

April 12, 2024

Minnesota Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

Chair Ron Latz

3105 Minnesota Senate Bldg., St. Paul, MN 55155

Ranking Minority Member Warren Limmer

2221 Minnesota Senate Bldg., St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Latz and members,

Esperanza United mobilizes Latine communities to end gender-based violence. For more than 40 years, Esperanza United has offered critical services and supports to survivors and their families including emergency shelter and prevention and social change efforts in Minnesota.” This year, Esperanza United is asking the Minnesota Legislature to adopt legislation to investigate the high incidence of violence against Latina women, including queer Latines, in Minnesotans and fund its prevention.

That is why Esperanza United is working with the partners and community listed below to support [SF4258/HF4417](#) that Senator Alice Mann and Representative Alicia Kozlowski are authoring. [SF4258/HF4417](#) will result in a report focused on preventing violence against Latina women and queer Latines in Minnesota.

Latina Minnesotans need your help:

- Gender-based violence is deadly in Minnesota. According to the 2022 Status of Women and Girls in Minnesota report, at least 21 Minnesotans were killed by a current or former partner in 2019 alone. Between 2015 and 2019, 138 Minnesotans lost their mothers to domestic violence (<https://bit.ly/wfmn22>).
- We have high rates of sexual violence in our state and communities. 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>).
- Family violence affects Minnesota girls. 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>).
- A significant number of sexual assaults reported to Minnesota police are not seriously investigated according to research done at Minnesota State University. Many of these cases involve Latina women facing language barriers and social isolation(<https://bit.ly/mnsu14>).
- Gender-based violence is costly in economic terms. According to the CDC, female survivors of domestic violence lose an average of \$103,767 and female survivors of sexual violence lose an average of \$122,461 over their lifetimes thanks to related costs

such as treatment for related injuries, productivity loss in the workplace, and time spent accessing the criminal justice system (<https://bit.ly/cdcvp>).

- According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, 47% of victims of sex and labor exploitation in the US are Latin@ (<https://bit.ly/nhth21>) – an outsized amount as Latin@s make up under 20% of the population according to the US Census (<https://bit.ly/USCensus22>).

Creating a report on preventing violence against Latina women and queer Latines will help address these disparities by dedicating resources, increasing media coverage and coordinating better state-wide responses. In addition, this report will help us understand the root causes of violence toward Latina women and the LGBT Latine community, while providing support for victims of domestic violence and focusing on violence prevention.

We the undersigned urge you to support [SF4258/HF4417](#).

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