



Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote- Michigan

**Written Testimony for Michigan State Senate Judiciary Committee regarding HB 4105
and HB 4334**

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Good afternoon Chairman Lower and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Aamina Ahmed and I am the executive director for Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote – Michigan.

Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote – Michigan is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that serves the Asian and Pacific Islander American (APIA) community through civic participation, advocacy, and education. At 2.97% of Michigan’s population, our state’s 293,766 APIAs¹ are the fastest-growing population while other populations are declining.

Our mission is to serve the APIA community through civic participation, advocacy, and education. Given that two-thirds of our community in Michigan is foreign born, the APIA community faces many challenges to integration due to language barriers, lack of familiarity with the political process, and, sometimes, distrust of government, including law enforcement, due to the history of home country political corruption. This distrust is further exacerbated by recent high profile cases of anti-Asian immigrant violence at the hands of law enforcement across the country with outcomes that have shown a lack of justice for families of victims. However, some Michigan cities and counties are working hard, investing in relationships with immigrant communities to promote trust in the name of public safety.

Now, House Bills 4105 and 4334 would effectively punish cities and counties that prioritize public safety and community trust over cooperation with federal immigration. These bills would penalize the exercise of any local police discretion to limit inquiries into immigration status in any manner, and would strip certain funding from localities that attempt to balance multiple public safety considerations. The threat of withholding funding to local units outlined in HB 4105 would create gross incentives for racial profiling by local police who fear loss of funding that would impact all of public safety.

Further, these bills jeopardize sanctuary practices that are particularly important for immigrant victims of domestic violence, an important caveat to note by our partners at Mai Family

¹ Includes Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander – both alone and multiracial. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010.

Services, a direct service provider for the South Asian community. Mai Family Services works with many victims of domestic violence, including most recently, a woman who came to Michigan from India with her spouse on an H-4 visa. After a series of neglect and domestic violence altercations that resulted in her husband abandoning her and taking their son, her husband has cancelled her H-4 visa, effectively leaving her undocumented in the U.S. Policies like HB 4105 and 4334 would leave this domestic violence victim at risk of double punishment and separation from her son. This is a situation that is all too familiar to case workers at Mai Family Services. Domestic violence victims must feel safe reporting their abuse, but policies like the proposed bills would only promote fear.

Mandating cooperation between local law enforcement and federal immigration officials will reduce confidence among our diverse and large immigrant communities in local law enforcement, thereby harming public safety for everyone. Again, this sort of cooperation will discourage victims and witnesses of crime from coming forward to assist local law enforcement for fear of being questioned about their status or worse. HBs 4105 and 4334 only stand to hinder effective community policing.

APIA Vote-Michigan, along with our partners at Americans Citizens for Justice/Asian American Justice Center and Mai Family Services, strongly oppose HB 4015 as well as HB 4334 and any similar policies that violate trust between immigrants and local police. The State of Michigan would be better served and represented by bills that keep families together and prioritizes due process and human rights.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I hope this committee will take our concerns into consideration. Thank you for your time.

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