March 4, 2019

Minnesota House of Representatives
Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Division

RE: Minnesota Chamber of Commerce support for HF1500 (Winkler)

Mr. Chair and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Minnesota businesses value the contributions of immigrants to our state. Their roles as workers, entrepreneurs and consumers are important to the development and growth of our economy and our communities. In concert with the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Chamber has completed a number of studies documenting the positive impact of immigrants through workforce participation, taxes paid, business ownership, home ownership and consumer power.

The Minnesota Chamber supports HF1500 for workforce and public safety reasons. Our labor participation rate is second highest nationally. Demographics indicate that as our population continues to age and as our economy grows, Minnesota will not have the number of people needed to meet labor market needs. In the next few years, our population will include more individuals over the age of 65 than school-age kids 5-17 years old. In addition, during the past 17 years, Minnesota has lost population to other states. Immigrants are a key to addressing this challenge.

Minnesota employers rely on immigrant workers to serve their customers. To do this safely, workers should complete drivers' license training, testing and licensing requirements, including securing insurance. We believe this will make roads safer for all drivers.

The Minnesota Chamber supports comprehensive federal immigration reform. As we wait for solutions on the federal level, the state also has a role in dealing with state-specific issues on this matter. This legislation addresses a state-based concern and a state employment and public safety need.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

Laura Bordelon
Senior Vice President, Advocacy

cc: Majority Leader Ryan Winkler