January 25, 2021

RE: HFXXX Certifications for Victims of Crimes

Dear Chair Mariana and members of the Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform and Finance Policy Committee:

I, Ernest Wiafe, attorney, support the proposed bill and respectfully request that members of this committee support efforts to prevent the victimization of Minnesota residents especially in Greater Minnesota. HFXXX promotes a streamlined certification process throughout the state of Minnesota which will provide guidance to law enforcement agencies when receiving such requests. This will be most beneficial to law enforcement agencies with fewer resources. Furthermore, HFXXX promotes the protection of crime victims and ensures that foreign national crime victims are available to assist in the prosecution of those accused of the crimes.
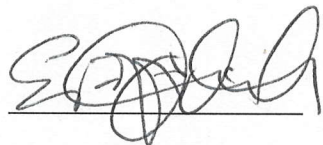
Currently, there is no standard certification process throughout Minnesota. Foreign national/immigrant victims of crimes are treated differently depending on the community where the crime occurred. This was not the intention of Congress. Congress created the U visa to address the problem that immigrant women and children are often targeted to be victims of crimes committed against them in the United States, including domestic violence, sexual assault, involuntary servitude, being held hostage or being criminally restrained. However, unless and until this state develops a statewide certification process, the intent of congress to protect all immigrant victims of crimes cannot be fulfilled to the full extent of the law.

This process has made the community safer by providing law enforcement with additional resources to protect victims and apprehend perpetrators. This program has been beneficial to local law enforcement by providing a connection to crime victims and their testimonies. Communities' safety will benefit greatly from the proposed bill.

Supporting HFXXX will allow communities throughout Greater Minnesota foster positive relationships with law enforcement.

Thank you for your consideration and your support.

Sincerely,