TO: MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

HF 1811 | SF 1799 – VOLUNTEERISM BILL

March 19, 2023

My name is Jennifer Galván-Bautista. I am a cabinet Member on the Young Women’s Initiative Cabinet, the Manager of Volunteer Services at CLUES – Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio, and I am also a MAVA member.

CLUES is a non-profit organization serving the Latino community, our focus is to ensure the advancement of social and economic equity and wellbeing for Latinos in MN. CLUES has a team of about 150 staff members and 550+ volunteers annually. Volunteers serve in all of our areas of the organization from administration to frontline work and direct services. Some of our largest and most in demand programs are operated almost entirely by volunteers. Our volunteers distribute healthy food to 100+ families in Minneapolis & St Paul and bi-weekly in Austin MN at our Canasta Familiar Food Shelf, teach our Adult Basic Education classes (4 levels of ESL classes, Computer Literacy, GED & Citizenship Prep courses), and they bring thousands of dollars back to our community members pockets by providing tax prep services in our VITA Tax Program. Many of our volunteers are students and youth who are looking to gain transferable skills and experience, some of our volunteers are undocumented community members who are currently unable to work but have valuable skills to contribute to our community.

I’ve been with CLUES for almost 5 years and am proud of the work and impact that our volunteers make every day, however, my department, just like many others throughout Minnesota, continues to be understaffed and underfunded. I managed this department and CLUES’ amazing volunteer team by myself for 2 years during a pandemic because of lack of funding for my already underfunded department. My experience is not unique. I have been a MAVA member for as long as I’ve been with CLUES and through MAVA I’ve gotten to meet and connect with other Volunteer Engagement Professionals in MN. Throughout the years I continue to see that most other Volunteer Engagement Professionals in MN share the same or similar experiences and it all comes down to one overarching issue – our staff are overworked, and our departments are underfunded.

State funding will provide much needed financial support and job security for volunteer programs and Volunteer Engagement Professionals in Minnesota. It will also support CLUES’ Volunteer Services Department so that us and our volunteers can continue growing and serving our Latino and migrant community in Minnesota through meaningful and engaging volunteer experiences.

Please support MAVA’s Volunteerism Bill - HF1811.

With gratitude,

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**Jennifer Galván-Bautista, CPPM**

Cabinet Member – Young Women’s Initiative Cabinet, Manager of Volunteer Services – CLUES

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