



Support for SF 4176
The STAR Act
March 17, 2026

The North STAR Alliance (“NSA”) comprises over thirty Minnesota community and faith based organizations committed to legislation that welcomes and protects all Minnesotans, regardless of immigration status. The NSA supports SF 4176. The North Star Alliance Leadership Team is comprised of the following organizations:

- Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Acción Latina (COPAL)
- Episcopal Church of Minnesota
- Communities Advancing Prosperity for Immigrants (CAPI USA)
- Jewish Community Action (JCA)
- Asylum Coalition for Transition - Twin Cities (ACT-TC)
- Fe y Justicia
- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU-MN)
- Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA)
- Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL)
- Interfaith Coalition on Immigration (ICOM)

The STAR Act stands for SAFETY, TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY, and RESPECT.

The STAR Act makes Minnesotans safer by protecting schools, healthcare providers and courts from intrusion by immigration enforcement agents without a signed judicial warrant and clear identification. All Minnesota families and those who serve them must be protected from intimidation at these sensitive locations.

The STAR Act protects Minnesotans’ data and privacy from dangerous and unnecessary intrusion by immigration enforcement personnel. It requires federal immigration agents to obtain a signed judicial warrant to access personal data from educational and governmental institutions, safeguards our health data, and ensures that personal data is not sold by vendors to federal contractors that enforce immigration.

The STAR Act holds federal agents accountable by creating a state civil cause of action against individuals who knowingly violate our constitutional rights while conducting civil immigration enforcement. Without practical accountability tools, our rights exist only on paper.

The STAR Act restores federal respect for due process and state and local law enforcement by disentangling state and local agencies from federal civil immigration enforcement. We need clear, consistent guidelines that prevent federal agents and politicians from enlisting our police, sheriffs and correctional facilities into work that compromises their ability to protect and serve our communities. Our communities are safer when all Minnesotans, regardless of their immigration status, feel free to contact or seek help from local law enforcement.



This explainer walks through the STAR Act (SF4176, HF3924) article by article, providing additional background.

ARTICLE 1: LIMITATIONS ON CIVIL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

Minnesota and its Counties Should Not be in the Business of Immigration Detention

There is nothing in Federal law that precludes a State from banning contracts to house ICE detainees in public detention facilities.¹ The STAR ACT would prohibit contracts by local governments to become immigration detention centers. The NSA strongly supports ending current agreements for such services as well as prohibiting such agreements in the future.

Financial burden on county jails. Intergovernmental Service Agreements (IGSAs) between Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and county jails provide for bed space for ICE detainees. Federal reimbursement rates often fall well below the actual cost of detention. Counties absorb unreimbursed expenses for staffing, food, medical care, and facility maintenance.

Orange County, Florida, provides a very recent example. The county spends approximately \$180 per day for each ICE detainee and receives only \$88 per day for each detainee, leaving about \$92 to be covered by the county. This shortfall has county leadership considering renegotiating or terminating the agreement because of the financial strain on local taxpayers.²

The Ramsey County Jail, located in St. Paul, Minnesota, stopped taking detainees in 2018 because it cost twice as much to house an ICE detainee as was reimbursed by the federal government.²

Poor oversight and operational standards can lead to substandard care. IGSAs often lack uniform detention standards and adequate oversight mechanisms. A lack of accountability has led to unsafe facilities, sub-standard medical care, and a failure to meet detention standards. Local jail staff are also not trained for civil immigration detention. This leaves them ill-equipped to treat detainees appropriately.

In 2015, the National Immigrant Justice Center released a report documenting the lack of compliance with basic standards of care for ICE detainees.³

¹ In 2022, the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit held that a State has the authority to preclude local jurisdictions from entering into agreements to house immigrants in detention facilities. See *McHenry Canty. v. Raoul*, 44 F.4th 581 (7th Cir. 2022).

² Joe Byrnes, Orange County Mayor Gives Feds Deadline to Resolve Jail Reimbursement Rate for Immigrant Detainees, WUSF (Feb. 16, 2026), <https://www.wusf.org/politics-issues/2026-02-16/orange-county-mayor-gives-feds-deadline-to-resolve-jail-reimbursement-rate-for-immigrant-detainees>.

³ National Immigrant Justice Center, The Immigration Detention Transparency & Human Rights Project: August 2015 Report (Aug. 2015), <https://immigrantjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/NIJC-Transparency-and-Human-Rights-Project-August-2015-Report-FINAL3.pdf>.



The DHS Office of Inspector General confirmed these findings in 2018 and 2019, reporting that ICE’s inspections and monitoring processes failed to hold ICE and local officials accountable when detention facilities did not meet performance standards.⁴

Internal DHS inspection reports documented independent findings of unsafe and filthy conditions, racist abuse and harassment of detainees, negligent medical and mental health care, and “barbaric” punishments, often imposed on individuals with mental health disorders. This inhumane pattern has been documented at ICE-run facilities, private facilities, and county jails across the country.⁵

In March 2025, the administration shut down or gutted three major internal watchdog offices, including the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO), and the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman. The current administration has all but eliminated these oversight bodies, which inevitably makes it even more difficult to ensure safety in these facilities, setting up local jails for failure.⁶

What’s happening in Minnesota? As noted above, Ramsey County Jail decided to stop housing ICE detainees in 2018. The Carver County Sheriff in Chaska had a contract to house up to 30 people for ICE for decades, but that agreement ended during COVID. The Sheriff recently made the decision not to enter a new contract, citing that demands for guaranteed space from ICE were too great.⁷

Dozens of community members had turned out to the Carver County Board in January 2026 to oppose an ICE contract, bringing with them a petition with over 500 signatures. One local

⁴ John V. Kelly, ICE’s Inspections and Monitoring of Detention Facilities Do Not Lead to Sustained Compliance or Systemic Improvements, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, OIG-18-67 (June 26, 2018), www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2018-06/OIG-18-67-Jun18.pdf; John V. Kelly, ICE Does Not Fully Use Contracting Tools to Hold Detention Facility Contractors Accountable for Failing to Meet Performance Standards, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, OIG-19-18 (Jan. 2019), www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2019-02/OIG-19-18-Jan19.pdf.

⁵ Tom Dreisbach, Government’s Own Experts Found ‘Barbaric’ and ‘Negligent’ Conditions in ICE Detention, NPR (Aug. 16, 2023), <https://www.npr.org/2023/08/16/1190767610/ice-detention-immigration-government-inspectors-barbaric-negligent-conditions>.

⁶ Isabel Del Mastro, Luisa Clausen, & Rene Kladzyk. ICE Inspections Plummeted as Detentions Soared in 2025, Project on Government Oversight, American University (Jan. 12, 2026), <https://www.pogo.org/investigates/ice-inspections-plummeted-as-detentions-soared-in-2025#>; J. David McSwane & Hannah Allam, “They Don’t Care About Civil Rights”: Trump’s Shuttering of DHS Oversight Arm Freezes 600 Cases, Imperils Human Rights, ProPublica (Apr. 8, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/homeland-security-crcl-civil-rights-immigration-border-patrol-trump-kristi-noem>.

⁷ Jeff Holmquist, Carver County Jail Won’t House ICE Detainees, Carver County Local News (Jan. 16, 2026), <https://cclocalnews.org/2026/01/14/carver-county-jail-wont-house-ice-detainees/>.



citizen summed it up nicely: “Do not commit county resources, facilities, or credibility to a program that drains public funds, erodes trust, and harms our local economy.”⁸

Jails in Crow Wing County, Kandiyohi County, Freeborn County, and Sherburne County are currently housing ICE detainees. As in similar facilities in other states, inspections have identified deficiencies regarding timely medical assessments, informed consent for medication, and plans for handling detainees with disabilities. There was no approved written policy or procedures for handling sexual abuse or assault, or suicide prevention, according to the 2023 and 2024 investigations by the federal DHS Office of Detention Oversight.⁹ Community concern and lawsuits have been the reality at Sherburne County Jail,¹⁰ including a suit involving the suicide of an immigrant with mental health issues resulting in a \$1,500,000 settlement.¹¹

