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Chair Paul Novotny
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Novotny, and Committee Members:

We write to express opposition to HF16, which conscribes our police and prosecutors into the federal immigration bureaucracy. The Minnesota Legislature and the Hennepin County Attorney's Office share a responsibility for stewarding law enforcement resources, standing up for crime victims and witnesses, and bringing violent and dangerous offenders to justice. HF16 undermines our shared responsibilities by diverting the limited resources of police and prosecutors away from investigating and prosecuting violent offenders and into immigration enforcement, which is the sole function of the federal government.

HF16 would divert the resources of our police and prosecutors away from crime-fighting. By misplacing a federal responsibility onto our local police and prosecutors, HF16 would force us to divert time and resources away from investigating and prosecuting dangerous offenders. Every minute a police officer and a prosecutor spend working for the federal immigration bureaucracy is a minute not spent investigating the crimes that harm our residents, like murders and drug trafficking. HF16 would strain our ability to hold violent offenders accountable and deliver justice for victims.

HF16 would prevent victims from talking to our police and testifying against violent offenders. HF16 would force our police and prosecutors to report residents to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. When victims and witnesses view our police and prosecutors as an extension of ICE, they stop talking to our police and ask us to drop charges against dangerous offenders. This is not speculation; we are seeing it every day in communities across Minnesota. Our ability to prosecute violent crimes, like shootings, rapes, and carjackings, depends on the trust of victims and witnesses.

Violent offenders would brandish HF16 like a weapon. By requiring that anyone who is arrested has to be reported to ICE, HF16 would give dangerous offenders a menu of false accusations they can use to silence victims and witnesses or disappear them out of the country. This chilling effect on victims and witnesses would make it easier for violent offenders to escape justice. Human traffickers, drug traffickers, and abusive intimate partners thrive when victims cannot come forward. If victims and witnesses stop talking to our police and prosecutors, dangerous offenders will have free rein to run roughshod through Minnesota's neighborhoods. HF16 would not make us safer—it would do the opposite.

Because of our shared responsibility for stewarding law enforcement resources, standing up for victims and witnesses of crime, and bringing violent and dangerous offenders to justice, we must oppose the passage of HF16. Failing to reject HF16 swiftly compromises active criminal investigations and prosecutions, which depend on the trust of courageous victims and witnesses.

We urge the committee to reject HF16 and instead promote policies that support our police and prosecutors in the work we do—keeping Minnesotans safe. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.