



January 10, 2023

Senator Scott Dibble, Chair
Transportation Committee
1100 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Dibble,

On behalf of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber, I write to express my support for SF27. In 2020 the Minneapolis Regional Chamber commissioned a report that highlights the critical role that our immigrant and refugee communities play in our regional economy, from spending power to the workforce. As of 2019, immigrants and refugees made up 14.9% of the total population for the City of Minneapolis and leveraged \$1.2 billion in spending power. While immigrants and refugees make up nearly 15% of the total population, they make up 17.4% of the working age population and are over 20% more likely to be of working age than their U.S. -born counterparts.

This report also confirmed what many of us already knew - immigrants and refugees played a critical role in our region's ability to weather the pandemic. Immigrants and refugees 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. These industries that are disproportionately populated by immigrants and refugees are some of the very same industries that are still struggling to find workers today.

While the Minneapolis Regional Chamber is a strong advocate for expanding access to multimodal transit and transportation options, we recognize the reality that most people need a car to get to and from work and employers need and want them to be able to do so safely. While we know we need meaningful and comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level, we believe this legislation will go a long way in helping meet the immediate needs of employers and enable our immigrant and refugee neighbors to continue making a stronger and more vibrant Twin Cities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Weinhagen', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Weinhagen
President & CEO
Minneapolis Regional Chamber



Cc: Senator Kelly Morrison, Vice Chair
Senator John R. Jasinski, Ranking Minority Member
Majority Leader Kari Dziejic
Speaker Melissa Hortman
Senator Zaynab Mohamed
Representative Aisha Gomez