



March 11, 2025

TO: Chair Novotny and Members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee

RE: Opposition for HF 16 (Rymer)--Immigration law enforcement noncooperation ordinances and policies prohibited, use of immigration-related data provided, and county attorneys required to notify federal immigration authorities when an undocumented person is arrested for a crime of violence.

Dear Chair Novotny and Members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee,

The City of Saint Paul stands in firm opposition to HF 16, a politically-motivated policy that threatens to undermine public safety, erode trust in our community, and strip local governments of the ability to make decisions that best serve their residents. This legislation directly attacks decades of precedent set by our separation ordinance adopted in 2004, which ensures that city employees are not required to conduct the jobs of federal immigration agents.

The sacred relationship between law enforcement and the community it serves is built on the foundational principle of mutual trust. HF 16 compromises that trust and places more barriers between our officers and our residents, which in turn makes it harder to prevent and solve crimes. This bill will make our community less safe. No family — regardless of their citizenship status — should have to choose between reporting a crime and protecting themselves. They should not fear that calling for help means putting their families in danger. Our city has long recognized this reality. We refuse to be forced into policies that break that trust.

HF 16 also discourages access to critical city services and resources that our immigrant neighbors are entitled to. Our role as public servants is to serve — it's about ensuring that every resident has access to housing, education, and emergency services. Forcing city employees to act as immigration agents deters families from seeking the services we provide, making our city less healthy, less stable, and less resilient.

Most egregiously, HF 16 is a blatant nullification of local governance. Local leaders know their communities best. We should decide how to use our public safety resources — not be forced to redirect city taxpayer dollars away from crime prevention, emergency response, and neighborhood safety initiatives to serve a federal agenda. This bill strips cities of their authority and bullies us to handing over local resources to a sector of enforcement that has never been our responsibility.

Further, involving the Attorney General or City/County Attorney in enforcing violations of the bill creates the possibility of conflicts of interest and diverts critical resources. State and local law enforcement agencies should remain focused on their primary responsibilities rather than being tasked with federal immigration enforcement, which is not their primary jurisdiction.

Our city employees have a fundamental duty to serve our residents, regardless of background or circumstance. Their role is not to pick and choose whom they serve. Our firefighters don't check immigration papers before responding to a fire. Our police officers don't ask for documentation before protecting victims of crime. Our city workers fill potholes, provide safe spaces for youth, and provide support—regardless of citizenship status. That is our role. That is our commitment. And that will not change.

We stood against the threats from the White House to withhold federal funding from cities like Saint Paul who adhere to separation ordinances. And we stand against HF 16. We urge you to reject this harmful legislation and uphold the fundamental principle that local governments must have the authority to govern in the best interest of their communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melvin Carter", written in a cursive style.

Melvin Carter  
Mayor