

Testimony in Support of HF 3480

Mike Hang, mikehang@mnhmongchamber.org

Chair, Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce

Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Mike Hang, and I serve as the Chair of the Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce. I am here today in support of HF 3480 because what we are witnessing in our communities right now is something we cannot fully see yet but we can already feel the impact.

Across parts of Minnesota, business activity has slowed dramatically. Marketplaces that were once filled with families, customers, and workers are now quiet. Business owners who have spent years building their livelihoods are wondering if they should even open their doors.

We are seeing weddings cancelled, community events postponed, and workers afraid to go to their jobs. I've heard from mothers who are legal residents, not citizens, who are afraid to go to work because they worry they may be stopped or questioned. When workers stay home, when customers stop coming out, and when families stop gathering, the economic impact spreads quickly.

For many in our community, this moment feels worse than COVID-19. During the pandemic, businesses at least understood what was happening and relief programs existed to help them survive. Right now, businesses are experiencing economic losses, but we do not yet understand the full scope of what is happening.

And what we see today is only a snapshot.

The real concern is the ripple effect how fear and uncertainty spread through workers, families, small businesses, and local economies. When one worker stays home, one business closes early, or one community gathering is cancelled, the impact reaches far beyond what we can immediately see.

That is why HF 3480 is so important.

Minnesota is home to one of the largest Hmong communities in the country. Our families came here as refugees decades ago, and over the years we have built businesses, created jobs, and contributed to the economic and cultural fabric of this state. Today, thousands of Hmong-owned businesses help drive Minnesota's local economy.

Yet communities like the AAPI business community are often overlooked in economic analysis. Our businesses are deeply impacted, but too often our experiences are not fully reflected in the data.

As someone of Hmong descent, I have seen situations where our community's data is used to support initiatives, yet when funding is distributed, that support does not always reach the communities whose experiences revealed the problem in the first place.

You cannot manage what you do not measure. HF 3480 allows Minnesota to understand the true economic impact, and it ensures that when resources are distributed, they follow the data and reach the communities where the harm occurred.

On behalf of the Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce and the entrepreneurs we represent, I respectfully urge your support.

Thank you.