



**IMMIGRANT
LAW CENTER**
— *of MINNESOTA* —

Representative Jamie Becker-Finn, Chair
Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
559 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Peggy Scott, GOP Lead
Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
335 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

February 3, 2023

Dear Chair Becker-Finn and Republican Lead Scott:

My name is Glenn Leitch, and I am the Treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM), the leading provider of free, comprehensive immigration legal services and education to Minnesota's immigrant and refugee communities. I am also the former Executive Vice President of Supply Chain for Hormel Foods and the former President of Jennie-O Turkey Store, where I had the privilege of working with New Americans at every level of these companies. I am also a long-time resident of Willmar, Minnesota, where immigrants and refugees have enriched our community over the last few decades.

I have had the pleasure of working with attorneys and paralegals over much of the past 40 years, most often in the capacity as a beneficiary of their knowledge and a customer of their services, often in a corporate setting. More recently, as a board member for ILCM, I have witnessed some exceptional legal work by a talented and dedicated staff. These professionals provide services that are extraordinarily important to ensure that we are supporting Minnesotans with proper representation. For the immigrant community, this can often be the difference between remaining a family unit or being separated.

While all attorneys have fact-based learning skills, ILCM attorneys and support staff also carry with them extraordinary compassion and commitment. This commitment often means they need to hold on to a case for years as the judicial process moves slowly. A client is often solely dependent on the skill and perseverance of the attorney on their case to navigate a complex system. And while these exceptional skills are evident, these attorneys are compensated well below market rates for attorneys in the business world. Having seen both sides work, I would suggest that the market rates should be far more closely aligned than they are today.



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We know that immigrants are essential to our Minnesota workforce of the present and of the future. Having attorneys compensated at a rate that keeps them in their roles for longer periods of time will help ensure the best outcomes for their clients, and for Minnesota as well. We also want to ensure that talented individuals who support public sector endeavors, and who love what they do, are not drawn away solely with compensation as the reason.

As an added note, I also happen to be fairly well versed in the cost of law school today, as I have had two children and one daughter-in-law graduate from Minnesota law schools in the past few years. We know we need attorneys to ensure proper representation, and we also know that graduate school brings additional financial burdens to most students. Additional financial support will not only assist the obvious need here, but will in all likelihood ensure that more attorneys are able to make this type of work their career choice. Skills they gain through greater longevity will not only assist their client base, but will also show a return on investment for Minnesota in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

| /s/ Glenn Leitch

Glenn Leitch