Detention affects not only detainees, their families, and their communities, but also the facility staff, who are also part of the community. Factoring in the impact on physical and mental health of these community members and their families also matters. Research suggests that “of all U.S. workers, correctional officers have one of the highest rates of nonfatal, work-related injuries,” particularly obesity, cardiac disease including risk of heart attack, and musculoskeletal injuries. Mental health conditions are more common among corrections officers than almost ANY other profession, including depression, anxiety, panic disorder, PTSD, alcoholism, self-harm, and suicide. These jobs expose workers to constant trauma and risk, result in stress and burn-out, and spill-over of worker experience to the entire family and community. Burdening these people with additional work they are not trained to do will certainly add to their struggles.¹²

But isn’t it better for families to be detained closer to their loved ones? While this may be true when a person is located in a jail within the state, Metro Surge has shown us that detained persons can be moved rapidly out of Minnesota, often within a matter of hours in violation of due process, to meet the “needs” of ICE. The existence of Minnesota detention centers does not ensure detention of Minnesotans in Minnesota.

⁸ Residents Urge Carver County Board to Reject or Pause Proposed ICE Contract, Citizen Portal (Jan. 6, 2026), <https://citizenportal.ai/articles/7256764/Carver-County/Minnesota/>.

⁹ Office of Detention Oversight. Unannounced Compliance Inspection 2024-004-252. Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO Saint Paul Field Office). Kandiyohi County Jail, Willmar, Minnesota. March 12-14, 2024. www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/odo-compliance-inspections/kandiyohiCoJail_WilmarMN_Mar12-14_2024.pdf; Jennifer Mayerle, Where are Federal Agents Taking People They Detain in Minnesota? WCCO Investigates, CBS Minnesota (Jan. 12, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/where-federal-agents-take-people-detained-in-minnesota/>.

¹⁰ Nafi Soumare, There Is Only One ICE Detainee Left in Sherburne County Jail, News From the States (Dec. 8, 2023), <https://www.newsfromthestates.com/article/there-only-one-ice-detainee-left-sherburne-county-jail>.

¹¹ Jenny Berg, Family of Man who Died by Suicide in Sherburne County Jail reaches \$1.5M settlement, Star Tribune (July 16, 2024), <https://www.startribune.com/family-of-man-who-died-by-suicide-in-sherburne-co-jail-reaches-1m-settlement/600381186https://www.startribune.com/family-of-man-who-died-by-suicide-in-sherburne-co-jail-reaches-1m-settlement/600381186>.

¹² W.J. Schultz & R. Ricciardeli, Correctional Officers and the Ongoing Health Implications of Prison Work, Health Justice 13, 4 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40352-024-00308-2>.



Minnesota Should Limit Other Entanglements with Civil Immigration Enforcement

The STAR Act creates limits on what public safety agencies¹³ can do in the field of civil immigration enforcement.

Public safety agencies must not comply with detainers, administrative warrants or similar immigration hold requests. ICE detainers are not federal legal requirements; they are a request and are not compulsory. In fact, Keith Ellison, the Minnesota Attorney General, issued an Advisory Opinion conveying that Minnesota law prohibits state and local law enforcement agencies from holding someone based on a civil immigration detainer if that person would otherwise be released from custody.¹⁴ Because this opinion and court cases in Minnesota are not binding, this prohibition needs to be written in Minnesota law.

Public safety agencies must not assist in civil immigration enforcement actions (but may assist individuals or families impacted). Court cases are clear that the federal government cannot require States to cooperate with ICE's civil immigration enforcement activities. The U.S. Constitution's Tenth Amendment anti-commandeering doctrine has been consistently interpreted to give States a constitutional right not to cooperate with the enforcement of federal civil immigration law.¹⁵

Public safety agencies must not enter into 287(g) or other formal or informal programs for Minnesota governmental personnel to participate in civil immigration enforcement. The STAR Act restricts local sheriffs and police departments from being deputized to enforce civil immigration law on behalf of the Federal Government. Thus, allowing local law enforcement to focus their resources on enforcing state and local laws rather than checking immigration status, issuing detainers, and making civil immigration arrests. Any pre-existing contracts would be terminated following the passage of this bill.

