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January 30, 2026

To the attention of the Board of Trustees, College Presidents, and Chancellor of the Minnesota State system.

We are writing to you as members of LeadMN, a student-led organization representing the 2-year community and technical college students in the Minnesota State System, with concern for the safety and well-being of students, staff, and faculty at our institutions. As student leaders, we have the responsibility to raise issues that directly affect the ability of campus communities to provide a safe, accessible, and equitable environment for learning. Current actions being taken by ICE and other federal agencies have created a state of confusion, anxiety, and fear across our campuses, state, and country.

We believe that our colleges and universities want to keep students safe but we are hearing from students across the system that they want more information on what Minnstate and their campus are doing to keep them safe and they are asking for clearer guidelines on alternatives for students unable to make it to campus due to ICE activity. This leaves colleges wondering how to be proactive rather than reactive. We recommend the following actions to ensure the safety of students on our campuses and affirm a commitment to providing an environment where all students can pursue an education regardless of immigration status.

Designation of Non-public Places: While our campuses have many designated public places, not requiring a warrant for entry, spaces designated as “non-public” require the consent of an authorized college official or a judicial warrant to enter. We believe creating and posting signage on campuses to identify and inform everyone of which spaces are non-public will create a safer environment for our students, faculty, and staff. We request that institutions use their full legal authority to set clear boundaries and consider the option of creating a closed campus or otherwise limiting access to spaces on campus.

No Voluntary Cooperation with Immigration Enforcement: College staff must be trained and directed to not share student or family information, allow interviews for students that are under the age of consent, or permit immigration

agents on campus without a valid judicial warrant reviewed by the district's legal counsel.

Identification Requirement: All visitors to the college should identify themselves. Record their name, badge or ID number, and phone number, and present a valid form of identification for additional verification.

Training for All Staff: Annual training on how to respond to immigration enforcement and student privacy protection under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Ensure all staff are aware of the differences and powers between ICE and judicial warrants, with understanding that only a judicial warrant provides grounds to enter private areas on campus.

Clear Protocols: Step-by-step procedures for administrators, faculty, and security staff if immigration officials request access to college grounds or student information, as well as providing a warning to students when / if agents are on campus.

Inform Students, Faculty, and Staff of Their Rights: We request that colleges provide clear, and accessible guidelines to students and employees outlining their rights if approached by immigration enforcement. This information should include:

- The difference between judicial and administrative warrants
- The right to remain silent/decline answering questions
- Whom to contact on campus, and resources in the community if a student is detained.
- Clear guidelines for students if they are unable to attend class in person due to ICE activity.
- Inform students of any legal resources available through the college in the event

When students, staff or faculty feel unsafe and unsupported on our campuses, in seeking academic and mental health support, or living with dignity on campus housing due to fear, the mission of our institutions are compromised. We feel it is of the utmost importance that the Minnesota State System, and our college leadership shows unwavering support to all students during this stressful time and help create a safe learning environment to ensure as little disruption as possible for those affected by the unjust actions of Federal agencies and keep all current protections for students in place.

Minnesota State colleges and universities serve diverse communities, and ensuring campuses remain a place of learning rather than enforcement is essential to student success and institutional integrity. With this in mind, we urge you to communicate, implement and uphold the policies that will best keep our students, staff, and faculty

safe and free to continue creating the educational environment that makes our system great.

Regards,
LeadMN Board of Directors

Andrea Kimlinger

Testimony submitted to: Minnesota House Higher Education Finance & Policy Committee

Date: 2.25.2026

I thank you Chair Wolgamott and members of the committee for reading my testimony. My name is Andrea and I am a nursing student at Hennepin Technical College in Eden Prairie, Vice President of my Student Senate and the Region 4 Representative on the LeadMN Board of Directors. I am writing to share my experience as a college student during Operation Metro Surge and increased and ongoing federal immigration enforcement activities in MN.

I have been living in Minnesota for many years, and it has always been a state that values support around communities, and taking care of people. Within the last months there has been a change and many people are now not feeling comfortable or moving freely in their communities or schools. As an advocate and a student, I have seen and heard fellow students state that they are not coming to school (which decreases enrollment and is hard on their education). There has also been increased stress for people wanting to come out of their homes to keep working toward their education, but fearing for their safety if they do. Or students are focusing mainly on their and their families' basic needs and that is taking priority over school.

