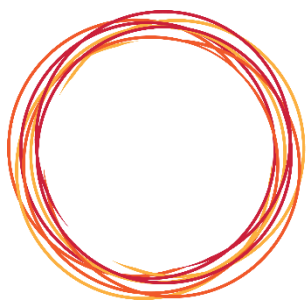




The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

Statement of Support for SF509- The Center for Victims of Torture

The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) supports SF 509 to create an alternative pathway for licensure for internationally educated physicians who are now living in Minnesota. Since 1985, CVT has provided comprehensive care to survivors of torture who have been forced to flee their countries and have come to Minnesota.

Throughout our history, CVT clients have come from over 30 different countries and come with a wide variety of educational and professional backgrounds. We work with people who were physicians, engineers, teachers, nurses and farmers, etc. We provide comprehensive mental health, social services and medical services to our clients who come to us with nightmares, flashbacks, and depression related to their torture experience and subsequent exile.

Our clients improve with the care they receive and as they are able to return to the things that were meaningful to them in life: reuniting with family, returning to school, returning to work. However, our clients who have worked in certain professions like medicine have not been able to return to their jobs because of the barriers that are in place; many would have to start from scratch, which is virtually impossible when coming to a new country and needing to earn money to survive. As a result, many of our clients accept low paying jobs where they are underemployed. One client said, "Our dreams die because we have to make ends meet." Clients tell us that not being able to work in their field of study and practice prevents them from having a full sense of purpose and meaning in their lives.

This bill not only addresses the problem of the workforce shortage of physicians in Minnesota, it also paves a way for a fuller sense of healing for our clients who survived torture and were able to escape danger and start life anew in Minnesota. Our clients are eager to participate in the work force in Minnesota at the highest level their education and experience affords.

Thank you for the opportunity to briefly share our clients' experiences and support this bill.