



April 9, 2024

Chair Ron Latz
3105 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ranking Minority Member
Warren Limmer
2221 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Latz and Members

I am writing on behalf of Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES), to support Esperanza United's request to adopt legislation to investigate the high incidence of violence against Latina women, LGBT Minnesotans Latine communities, and fund education and prevention services SF4258/HF4417. SF4258/HF4417 will help create the Task force to assess prevention measures on violence against Latina women and LGBT communities and to make recommendations for the State to improve gender-based violence in our community. According to the 2022 Status of Women and Girls in Minnesota report, 21 Minnesotans were killed by a current or former partner in 2019 alone.

Our communities are experiencing high rates of sexual violence in Minnesota –many of these cases involving Latina women who face language barriers and social isolation (<https://bit.ly/mnsu14>). A significant number of sexual assaults reported to Minnesota police are not seriously investigated according to research done at Minnesota State University. According to the University of Minnesota, 42% of Minnesota women reported sexual violence in their lifetime, with 20% experiencing rape or attempted rape. Nationally, 36% of Latinas reported sexual violence in their lives (<https://bit.ly/wfmn22>). Among Minnesota students in grades 8, 9, and 11, 78% of girls from homes with domestic violence reported depression and hopelessness, 49% hurt themselves, and 40% contemplated suicide (<https://bit.ly/wfmn22>). In addition, according to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, 47% of victims of sex and labor exploitation in the US are Latin@ (<https://bit.ly/nhth21>).

Creating the Task force on preventing violence against Latina women will help address these disparities and assess the root causes of violence toward Latina women and the LGBT Latine communities. Latino-centered organizations like Esperanza United and CLUES are dedicated to end hate and violence against our communities. We need resources to increase awareness, education, and coordination of prevention services across the State. We urge your support for HF4417 to establish the Task force on preventing violence against Latina women to help us protect women and gender-expansive people in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruby Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Ruby Lee
President & CEO