In school I have heard from students that they are not comfortable in areas on campus, because they fear for their safety. Safety is a basic need. When students don't feel safe on campus, everything else is affected. Having safety in our schools and community is important so that individuals can manage a healthy lifestyle and get their basic needs met. Feeling safe in school has to come first so students can get their education to go back into our communities, pursue careers and give back.

This affects me in not only school but within my community. Being a student leader and an advocate for others, I hear so many fears and uncertainties about what comes next. I have seen students not be completely up to par when it comes to education and living a comfortable life. As a system and higher education community we need to stand together to make sure that all students are safe and taken care of

Our campuses are places where students should feel safe and supported. If that means even moving classes online at times for the students who need to stay home and also help their families, that should be an easy option.. When we lack protection and when things happen that are not in our control, we as students and advocates just want to be able to continue to live and go to school and also know that we have real support from the system, our school and from our larger community and state.

I am grateful and thankful for the time taken by this committee to hear from impacted students to understand how Operation Metro Surge and current federal immigration enforcement activities have affected us.

What I am hoping that you take from this is a call to action to support our students, who want to feel safe, protected, and valued by our institutions. Also to understand the mental health impacts, the real disruptions to schoolwork, impact to our campus communities, and how that affects our society as a whole.

Thank you to the members of this committee for reading my story.

Sincerely,
Andrea Kimlinger

Fatima, Student, St. Paul College

Testimony submitted to: Minnesota House Higher Education Finance & Policy Committee

Date: February 25, 2026

Thank you Chair Wolgamott and members of the committee for reading my testimony. My name is Fatima, and I am a student at St. Paul College. I am submitting this testimony to share my experience as a college student during Operation Metro Surge and the increased and ongoing federal immigration enforcement activities in Minnesota. As a student, I have been directly affected by everything happening in our communities.

When I returned to school in Fall 2024, St. Paul College embraced me. I found community and support through TRIO programs and other on-campus resources. As a first-generation college student, that support meant everything. There is no handbook for navigating financial aid appeals, transfer processes, leadership opportunities, scheduling changes, and balancing full-time coursework with work responsibilities. St. Paul College became a home for me — a sanctuary where I could work, dream, and build the future I have envisioned my entire life. I felt safe knowing that the people around me had my best interests at heart.

There was a definite shift toward the end of 2025 with everything happening in the Twin Cities. I live in St. Paul and have family and friends in Minneapolis. Operation Metro Surge has shaken my community. Although I am a U.S. citizen, born and raised here, I have carried my passport card with me for months. Knowing my citizenship status does not necessarily protect me has been terrifying, especially as people are being targeted based on what they look like.

I have been staying with my family in their neighborhood, which is predominantly Somali, because during times of crisis, families come together. There were agents outside of our parking premises stopping people as they were trying to warm up their cars and leave for work — in the middle of winter. A young woman who is also a U.S. citizen, born and raised here like me, was detained and kidnapped after being stopped outside. Seeing that happen changed everything for me.

Now I constantly think: If I leave home, will I be able to come back? Even if I were released, what would happen to my job during that time? My classes? How do I focus on school when the fear is constant? The world continues moving forward. I still have bills to pay. I still have assignments due. But the stress and anxiety make it incredibly difficult to excel academically or be fully present at work.

There have been no accommodations made statewide for higher education students who feel unsafe. No extended tuition deadlines, no automatic flexibility in drop deadlines, no guaranteed hybrid options — it is left entirely to individual faculty discretion. Meanwhile, I know students who have not returned this semester because school feels like a privilege they cannot afford when their safety or their family's safety is at risk. We even received news that a student was detained by ICE right outside of campus. It no longer feels like there are safe spaces.

School should be a sanctuary — a place where students can escape hardship, learn, and imagine a better future. Instead, many of us are forced to choose between our personal safety and coming to campus. I am asking for your support in ensuring that our colleges remain safe spaces for all students, regardless of background. Students pursuing higher education are doing so because they believe in a better future. We need stability and safety to make that future possible.

Thank you to the members of this committee for reading my story. Thank you for your consideration of how to support the safety and well-being of college students across the state, and I hope you will take meaningful steps to ensure that students can continue their education without fear.



