



Date: April 24, 2025

To: Chair BeGole and Members of the House Government Operations Committee

From: Monique Stanton, President and CEO of the Michigan League for Public Policy

Subject: Opposition to House Bills 4338-4342

The Michigan League for Public Policy strongly opposes House Bills 4338-4342, sponsored by Reps. Cavitt, Pavlov, Linting, Thompson and DeSana. These bills simply perpetuate the harmful rhetoric around immigrants in Michigan and continue to otherize people who live and work in the state and contribute to our economy and diverse culture. Additionally, they require our local governments to assume a significant financial risk should they have policies in place that prioritize resources and reflect the needs of their communities. We urge lawmakers to reject these harmful proposals and instead prioritize resources for Michigan residents.

For those of you who are not yet familiar, the League is a nonpartisan research and advocacy organization that promotes economic opportunity for all and analyzes the impact of public policy and budget decisions on the lives of Michiganders who have been historically and systemically left out of opportunities to advance prosperity. The League is also the state's Kids Count organization, working as a part of a national effort to measure the well-being of children at the state and local levels and to shape efforts that improve the lives of Michigan children.

There are approximately 740,300 immigrants who call Michigan home.¹ Of these, about 437,000 are in Michigan's labor force — this represents 8.7% of the labor force in our state.² These are Michiganders who work in our businesses, are small business owners, care for or teach our children, are our health care professionals, or who are friends with our kids at school. They help create vibrant communities, which help attract and welcome more residents. They also participate in Michigan's economy and pay taxes. Given action at the federal level, immigrants, regardless of status, are already being otherized and are fearful for themselves, their families, and their neighbors, contributing to toxic stress that will have lifelong consequences. Additionally, policies that lawfully support the rights of our immigrant neighbors lead to stronger, healthier and safer communities, as people will not be afraid to attend school and work, seek medical care or report crimes they have observed. This is especially important as, according to recent Census Bureau estimates, immigration has been driving Michigan's population growth in recent years, with international migration more than making up the population decline due to net

¹ American Immigration Council, *New Americans in Michigan*, available at: <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/michigan/#>.

² Id.

outward domestic migration and natural decline (deaths outweighing births). Instead of celebrating the diversity of our state, these bills will divide our communities and mark our state with extreme, anti-immigrant bias.

Immigration policy, and enforcement thereof, is a federal responsibility. Federal immigration laws already make it very difficult to access status in the United States – it is a complex system of visas, pathways to permanent legal status and citizenship, and temporary status for individuals experiencing specific substantial hardship or crises in their home countries. Federal and state policies also already restrict many immigrants from accessing federal benefits like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), non-emergency Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and others. However, there are specific instances where the federal laws have authorized some flexibility for states to provide certain benefits to lawfully present immigrants, such as through the Immigrant Children’s Health Improvement Act which allows states to waive the five-year waiting period for lawfully present immigrant children and pregnant people to access Medicaid. House Bills 4340 and 4341 are therefore unnecessary, as federal laws already govern eligibility or lack thereof for benefits. These bills are simply meant to discourage families with eligible children from seeking assistance that could help them put food on the table or access necessary resources. The result is that people, including United States citizens, will not apply for assistance out of fear of retribution. Instead of passing unnecessary legislation that only serves to perpetuate discrimination and create fear, Michigan should be accessing these legal and allowable opportunities for flexibility to support Michiganders.

House Bills 4338, 4339 and 4342 prohibit local municipalities from enacting or enforcing any policy that limits communication or cooperation with federal officials concerning immigration. To be clear, these bills simply stoke fear and encourage blatant bias and discrimination. There is a wide variety of policies that municipalities may put in place to lawfully protect the rights of immigrant residents. These policies simply allow local law enforcement to prioritize local resources for local law enforcement. Communities with such policies choose to put safety first – ensuring that their local law enforcement is available and equipped to handle local issues like home invasions, vehicle collisions, domestic violence and others. Importantly, so-called “sanctuary” policies do not stop Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from conducting immigration enforcement. However, local jurisdictions are not required to detain individuals for ICE without a judicial warrant, maintaining constitutional protections for all residents.

Local units of government must already rely on limited resources to provide essential services, like emergency services, for their residents. Forcing communities to engage in costly federal immigration enforcement duties – that are already the responsibility of the federal government – needlessly pulls resources away from local law enforcement. What’s worse is that these bills require local governments to assume significant financial and budget risks, notably lawsuits and potential loss of revenue sharing, should they have policies that prioritize local resources for local issues over federal responsibilities.

Furthermore, our Michigan constitution and laws give broad authority to our local governments to make decisions about what is best for them and their residents. Local governments have a constitutionally protected right to decide for themselves how and whether to enforce immigration laws. Voters expect their duly elected local government officials to make policy and local budget decisions that best reflect the needs of their community. The proposed bills would

Using data to educate, advocate and fight for policy solutions that undo historic and systemic racial and economic inequities to lift up Michiganders who have been left out of prosperity.

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undermine local control, disenfranchise voters across the state and undercut the ability of local governments to determine how to allocate their own resources.

Existing policies do nothing to subvert the ability for ICE to do their job. Municipalities should be able to create the policies that work best for their communities, including prioritizing local law enforcement to investigate and resolve local issues, such as domestic violence, traffic collisions, and thefts, and ensuring their residents feel safe and welcomed and can contribute to a robust economy. These bills do nothing to make our communities stronger or safer and should not be enforced. For these reasons, we oppose House Bills 4338-4342 and urge a no vote.