

March 11, 2025

Rep. Paul Novotny, Chair  
MN House of Representatives  
Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee

***VIA EMAIL***

**RE: Written Comment in Opposition to HF16**

Dear Chair Novotny and Members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee,

We, the undersigned organizations, respectfully submit this letter in opposition to HF16. The undersigned organizations are legal and social service providers, grassroots and community advocacy organizations, unions, and religious institutions across the state of Minnesota.

The entire foundation of HF16 is based on an **erroneous underlying presumption** regarding the connection between immigration and criminal activity. HF16 assumes that increasing cooperation and interaction between state and local law enforcement and federal immigration authorities will yield better public safety outcomes through more arrests and prosecutions of alleged criminals. This presumption rests on the idea that immigrants are committing more crimes than other people. However, research has shown that **immigrants make communities more safe, not less safe**. In fact, immigrants, both documented and undocumented, are less likely to be arrested and jailed than U.S. citizens. More immigration enforcement doesn't reduce overall crime rates, and sanctuary policies don't increase crime rates.<sup>1</sup>

HF16 will have **detrimental public safety impacts on all Minnesotans**, including U.S. citizens and people with lawful immigration status by prohibiting sanctuary-type policies at the state and local level. One of the key principles underlying separation, or sanctuary, ordinances and laws is that people who are victims of, or witnesses to, a crime should feel safe in reporting that crime to state or local law enforcement, regardless of their immigration status. If people are afraid that state or local law enforcement will share information about their immigration status with federal immigration authorities, they are less likely to report crimes and/or cooperate with criminal investigations. This hinders public safety for everyone.

HF16 will have **particularly negative impacts on vulnerable populations**, such as noncitizens who are victims of domestic abuse or human trafficking. People in these

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<sup>1</sup> American Immigration Council, Oct. 2024, "Debunking the Myth of Immigrants and Crime," [https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/debunking\\_the\\_myth\\_of\\_immigrants\\_and\\_crime.pdf](https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/debunking_the_myth_of_immigrants_and_crime.pdf); David Bier, Cato Institute, Testimony before The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Mar. 2025, [Bier-Written-Testimony.pdf](#).

situations may be threatened with being reported to immigration authorities and subjected to deportation to prevent them from seeking assistance. HF16 would give more weight to these threats, and people being victimized by abusers or traffickers would be less likely to make reports to law enforcement, cooperate with investigations, or even seek medical treatment at a county healthcare facility. This not only continues the cycle of harm to victims, but negatively impacts public safety by making it harder to investigate and prosecute crimes.

Notably, in the last two terms, the **Minnesota Legislature has advanced bipartisan legislation lifting up the humanity and interests of vulnerable immigrants**, including provisions to enhance the U visa process for immigrant victims of crime, to align state criminal law with federal immigration law to avoid disproportionate collateral consequences of a state-level conviction, to expand access to Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) for neglected, abandoned, or abused immigrant youth, and enhancing protections for immigrants who are vulnerable to labor trafficking. We ask that you continue this approach to supporting vulnerable immigrants and enhancing public safety for all Minnesotans through this type of measured bipartisan legislation.

HF16 will do little to promote public safety, while doing a lot to harm all Minnesotans – especially the most vulnerable.

We respectfully urge the committee to vote no on HF16.

Sincerely,

Asylum Coalition for Transition – Twin Cities	LatinoLEAD
CAPI USA	Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
The Center for Victims of Torture	Minnesota Budget Project
Coalition of Asian American Leaders	Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
COPAL	Minnesota Freedom Fund
Fe y Justicia	Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee (MIRAC)
ICOM	MN8
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota	PRISM
Indivisible Bemidji	UFCW 663
Indivisible Twin Cities	Women's March Minnesota
Interfaith Committee for Migrant Justice - Duluth	