

March 19, 2024

Minnesota House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee

Committee Chair Rep. Kelly Moller
509 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Committee Vice Chair Rep. Sandra Feist
409 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative
Paul Novotny
Ranking Minority Leader
Public Safety Finance and Policy
301 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Moller and Members,

Esperanza United mobilizes Latine communities to end gender-based violence. For more than 40 years, Esperanza United has offered critical services and supports to survivors and their families including emergency shelter and prevention and social change efforts in Minnesota.” This year, Esperanza United is asking the Minnesota Legislature to adopt legislation to investigate the high incidence of violence against Latina women, including LGBT Minnesotans in the Latine community, and fund its prevention.

That is why Esperanza United is working with the partners listed below to support [SF4258/HF4417](#) that Senator Alice Mann and Representative Alicia Kozlowski are authoring. [SF4258/HF4417](#) will create the Task force on preventing violence against Latina women.

Latina Minnesotans need your help:

- Gender-based violence is deadly in Minnesota. According to the 2022 Status of Women and Girls in Minnesota report, at least 21 Minnesotans were killed by a current or former partner in 2019 alone. Between 2015 and 2019, 138 Minnesotans lost their mothers to domestic violence (<https://bit.ly/wfmn22>).
- We have high rates of sexual violence in our state and communities. According to the University of Minnesota, 42% of Minnesota women reported sexual violence in their lifetime, with 20% experiencing rape or attempted rape. Nationally, 36% of Latinas reported sexual violence in their lives (<https://bit.ly/wfmn22>).
- Family violence affects Minnesota girls. Among Minnesota students in grades 8, 9, and 11, 78% of girls from homes with domestic violence reported depression and

hopelessness, 49% hurt themselves, and 40% contemplated suicide (<https://bit.ly/wfmn22>).

- A significant number of sexual assaults reported to Minnesota police are not seriously investigated according to research done at Minnesota State University. Many of these cases involve Latina women facing language barriers and social isolation(<https://bit.ly/mnsu14>).
- Gender-based violence is costly in economic terms. According to the CDC, female survivors of domestic violence lose an average of \$103,767 and female survivors of sexual violence lose an average of \$122,461 over their lifetimes thanks to related costs such as treatment for related injuries, productivity loss in the workplace, and time spent accessing the criminal justice system (<https://bit.ly/cdcvp>).
- According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, 47% of victims of sex and labor exploitation in the US are Latin@ (<https://bit.ly/nhth21>) – an outsized amount as Latin@s make up under 20% of the population according to the US Census (<https://bit.ly/USCensus22>).

Creating the Task force on preventing violence against Latina women will help address these disparities by dedicating resources, increasing media coverage and coordinating better state-wide responses. In addition, this office will help us understand the root causes of violence toward Latina women and the LGBT Latine community, while providing support for victims of domestic violence and focusing on violence prevention. Passing HFXX and establishing the Task force on preventing violence against Latina women will be a step in the right direction towards a Minnesota that protects all women and gender-expansive people.

We the undersigned urge you to support this bill.

Tamara Ramirez-Torres, High School
Teacher
El Colegio High School Minneapolis, MN



Rosa Tock, Executive Director,
Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
(MCLA)



Amáda Márquez Simula, Mayor of the
city of Columbia Heights



Ashley Booker, YWCA St. Paul Chief
Executive Officer

Ivette Izea-Martinez, Director of
Community Impact & Program Strategy



Individuals in support of [SF4258/HF4417](#):

Leticia Guadarrama, Edina Resident &
Former Minneapolis Public Schools
Teacher

Ruben Vazquez, Minneapolis Resident

Juventino Meza, West Saint Paul
Resident

Merrick Meyer, Minneapolis Resident

Chris Huot, Crystal Resident

Alfonso Wenker, Minneapolis Resident

Mónica Romero, Minneapolis Resident

Jennifer Reyes, Minnesota Council on
Latino Affairs (MCLA) Council Member,
Hibbing Resident

Nelly Korman
School board director, Bloomington
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Teacher, SLP High School.

Brigid Higgins, Minneapolis Resident

Doremi Tinoco, Woodbury Resident

Elvis Rivera, Brooklyn Park Resident

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Aqui Para Ti/Here for You, Medical
Director, Hennepin Healthcare

Edwin Torres DeSantiago, Minnetonka
Resident

Alejandra Bejarano, Mankato resident

Nicole Donoso, Voices for Racial
Justice policy organizer

Francisco J. Gonzalez, former Council
Member, Metropolitan Council

CC: Rep. Alicia Kozlowski
Ellen McDaniel