



March 18, 2024

Chair Moller and Members of the House Public Safety Committee
Via Electronic Delivery

Re: Letter in Support of H.F. 4417

Dear Chair Moller and Committee Members,

Violence Free Minnesota, the coalition to end relationship abuse, and the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, write jointly in support of H.F. 4417. Our support for this bill is rooted in our dedication to ensuring that Minnesota residents of all backgrounds are served equitably when they experience violence.

Latina women are both more likely to experience domestic and sexual violence and less likely to be provided with adequate help when they attempt to access resources to assist them with their healing from these traumas than the general public. Whether reaching out to law enforcement, community based advocacy, healthcare, housing providers, or any other service that may be useful to them, Latina women are more likely to encounter barriers. These barriers range from language and cultural differences and misunderstandings to active racism.

In the past few years, offices for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and African American Women and Girls have been created, and have been a critical step in addressing disparities. By applying a culturally specific lens to a problem which has been exacerbated by cultural differences, we have been able to help begin the process of remediating past harms and ending ongoing harms.

Minnesota has long been a leader in domestic and sexual violence prevention, but Minnesota has also long been a leader in unacceptable racial disparity across cultural metrics. We cannot continue to be a proud leader in crime victim services if those services aren't reaching *every* resident of our state. In supporting this bill, you are supporting your survivor community, your Latina community, and your State. Please support this bill.

Sincerely,

Guadalupe Lopez
Executive Director
Violence Free Minnesota

Pahoua Vang
Executive Director
Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault