

February 13, 2024

Chair Ron Latz
Senate Judiciary and Public Safety—G-15 Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee:

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (the Council) submits this letter in support of S.F. 3441 and S.F. 3447, both offered by Senator Gustafson, to prevent domestic abuse advocates from disclosing certain information about domestic abuse victims without their consent and to provide resources to victims of these crimes through the Office of Justice Programs.

The Council is charged by the Legislature with the statutory duty of advocating on behalf of Minnesota's Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities, acting as the liaison between state government and Minnesota's API communities, and serving as an advisory body to the Legislature and the Governor. It is in this capacity that we strongly urge the passage of S.F. 3441 and S.F. 3447.

The Council has long supported efforts to prevent gender-based, domestic, and sexual violence in Minnesota and encourages the Legislature to approach domestic abuse prevention through a holistic approach. This should include appropriate roles for state agencies such as the Minnesota Department of Health and the Department of Public Safety, including the Office of Justice Programs. S.F. 3447 makes important contributions towards this approach, particularly through its prioritization of culturally specific programs.

Domestic violence remains a major concern within Minnesota's API communities. Community-based domestic abuse advocates play an indispensable role in supporting victims by establishing relationships based on trust and understanding and by providing victims critical access to cultural and linguistically appropriate services. S.F. 3441 would strengthen that foundation of trust and give victims of domestic abuse the confidence that, in their most vulnerable moments, they can seek assistance from community-based advocates without fear of disclosure and exposure that could potentially threaten the safety of themselves and their family. In this way, the changes proposed in S.F. 3441 will ease a potential barrier to victims seeking emergency shelter, crisis intervention, and other supports and information that can assist them in reaching a safe environment.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of these bills and urge their adoption to support victims and improve access to culturally-relevant domestic abuse prevention programs.

Sincerely,



Andrew Morris
Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison
Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans