



North STAR Alliance

March 10, 2025

**Subject: Strong Opposition to HF 0016 – A Threat to Minnesota’s Public Safety and Community Trust**

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

The North STAR (Safety, Trust, and Responsibility) Alliance strongly opposes HF 0016, which would erode local control of finite government resources and pit Minnesota counties against each other. It prohibits local policies of noncooperation, overriding community-based approaches designed to foster trust and safety. Passage of this bill will undermine community safety, economic stability, and the dignity of all Minnesotans.

**HF 0016 Undermines the Services Minnesotans Need from Their Local and State Agencies**

Minnesota’s 87 counties, 853 cities, and 1,782 towns have diverse needs and limited resources to keep their communities thriving.

HF 16 prohibits local governments from restricting information sharing between officials and federal immigration authorities, effectively preventing local jurisdictions from enacting community trust policies. HF 0016 will allow rogue employees of local and state agencies, over the objection of their agencies, to report on the citizenship status of community members.

If residents fear that a local official will report them, potentially mistakenly, to immigration authorities, they are less likely to participate in local events, obtain needed services, seek protection from violence, or serve as witnesses in the judicial system.

Evidence from other states has shown that communities with policies preventing unnecessary communication with immigration officials experience lower crime rates and higher cooperation with police. Local governments should focus on public safety and the well-being of their residents—not on federal immigration enforcement.

Recent work by the Cato Institute supports this. David Bier, its Director of Immigration Studies recently asserted that undocumented immigrants “reduce crime rates by committing fewer crimes.” Undocumented immigrants are much less likely to commit and be incarcerated for serious crimes than U.S. born persons. For example, in 2023, 0.6% of undocumented immigrants were incarcerated, compared to 1.2% of U.S. born citizens.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Testimony of David J. Bier, Dir. of Immig. Studies, Cato Institute, Before the Comm. on Oversight & Government Reform (Mar. 5, 2025), p. 3.



It has been shown that from January 2021 to June 2024, as immigration court filings have gone up, murders have gone down. “Murders were down 28 percent in Denver, 30 percent in Chicago, 37 percent in New York City, and 86 percent in Boston,” all cities with limits on ICE cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

Of the top 20 cities with the largest increases in immigration court filings as a percentage of their population, only one (Austin, Texas) did not see a decrease in homicides. Austin, Texas is required by Texas law to do whatever ICE wants. Of the other 19 jurisdictions, 15 limit cooperation with ICE.<sup>3</sup>

Studies have shown that reasonable restrictions on collaboration with immigration authorities do not increase crime. According to Bier, a “dozen studies have found that limits on ICE cooperation do not lead to higher crime rates.”<sup>4</sup> One study covering 2010-2015, a time when the separation ordinances of Minneapolis and St. Paul had long been in place, found that “these policies did reduce deportations, but not of people with violent convictions. This is an indication that those policies did not severely hamper ICE’s efforts to target violent criminals during that period.”<sup>5</sup>

In 1980, the US population was made up of 6.2% immigrants and crime was measured at 5,900 crimes per 100,000 people. In 2022, the immigration population increased to 13.9% of the population and the rate of crime declined to 2,335 crimes per 100,000 people marking a 60% drop in crime.<sup>6</sup> Law enforcement should focus on public safety—not federal immigration enforcement.

HF 0016 will force peace officers and county attorneys to report anyone who is undocumented among those arrested for certain crimes — regardless of whether those persons are convicted or even prosecuted. This diverts those resources from providing services to Minnesotans. Immigration law is complicated and is best left to federal agents.

### **HF 0016 Encourages Racial Profiling and Civil Rights Violations**

HF 0016 prohibits local noncooperation ordinances, opening the door for government officials to share immigration information in a discretionary or discriminatory way. Many Minnesota cities and counties—including St. Paul and Minneapolis—have chosen not to assist ICE to ensure that immigrant residents feel safe engaging with local law enforcement.

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<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 6, citing to David K. Hausman, [Sanctuary Policies Reduce Deportations Without Increasing Crime](#), Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A 117, no. 44 (Oct. 19, 2020): 27262-27267. See also, Virgil Wiebe, [Immigration Federalism In Minnesota: What Does Sanctuary Mean In Practice?](#), Univ. of St. Thomas Law Journal (2017), pp.17-20.

<sup>6</sup> [Debunking the Myth of Immigrants and Crime](#), American Immigration Council (Oct. 17, 2024), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/debunking-myth-immigrants-and-crime>.



In states with similar laws, U.S. citizens and legal residents have been mistakenly reported to ICE or unlawfully detained due to racial profiling. The bill does not include clear safeguards against abuse, leaving room for racial bias in how and when individuals are reported to federal immigration authorities.