Minnesota Association of
Private College Students

February 25, 2026

Dear Honorable House Higher Education Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today. On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Private College Students (MAPCS), student leaders across Minnesota's 18 private colleges who advocate on behalf of approximately 51,000 students, I would like to express our strong opposition to Operation Metro Surge and ICE's drastic negative impacts on our college campuses.

It goes without saying that college students are collectively experiencing an unprecedented level of shared anger, grief, and trauma. While we may be relegated to the singular term of "student", each student is a friend, family, and community member. Thus, it is difficult to focus and prioritize studying when our fellow students are being stalked, kidnapped, and deported by ICE. Every time someone we know is abducted, we carry that grief and fear as a community. Although we have done what we can to remain resilient, it is difficult not to be consumed by the feeling of helplessness and questions about if school can safely remain a priority.

The last time we experienced this level of collective trauma was the COVID-19 pandemic, and I have heard from students directly that this moment feels worse. Across our colleges, we have seen larger increases in the usage of our food pantries, mental health resources, and absenteeism. Students are being racially profiled and stopped in the street and being asked to produce their birth certificate or passport, something most have never felt they had to carry on them at all times. Now students, staff, and faculty who fear racial profiling bring legal documents with them everywhere they go, for fear of violent consequences at the hands of ICE if they forget. In conjunction with these harassment and intimidation tactics, students are afraid to come to class in-person. Pre-existing distrust in police officers and law enforcement have been exacerbated by ICE. Increased levels of paranoia have eroded trust within and outside of college campuses and their communities.

All of these factors combined directly impact students' ability to focus, learn, and prepare themselves adequately for their futures. The negative impacts of the continuation of Operation Metro Surge is not only immediate, but also impacts the future of Minnesota that is entrusted to the younger generation. As student leaders, our college campuses are intended to be safe spaces to learn and grow, and we have done our best to maintain that mission. I've seen how students

rally for each other, establish mutual aid programs and networks that all students can rely on, and bring our communities together rather than allow division to fester. Students have become the embodiment of hope. We hope that the state legislature will mirror the hope met with action modeled by our fellow students. Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective with you today.

In solidarity,

Willow, on behalf of the Minnesota Association of Private College Students (MAPCS)

William H. Luther – Director of State Affairs for the Undergraduate Student Government at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities

February 26th, 2026, House Higher Ed. Committee

Chair Rarick, Chair Wolgamott, and members of this committee. Thank you for having me! My name is William Luther. I am the Director of State Affairs for the Undergraduate Student Government at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, and we represent the 30,000 undergraduate students at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

Today's discussion is important. Students from all parts of this state returned to class after the heartbreaking events that occurred in the city where we study. As a member of our student government, we've heard countless stories from students who were afraid to leave their dorms, apartments, or homes in fear of being swept up by immigration enforcement, regardless of whether they are U.S. citizens or lawful residents of this country.

One thing that makes the University of Minnesota Twin Cities great is its location in Minneapolis and St. Paul, where students live, work, and learn in a city the New York Times named the best for new college graduates. A large majority of our students live off campus, either commuting from home or living in off-campus housing. Although ICE agents are not permitted on University property without a warrant, the 4th Amendment protections that apply to the University of Minnesota's property do not apply in public streets and neighborhoods where most students live and commute to class from. During Operation Metro Surge, the neighborhoods that border our campus, Dinkytown, Cedar-Riverside, Marcy, and Como all saw significant ICE activity.

One of the students we heard from was Thanh; his stepfather was swept up by immigration enforcement during the surge. His stepfather was a refugee from Vietnam and has been living in this country for 40 years. With his father taken during the surge, it is hard for Thanh to juggle schoolwork, sort out his family's finances, and find legal support for his father. On top of that, the constant worry about not knowing where his father is, where he will be taken, and whether his father will even get to see a judge to set the record straight takes a toll on Thanh.

Operation Metro Surge has impacted students in many ways. Like Thanh, students with parents who were taken by immigration enforcement now face the challenge of juggling schoolwork, helping their family, and fighting to free their guardian from ICE detention. Students had to decide whether to attend class and risk their safety or fall behind in their education. We urge this committee to take action to protect students during these unprecedented times.

Thank you, William H. Luther
Director of State Affairs – UMN Undergraduate Student Government