

Capital Investment Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55155

March 15, 2021

Dear Chairman Lee,

Statistically, Asian women have the highest rate of depression.

I am a Chinese American woman currently living in Saint Paul, Minnesota

I moved to the Midwest after thirty years of living in possibly the most diverse area on the planet – Brooklyn New York. I had no idea how challenging living here would be. My gym classes are filled with white people who have all gone to high school together and know each other's children and grandchildren. Though I claimed a spot front and center, I was largely ignored. On our daily walks around the neighborhood, passersby sometimes say hi to my white husband, but if I walk alone, I rarely get a "hi," or only in winter when I'm wearing a mask, sunglasses, and a hood so they cannot see who I am.

Living in this frosty locale, I have come to feel odd, different, shunned, as if I don't fit in.

I have that feeling of being invisible that Asians often refer to as emblematic of life as an Asian person in America.

I discovered FAWK workshops six months after I moved here in 2018. I can say unequivocally that FAWK *saved me*. As far as my life in MN goes, it was my first and extremely necessary experience of being with a group of Asian women. We found support for our creativity and new lenses through which to view the world—the feeling that we as Asians are part of something great and powerful, especially when we get together. We could feel pride in our identity and for once, claim a rare feeling of solidarity. We were not alone. And we were not invisible. We embodied *possibility*.

At FAWK, I stretch beyond my comfort zone, participating in workshops with professional and aspiring actresses, writers, and comedienne, but every Asian woman is welcomed, no matter what her arena of accomplishment is. In recent years, there was a performance space, and several workshop attendees took the stage. Minnesota suddenly became a colorful place for me, a place where I could feel I fit in.

It is with great sorrow and an overwhelming sense of injustice that I witness the rise in hate crimes against Asians in America. FAWK is needed now more than ever. As Asians, we need to come together, find our voices, share our experiences and access support. Asians are a major part of the movement toward racial equity and justice in Minnesota.

Asian American artists need better representation in Saint Paul in order to thrive and contribute their amazing talents to the community. FAWK has been and is currently one of the pillars of this community. I look forward to the expansion of their programs throughout the future.

Best regards,
SAM Greene