INA 287(g) provides the legal basis for delegating immigration authority to state and local law enforcement agencies. There has been a rapid expansion of 287(g) agreements under the

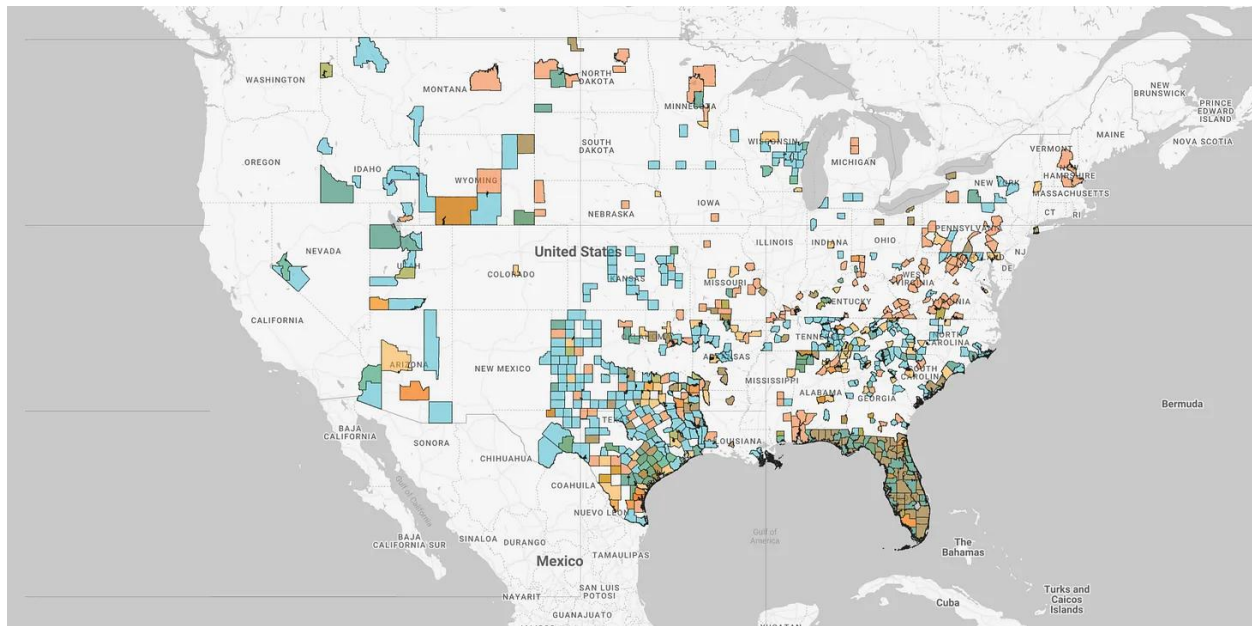
¹³ "Public safety agencies" as defined in the Act include law enforcement agencies, correctional and juvenile facilities, probation services, and security services for entities controlled by the state of Minnesota, such as public schools, public universities, health care facilities, drug rehabilitation facilities, and hospitals.

¹⁴ A copy of the Advisory Opinion can be accessed here: <https://www.ag.state.mn.us/office/opinions/3a-20250206.pdf>.

¹⁵ On July 25, 2025, the U. S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois dismissed a lawsuit brought by the Trump Administration against Illinois, Cook County, and the City of Chicago challenging many of the practices that are included in the legislation supported by the North STAR Alliance. See *United States v. State of Illinois*, 25 CV 1285 (N.D. Ill. Jul 25, 2025). The Court upheld the statutes in question both on Tenth Amendment grounds and on findings that Federal preemption principles did not apply and, therefore, did not supersede state/local law..

second Trump administration. According to NPR (Feb. 17, 2026), as of February 13, 2026, there are over 1,412 active 287(g) agreements across 40 states and territories, and over 1,130 were signed in 2025 alone.

