House Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Committee
379 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St Paul, MN 55155
651-296-4257
Re: HF3940
March 14th, 2022

Chair Noor and members of the Workforce Development Committee,

I write today in support of the Department of Employment and Economic Development's new workers proposals.

Hmong American Partnership is a social service and community development nonprofit that serves nearly 30,000 individuals annually. Originally founded in 1990 to serve Minnesota's growing Hmong population, we are now the largest Hmong-serving organization in the nation. Throughout our history, we have witnessed the changing immigrant and refugee community and have expanded and refined our services to meet the needs of Minnesota's newest residents. Our staff reflect the populations we serve. We pride ourselves in empowering our community to embrace the strengths of our cultures while achieving our potential. HAP provides culturally competent programs through our Impact Areas: HAP Academy OIC, Economic Prosperity, and Community Impact. Our services offer support from childhood to late adulthood and create a pathway to prosperity through economic, educational, and social growth.

DEED's proposals for new workers align with HAPs mission and will support the populations we work with. The Office of New American's will help create opportunities and help eliminate barriers between immigrants and connections to the workforce.

Establishing an Office of Ombudsperson for the safety, health, and well-being of agricultural and food processing workers is essential after this pandemic. We have seen how essential these workers are in the most difficult times, this would help to address their health and safety needs in the workplace. We also support funding the extension of the Agricultural Worker Wellness Committee. Our agricultural workers put in long hours and help support the Minnesota economy.

Thank you for your consideration of these proposals.

May yer Thao
President and CEO