

March 11th, 2025

The Honorable Paul Novotny
Chair of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
VIA EMAIL

RE: Written Comment in Opposition to HF16

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

We are writing this letter in opposition to HF16. We believe this measure will decrease safety for the City and its residents by creating fear in community that every interaction with a city employee, including interacting with law enforcement as a victim or witness, could result in a referral to immigration authorities.

The City of Minneapolis enacted a separation ordinance over 20 years ago. The separation ordinance formally prioritizes using the City's finite resources to advance the health and safety of all people in the Minneapolis community. This local legislation makes clear that the federal government has the legal authority to enforce immigration laws in the City, but the City does not operate its programs for the purpose of enforcing federal immigration laws. The ordinance states that Minneapolis employees shall not question, arrest or detain any person for violations of federal civil immigration laws except when immigration status is an element of a crime. However, nothing in the ordinance prohibits public safety personnel from assisting federal law enforcement officers in the investigation of criminal activity involving individuals present in the United States who may also be in violation of federal civil immigration laws. City employees must comply with lawful or properly-issued subpoenas. City of Minneapolis departments and staff do not operate for the purpose of enforcing federal immigration law, but rather to provide municipal services to the Minneapolis community, regardless of immigration status. As a whole, the ordinance was advanced to increase trust between the City and its residents.

This trust is critical to public safety. The police department can only be effective when people feel comfortable contacting law enforcement when they have been victimized or when they have witnessed a crime. This is especially important for individuals who are vulnerable to exploitation, people who have been exploited and people who are victims of crime, for whom a pathway to redress must be as open and barrier free as possible.

HF16 creates the premise that any encounter with a public official may result in a referral to immigration authorities. This bill is inimical to public safety. This bill makes every encounter a potential situation where a call may be made to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Furthermore, the provision of HF16 requiring the Attorney General or County Attorney to investigate suspected violations would redirect the limited resources from those offices towards policing the conduct of public employees, including our own City employees, for any suspected violation of the ordinance, resulting in a perpetual investigative state to ensure compliance at all levels. It also in effect requires local governments like the City to use their limited local resources to help enforce immigration law, rather than using their finite resources to keep their communities safe and healthy.

We strongly believe that this measure, if advanced, will not promote public safety, but instead will decrease community trust in government, and will make our society less safe.

For the reasons described above, we respectfully ask the committee to vote no on HF16.

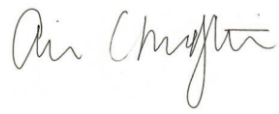
Respectfully,



Mayor
Jacob Frey



Council President
Elliott Payne



Council Vice President
Aisha Chughtai



Council Member
Aurin Chowdhury