

J. P. Larson Law Office, LLC

5601 Nicollet Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55419
Ph. 612.879.8223 / 8480

laura@jlarsonlaw.com
612.879.8223

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House Public Safety Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Reverend Martin Luther King Drive
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: HF 16

Dear Members of the House Public Safety Committee:

I am writing in opposition to HF 16, a bill that would undermine public safety and disrupt the essential work of our public servants. I have lived in Minnesota for over twenty years, and am raising two young children who attend public schools in South Minneapolis. I graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School and have represented hundreds of couples, families, and youth as an immigration lawyer. When I worked as a staff attorney for Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, I had the privilege of working with the city attorney's office and the Minneapolis Police Department to improve their protocols in assisting noncitizen victims of crimes. Currently, my private practice represents noncitizens from all over the world who have come to call Minnesota home for myriad reasons – because of our strong agricultural economy, because of our tradition of welcoming and supporting refugees, because it's a wonderful place to raise a family, and because *Minnesotans believe supporting our community promotes public safety*.


Rather than promoting public safety, HF 16 would heighten the panic and insecurity many noncitizens and their families are already feeling. Recently, I've received calls from asylees and green card holders who are terrified they will be wrongfully detained and deported. I've talked with domestic violence survivors who are afraid to request a copy of a police report detailing their abuse. I've heard from people who are literally afraid to leave their homes. When I drop my sons off in the morning at their diverse Minneapolis schools – places I trust to keep them safe - I empathize with the anxiety noncitizens parents must feel as they separate from their children for the day. Our schools and public institutions should be safe for all of us.

Our teachers, police, judges, court clerks, county social workers, and other public employees have important work to do serving the people of Minnesota. Facilitating immigration enforcement would disrupt essential services that we all rely on and strain our state resources. Facilitating immigration enforcement in places that are meant to be safe will dissuade noncitizen and mixed status families from freely participating in public life and accessing basic necessities. This bill undermines our shared values as a welcoming place for families.

Furthermore, it's entirely unnecessary for state employees to use their time facilitating immigration enforcement. The Department of Homeland Security has a robust, well-funded law enforcement agency with sophisticated means of identifying noncitizens who pose a criminal or security threat. Dissuading a dad from taking his child to school, a young person from applying for their first driver's license, or a mom from applying for food assistance for her US citizen children does nothing to serve these ends. This bill would only harm the wellbeing of our families, communities, and public institutions. Please vote No on HF 16.

Very Truly Yours,

J.P. Larson Law Office, LLC

By  _____
Laura Wilson