The Maxwell Commons Substack, authored by immigration legal system analyst Andrew Thrasher, provides a comprehensive overview of various agreements in different states based on publicly available data.¹⁶ We commend the site to legislators for a visual understanding of the scope of 287(g) agreements. This map shows the number of agreements across the country as of February 15, 2026.¹⁷



Thrasher's model shows that there are eight active agreement models in Minnesota spanning all across the state. Itasca County Sheriff's Office entered into a Task Force Model Agreement; Cass County Sheriff's Office entered into a Task Force Model Agreement; Crow Wing County Sheriff's Office entered into a Warrant Service Officer Agreement; Isle Police Department entered into a Task Force Model Agreement; Mille Lacs County Sheriff's Office entered into a Task Force Model Agreement; Sherburne County Sheriff's Office entered into a Jail Enforcement Model Agreement; Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office entered into a Warrant Service Officer Agreement; and Freeborn County Sheriff's Office entered into a Warrant Service Officer Agreement. However, Sherburne, Kandiyohi and Freeborn counties have had long-standing contracts to hold detainees for federal authorities.

Thrasher points out that data provided by the government lacks transparency, including when agreements have been signed and when they have been terminated. According to information

¹⁶ For a series of articles on 287g agreements, go here: <https://maxwellcommons.substack.com/t/287g>.

¹⁷ For an interactive version, go here: <https://maxwellcommons.substack.com/p/counting-to-1414-is-harder-than-it>.



the North Star Alliance has gathered over the years, there were no 287(g) agreements in Minnesota as recently as 2023, but there were some agreements in 2019.

The expansion of these agreements is one of the primary mechanisms through which the current administration is conducting immigration enforcement. These agreements in turn cause ICE and other immigration enforcement authorities to confront immigrants in various communities where ICE overreach was otherwise limited. This is best evidenced by the ACLU's report "*Deputized for Disaster*" (Mar. 2026), which finds that the eventual consequence of 287(g) agreements is that ICE enforcement is morphed into everyday policing. This manifests in the form of dragnet operations by local police demanding residents to show documentation of legal status during traffic stops, which erodes public trust, safety and constitutional rights. Thus, representing a broad pattern of unlawful conducts and constitutional violations under the pretense of immigration enforcement by ICE, CBP, and all the partner agencies that assist in immigration enforcement.

State and local governments bear the costs associated with 287(g) agreements. For example, in its 2017 report *The Negative Consequences of Entangling Local Policing and Immigration Enforcement* (Mar. 21, 2017), The Center for American Progress (CAP) detailed how the Houston, Texas, Sheriff's Office spent \$675,000 on salary-related expenses for its 287(g) agreement. In 2017, the Sheriff decided that money was better spent on other law enforcement purposes and cancelled the agreement.

Racial profiling has been associated with 287(g) agreements. The CAP report mentioned above details the case of the 287(g) agreement with the Maricopa County, Arizona, Sheriff's Office. In that case, the discriminatory practices of Sheriff Arpaio's Office were so pervasive they led to DHS cancelling the agreement. Now, however, the concern is that the discriminatory practices by ICE and CBP we have seen under Operation Metro Surge will permeate Minnesota law enforcement agencies. We urge lawmakers to support HF 3413.

Public safety agencies must not investigate, arrest, stop, or detain a person based on a suspected civil immigration violation. Minnesota law enforcement should be focused on Minnesota law enforcement and not federal immigration actions. Recent actions by ICE demonstrate how prone immigration enforcement is to racial profiling.¹⁸ Minnesota's public safety agencies should never engage in these activities.

Public safety agencies must not request or use federal immigration authorities for language assistance, translation, or interpretation. While seemingly innocuous, calling on ICE

¹⁸ Conor Wight, Federal Judge Rules ICE Agents in Minnesota Illegally Detained People Based on Racial Profiling, CBS Minnesota (Mar. 15, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/judge-rules-immigration-agents-minnesota-ice-surge-illegally-detained-people-racial-profiling/>.



for language assistance by public safety agencies can turn a routine traffic stop into a trip to immigration detention. Incidents such as this have occurred in Minnesota.¹⁹

Public safety agencies must not provide access to persons or facilities beyond that provided to the general public for conducting civil immigration enforcement.

Public safety agencies must not transfer control of a person in custody without a judicial warrant.

Public safety agencies must not notify or provide information to federal immigration authorities of an individual's pending release from a public safety agency's control, court dates, or any information about an individual (with exceptions for crime victims and trafficking victims).

