.aclu-mn.org
@aclumn

Minnesota

May 8, 2020

RE: Written Testimony on HF 4611 (SF 4540)

Dear Chair Mahoney and Members of the Jobs and Economic Development Committee,

I am a lifelong resident of St. James, Minnesota. I am also a community organizer with the American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota. I write to you to express concerns of fellow non-citizen residents and about the need to protect those left behind by federal and state relief efforts.

Through my work with the ACLU of Minnesota, I see a large gap in Covid-19 crisis relief efforts. In the past weeks, desperately needed economic relief packages have been legislated and executed by our U.S. and state governments. Small businesses, local industries, and many families will find relief in the stimulus packages that are being rolled out. It is important to understand, however, that not all families are eligible to receive crisis relief such as the CARES Act's \$1,200 cash rebate provided by the federal government, or to seek other state-level resources available to most Minnesotans.

In order to be eligible for a federal cash benefit, individual filers, and their spouse if filing jointly, must have valid Social Security Numbers. If one taxpayer spouse does not have a Social Security Number, no one in the family will be eligible for a cash rebate. According to a University of Minnesota study, about 46,400 households in our state are mixed-status households. An estimated quarter of them in non-metro areas.¹ This means that many of Minnesota's non-citizen residents and their mixed status families (households where some members are US citizens and others are not) who are in great need of assistance will not receive benefits like the rest of us.

Many of these non-citizen families are tax-paying workers that are essential to the stability of our local economy, especially now as our nation has aimed its spotlight on agriculture and food production in the Midwest. In this time of crisis, we urge our local governments to consider policies and assistance programs that will offer relief to all residents, regardless of their immigration status. Failing to do so will create a subclass of individuals who have extremely limited access to public resources. This will only further the economic crisis, especially in our small towns.

Respectfully,

¹ Allen, R. & Paca, J. (2020). Individuals Living in Mixed-Status and Undocumented Households in Minnesota in 2018. Minneapolis, MN : University of Minnesota

Julio Zelaya
Greater Minnesota Coordinator
ACLU-MN
709 Front St.
Mankato MN
56001