

January 22, 2021

RE: HFXXX Certifications for Victims of Crimes

Dear Chair Mariana and members of the Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform and Finance Policy Committee:

I, Monica Nevin, an immigration attorney and resident of the Powderhorn neighborhood in South Minneapolis, support the proposed bill and respectfully request that members of this committee support efforts to prevent the victimization of Minnesota residents especially in Greater Minnesota. HFXXX promotes a streamlined certification process throughout the state of Minnesota which will provide guidance to law enforcement agencies when receiving such requests. This will be most beneficial to law enforcement agencies with fewer resources as I have professionally experienced the limitations allowed such law enforcement agencies, frustrating the intent and purpose of the U-visa to promote safety and collaboration in our communities. Furthermore, HFXXX promotes the protection of crime victims and ensures that foreign national crime victims are available to assist in the prosecution of those accused of the crimes.

Currently, there is no standard certification process throughout Minnesota. Foreign national/immigrant victims of crimes are treated differently depending on the community where the crime occurred. This was not the intention of Congress. Congress created the U visa to address the problem that immigrant women and children are often targeted to be victims of crimes committed against them in the United States, including domestic violence, sexual assault, involuntary servitude, being held hostage or being criminally restrained. However, unless and until this state develops a statewide certification process, the intent of congress to protect all immigrant victims of crimes cannot be fulfilled to the full extent of the law.

I know the importance of our immigrant communities feeling that they can have faith and reliance in their local law enforcement agencies based on living in the Powderhorn neighborhood in South Minneapolis where many of my neighbors are themselves immigrants. I have heard their concerns and worries to contact law enforcement to report anything because of their immigration status but have been able to assure them that our law enforcement is here to protect all residents, regardless of their immigration status and to treat us all fairly. That is what makes our communities safer for residents and for the law enforcement officers who serve their neighbors, knowing that one will be treated fairly and justly; therefore, HFXXX supports that basic but vital tenant, that all should be treated equally by law enforcement, and that without equal treatment both residents and law enforcement officers will not be as safe as they otherwise could be.

Supporting HFXXX will allow communities throughout Greater Minnesota foster positive relationships with law enforcement.

Thank you for your consideration and your support.

Sincerely,