These three prohibitions merit discussion together. Providing special access to people being detained and office space within facilities undermines community trust and damages community. For example, from 2019 to mid-2021, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) "reported over a thousand immigrants to ICE, with hundreds ending up in immigrant detention centers and facing deportation."²⁰ Community groups argued for an end to collaboration between the HCSO, claiming that "being thrust into the deportation system has devastating emotional, cultural and economic impact on immigrant families."²¹ In June 2021, the HCSO stopped reporting immigrant release dates to ICE and "removed the ICE office from the jail."²² While HCSO came under critique for some of its actions during Operation Metro Surge, Sheriff Dawanna Witt should be commended for not changing that policy under the pressure of Operation Metro Surge and Border Czar Tom Homan.²³

Public safety agencies must not participate in, or provide access or assistance to, a federal immigration authority to conduct civil immigration enforcement activities at state courthouses, hospitals, health care clinics, churches or other places of worship, or schools without a judicial warrant. In 2025, the Trump administration reversed a decades-old policy of avoiding immigration enforcement actions in sensitive locations except in rare circumstances with

¹⁹ Lisa Graybill, Unwise Policy, Illegal Practice, Border Patrol Agents as Interpreters Along the Northern Border, American Immigration Council, Sept. 2012), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/borderpatrolagentsasinterpreters.pdf>.

²⁰ ICE Out Hennepin County Campaign Secures Important Protections for Immigrant Arrestees at the Hennepin County Jail, Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (Aug. 5, 2021), <https://www.ilcm.org/latest-news/ice-out-hennepin-county-campaign-secures-important-protections-for-immigrant-arrestees-at-the-hennepin-county-jail/>.

²¹ Id.

²² David, Chanen, Hennepin County Sheriff Changes Approach to Jail Inmates with Immigration Issues, Star Tribune (Sept. 6, 2021), <https://www.startribune.com/hennepin-county-sheriff-changes-approach-to-jail-inmates-with-immigration-issues/600094518>.

²³ Josh Skluzacek, Hennepin County Sheriff: 'Nothing Has Changed' Despite Federal Claims of 'Unprecedented Cooperation,' KSTP (Feb. 13, 2026), <https://kstp.com/kstp-news/top-news/hennepin-county-sheriff-nothing-has-changed-despite-federal-claims-of-unprecedented-cooperation/>.



an approach leaving such decisions entirely to the discretion of agents in the field. Minnesota must protect these spaces which are critical to human life, public safety, families and social cohesion.

As detailed elsewhere in this report, we have seen how this shift in policy impacts school settings in ways that instill fear in children and results in families keeping their kids home from school.²⁴ ICE actions on church property around the country have instilled fear and driven down attendance.²⁵ Faith communities have brought several suits against the federal government to reinstate the sensitive locations policy.²⁶ [4]

Connecticut is considering going even further than the proposed STAR Act, by banning federal immigration agents acting without warrants “from school buildings, university campuses, medical facilities, places of worship, playgrounds, recreation centers and social service agencies.”²⁷

In addition to the “Must Not’s,” the STAR Act creates duties. It requires public safety agencies to create a record when federal immigration authorities ask for data and to coordinate with government units to ensure that all state and local government offices, public schools, hospitals, and courthouses remain safe and accessible to all Minnesota residents. These agencies must also explain to individuals in custody the individual's right to refuse to disclose immigration-related information and that disclosure of such information might have immigration consequences, including deportation.

States that have already banned immigrant enforcement cooperation have not seen surges of undocumented immigrants choosing to move to their states in response to the passage of this legislation. Over a dozen states have banned or limited cooperation on immigration enforcement. Just in the past month, New Mexico and Maryland joined the list.

Enforcement

State Agencies, Localities, Individuals and Organizations may bring suit to enforce the STAR Act. Individuals will be able to go to state court over violations of the STAR Act. Several states do include private rights of action to allow for what is called “injunctive” relief, the ability to sue in Minnesota court to force an agency or personnel to stop violating the provisions of this Bill. It provides a monetary damages option as well. This structure was borrowed mostly

²⁴ See below, pages 13-15

²⁵ Jack Jenkins, 'This is Domestic Terror': Shaken by ICE Raids, Pastors Rethink Ministries, Religion News Service (Aug. 4, 2025), <https://religionnews.com/2025/08/04/when-ice-detains-people-on-church-grounds-pastors-say-congregations-suffer/>.