The bill does compel federal entanglement in local law enforcement in one respect. The bill would require county attorneys to report to immigration authorities anyone arrested for certain crimes, regardless of whether the person was convicted or even whether the county attorney planned to prosecute the person.

HF 0016 is in direct conflict with existing federal and state data protection rules and policies of any state agency that prevent sharing of private data and could apply to hospitals, schools and other institutions that retain sensitive private data. This bill aims to allow any hospital or school official with access to data systems containing private information to cull these systems for private information connected to the immigration status of the individual, their parents or other household member and sharing this with ICE. Even if it is currently a violation of federal and state law to share protected private data in certain circumstances, any official would be within their right to share protected data that includes immigration status information with ICE, even if it were motivated by racism or retaliation.

This will not only chill cooperation with law enforcement but also will lead to immigrants staying away from school, hospitals, and refusing to raise wage theft and other claims with state and local agencies, causing a negative impact on the health and welfare of local immigrant communities. Also, if ICE starts making requests to schools for lists of all their students and their immigration status, schools would be required to comply with these requests, resulting in an expenditure of time and resources that would be better used to meet the educational needs of students.

### **HF 0016 Threatens Minnesota's Economy**

Minnesota's economy depends on **immigrant workers in essential industries** such as healthcare, agriculture, and food production. By **creating a climate of fear and uncertainty**, HF 0016 will cause workforce disruptions, harming businesses and local economies.<sup>7</sup> Rather than contributing to society, detained immigrants become **burdens on taxpayer-funded detention centers**, diverting public resources from education, healthcare, and public safety.

### **HF 0016 Overrides Local Control and Pits Minnesota Communities Against Each Other**

Many Minnesota cities and counties have adopted policies that build trust between local governments and immigrant communities. HF 0016 would override these local decisions. Moreover, it will pit communities against each other. The current bill would allow a county

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<sup>7</sup> Rebecca Davis O'Brien & Miriam Jordan, [\*A Chill Sets In for Undocumented Workers, and Those Who Hire Them\*](#), N.Y. Times (Mar. 9, 2025).



attorney to investigate a city or town on the other side of the state for violations of the law. This sets a dangerous precedent for future legislation.

The North STAR Alliance urges the Committee to reject HF 0016 and instead support policies that foster trust in government, uphold local control of limited resources and time, and affirm the dignity of all Minnesotans.

### **Faith and Moral Responsibility to Protect Immigrants and Provide Leadership**

Faith traditions and ethical principles demand that we welcome and protect the stranger:

Leviticus 19:33-34 – “When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not mistreat them. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love them as yourself.”

Matthew 25:35 – “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Qur’an 59:9 – “The men who stayed in their own city and embraced Islam before them loved those who have sought refuge with them. They do not covet what they are given but rather prefer [their brothers and sisters] above themselves although they are in need. Those who preserve themselves from their own greed shall surely prosper.”

“A belief in ‘the inherent worth and dignity of every person’ is core to Unitarian Universalism: every person, no exceptions. As religious people, our Principles call us to acknowledge the immigrant experience and to affirm and promote the flourishing of the human family.”

“In the U.S., about half or more of Buddhists (50%), Jews (50%), Muslims (57%) and Hindus (73%) say that a growing population of immigrants is a change for the better. . . . Eight-in-ten or more Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Buddhists also say the country’s racial and ethnic diversity strengthens American society.” Pew Research Center, 2025

HF 0016 undermines our moral obligation to uphold the dignity, rights, and safety of all people, creating a culture of fear and division rather than justice and inclusion.

Speaking from my own religious tradition, I would like to remind you of the importance of servant leadership and accountability:

Romans 13:10 – “Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.”

Matthew 20:26 - "Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant."



Proverbs 11:14 - "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety."

I urge you to exhibit love and leadership in respecting and protecting all members of our communities.

**Conclusion: Reject HF 0016 for a Safer, Stronger Minnesota**

HF 0016 is not good for Minnesota. While it does not explicitly mandate local cooperation with ICE, it prohibits local governments from limiting their involvement, effectively forcing them to comply with federal immigration enforcement. This bill would:

- Harm public safety by eroding trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities.
- Promote racial profiling by allowing government officials to report individuals without clear accountability.
- Disrupt the workforce and economy by deterring immigrants from essential industries.
- Overturn local decision-making and impose a top-down approach on cities and counties.

The North STAR Alliance urges legislators to reject HF 0016 and instead support policies that foster trust, uphold local control, and affirm the dignity of all Minnesotans—regardless of immigration status.

Sarah Silva  
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