



Oromo Culture Institute of Minnesota

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March 24, 2022

To: Jobs & Economic Growth Finance and Policy

RE: ONA Office

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Girma Hassen, Chair of Oromo Culture Institute of Minnesota. I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the establishment of the Minnesota Office for New Americans, with Bill Number: [H.F. 4355](#) which will promote inclusion and more equitable access to programs and services for the more than 472,000 immigrants and refugees who live in Minnesota.

In 2019 alone, immigrants and refugees in the Minneapolis area held \$1.2 billion in spending power and paid over \$284 million in federal taxes and \$159 million in state and local taxes. This report also found that immigrants and refugees played a critical role in our city's ability to weather the pandemic - they made up 42% of the essential services workforce, 18% of healthcare workers, 18% of food service workers, 25% of transportation and warehousing workers and 15% of the essential retail trade workforce.

The Oromo community consist of hard-working citizens, business owners, organization leaders and healthcare professionals ranging from nurses and physicians. The Oromo community is in partnership with local and state level agencies that are serving immigrants and refugees. When communities are empowered, their contribution to the state's economy is increased. In collaboration with the African communities and other immigrants and refugees, we are also working with Assistant Commissioner Anisa Hajimumin on addressing the workforce shortage in the healthcare industry and creating collaboration with employers and the business community in greater Minnesota.

It's vital to create a centralized office that will help improve immigrant and refugee inclusion in education workforce and economic development, the centralized services for new Americans will help fill the gap between communities, state and the workforce shortage.

Oromo Culture Institute of Minnesota is pleased support the creation of the Minnesota Office of New Americans, so that all Minnesotans have the opportunity to thrive and contribute to the state's growth.

Sincerely,

Girma Hassen, Chair of Oromo Culture Institute of Minnesota