

March 10, 2025

Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Novotny and members of the Committee,

My name is Lilian Carcamo. I am from Guatemala.

I fled for my life from my home country of Guatemala in late 2003 and arrived in the United States in 2004. During the summer of 2004, I began dating a man here in Minnesota who I will call "Ivan." At first, we were in a strong relationship and were committed to each other. But he drank too much and began to abuse me. One time he headbutted me so hard it split open my forehead. He physically and emotionally abused me more than just that time. I was afraid of him and did not report this to the police at that time.

I was finally able to leave the relationship in December 2004 but discovered in February 2005 that I was pregnant with "Ivan's" child.

Because we were not together anymore, Ivan had not yet learned that I was pregnant when I went with a friend to a video store called *Video Latino* to rent a video to watch. This was in early March 2005. I saw "Ivan" in the store and thought it was a chance to give him the news.

"Ivan" still did not know I was pregnant with his child so I tried to talk to him and tell him the big surprise. However, he only ignored me. Then he put his finger to his lips, indicating that I should be quiet. I asked him why he was doing this.

I insisted that we had to talk, but instead "Ivan" again told me to be quiet. I then saw that he had brought another woman with him. The woman came up to him and asked, "What's going on, 'Ivan'?" I asked him who this woman was, and he claimed that I was crazy and he did not know me. The other woman said, "I'm his wife! Who are you?" I was in shock, and I asked him, "Why didn't you tell me you were a married man?"

When his wife asked him who I was, he lied and said, "I don't recognize this woman. I don't know her." At that moment I was quite upset, and I was frank with him. I told him I was ten-weeks pregnant with his child. And his wife, coincidentally, said she too was pregnant with his child.

I asked him again for an explanation but he struck me twice in the face, even though I had just told him I was carrying his child. Right there in the rental store, he hit me. I quickly asked the ladies who worked there to phone the police while "Ivan" was still in the store. However, "Ivan" told them that they did not have to call the police. Since the employees called "Ivan" by name, I think they knew him as a regular customer and wanted to cover for him. Therefore, they did not call the police for me.

I then left the video store with my face badly wounded. Marisol helped me and took pictures of my face, and together we went to the police station in order to make a statement about what had happened and how "Ivan" beat me.

My friend gave me the strength to go to the police. If I had thought that the police were going to report me to immigration, I would have been even more afraid and not gone. I was hoping they would give me justice and protection, because that does not happen in my country. The police later arrested "Ivan" for the crimes he committed against me. He was charged with six crimes and made a plea bargain. During the legal process, I had to get an order of protection against "Ivan" and his wife.


As I said earlier, I fled Guatemala out of fear. I had to leave my children behind. Three of my children followed me to the U.S. when I learned that they were being abused. When two of them were caught by immigration at the border and put in deportation proceedings, I also was caught when I took them to one of their hearings.

I, too, was put in deportation proceedings. Because of the persecution I faced in Guatemala, I was able to ask for asylum. But because I had also been a crime victim here and had been helpful to the police, I was also able to ask for a U visa, which is for victims of crime. I was able to get permanent residency. And I will never forget November 25, 2024, because that is the day I became a U.S. citizen.

I am able to remember all that happened to me twenty years ago this month because I had to tell this story and write it down in order to apply for a U visa. I shared this story in Spanish and it was written down in English for me.

I close my letter by asking people to oppose House File 16.

Thank you for your time,


Lilian Carcamo
United States Citizen