

Minnesota House of Representatives
Legacy Finance Committee

Dear Chair McDonald, Chair Vang and Members of the Committee,

I am Jane Graupman, the Executive Director of the International Institute of Minnesota. The Institute has provided comprehensive services to immigrants in our community for 106 years, including education, workforce, immigration and refugee services.

The past two and a half months have seen unprecedented times and actions in our community, particularly for and toward New Americans in our state. The first case of detainment that we heard of was in early January 2026—a refugee family came to the Institute terrified after their house was surrounded by approximately eight ICE officers with guns drawn demanding entrance to their home. The family was scared and confused and had no idea what was happening. The ICE officers took their 19-year-old son who happened to be coming home at the time the officers were outside. The family was here legally and had no criminal record. The Institute tracked the son to the Whipple building, provided legal support and eventually got him released. There were 14 additional refugees here in legal status who were also arrested and detained that reached out to the Institute for help. Of these 15 refugees, 14 were transported (within 24 hours) to Texas or Mississippi after being arrested and detained. After a week or weeks, they were released without their documents, into a state they had never been in and with no idea how to get home. We had a client that was moved three times during detainment and another that was beaten, for no reason, by four ICE officers while in detention. The Institute had to locate these individuals and provide legal assistance to get them back home. On January 29th the New York Times reported that there had been more than 100 cases of legal refugees arrested and detained in Minnesota.

Currently refugees and other legal residents in our state are being “reinterviewed” by US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) even though they have already been extensively vetted and, as a result, granted refugee status in the United States. Under Operation PARRIS, USCIS is targeting refugees who have not yet received their green cards, but are here in legal status. Most of them have applied for their green cards, but it takes two years after arrival in the United States for them to be granted so many of those targeted could not yet have received them. The long-standing refugee program with clear protocols and security screenings is being scrutinized as are the people who have come through this program. We are deeply concerned about the future safety and security of refugees and immigrants in our community.

Jane Graupman, Executive Director, International Institute of Minnesota