

# Paschal Nwokocha & Chukwu

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**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, Paschal Nwokocha, an immigrant and a Minneapolis immigration 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. The agencies will not have to devote resources researching or consulting with counsel on whether they should sign such certification requests. 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.

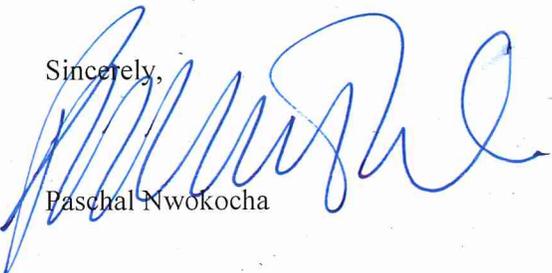
Currently, there is no standard certification process throughout Minnesota. Foreign national/immigrant victims of crimes are treated differently depending on the community where the crime occurred. This was not the intention of Congress. Congress created the U visa to address the problem that immigrant 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.

In my practice, I have encountered foreign national victims of crime who have received differing treatments because of the city where the crime occurred. Some cities, for various reasons, are not willing to sign the certification requests, while others are. This makes it even more difficult for foreign national crime victims in cities hostile to requests by foreign nationals to come forward with complaints or cooperate with investigations; they and their immediate family members do not feel welcome.

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

Thank you for your consideration and your support.

Sincerely,

  
Paschal Nwokocha