²⁶ See, for example, Mennonite Church USA et al v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Security et al, 2025 CV 00403, Feb. 11, 2025, U.S. Dist. Ct for the Dist. of Columbia, <https://dockets.justia.com/docket/district-of-columbia/dcdce/1%3A2025cv00403/277337>.

²⁷ Ken Dixon, ICE Could be Banned from Schools, Churches and Playgrounds in Connecticut, CT Insider (Mar. 11, 2026), <https://www.ctinsider.com/politics/article/ct-bills-ban-ice-schools-playgrounds-churches-22058439.php>.



from data protection statutes, such as the federal Driver's Privacy Protection Act , and from the Minnesota Environmental Protection Act which also contained private rights of action.

Organizations may also bring suit. The legislature is allowed to provide standing (meaning the ability to bring a lawsuit) not just to people who suffered from injury, but also to other entities. Here we added language allowing any governmental unit to sue (e.g. the City of St. Paul or Hennepin County), family members of affected people, and organizations that serve Minnesota immigrant populations. While government agencies and organizations can only get injunctive relief, they can nevertheless end violations of the bill. There is a period of time for policies to be put in place before any person or organization could bring a suit.

Repealer

The repealer would eliminate MN Statutes 631.50 and 631.51. Current law requires that correctional officers ask about nationality and notify federal immigration authorities if someone appears to be a noncitizen. Courts must also provide certified criminal records to federal immigration officers for free upon request. The repealer would remove these state-specific duties. The repealer does not stop federal enforcement or prevent federal agents from getting records through normal legal channels. Instead, it simply eliminates state mandates that require local officials to assist with federal immigration enforcement.

Repealing these statutes aligns MN law with core federalism principles. Under the anti-commandeering doctrine, the federal government cannot force states to enforce federal regulatory programs. Even though these statutes are state laws, repealing them ensures that MN does not require local officials to act as de facto federal immigration agents. The current statutes also expose counties and sheriffs to liability and legal risks, such as unlawful detention claims, civil rights lawsuits, and injunctions. There has already been litigation in Minnesota involving immigration enforcement practices, including lawsuits over the use of federal agreements by counties. Repealing these statutory mandates would help reduce constitutional violations and legal costs.

There are also important fiscal and administrative considerations. The current statutes require staff time to investigate nationality, coordination with federal agencies, and providing free certified copies of court records. This effectively means that state and county taxpayers are subsidizing federal immigration enforcement. Repealing these statutes would still allow federal agencies to obtain records through normal, compensated processes while also allowing state and local agencies to focus on core public-safety duties.

Maintaining community trust is also an important public safety concern. Effective policing depends on community trust. When local agencies are seen as extensions of federal immigration enforcement, victims may be less willing to report crimes and witnesses may refuse to cooperate with law enforcement. This diminished trust can undermine public safety for all residents. Finally, recent reporting in MN has raised questions about the accuracy of some federal claims about people released from custody. In several instances, immigrants described as the "worst of the worst" had no convictions, were already in custody or in other jurisdictions, or had completed their sentences long before immigration enforcement occurred. This shows that public messaging about local cooperation may be misleading.



In sum, the repealer would not stop federal immigration enforcement. Federal immigration officers would be able to pursue enforcement actions and obtain records through ordinary legal channels. The repealer would simply remove state mandates that expose Minnesota to liability, prevent state resources from subsidizing federal enforcement, and help maintain community trust necessary in public safety.

ARTICLE 2: PROTECT OUR COURTS ACT

Courts exist to serve justice for all residents of Minnesota. Ensuring that everyone can safely access the civil and criminal justice system is necessary to maintain public trust, protect victims and witnesses, and build safer communities. The STAR Act would safeguard the integrity of Minnesota’s county and state courts by preventing civil immigration arrests in and around courthouses, which allows all to participate in legal proceedings without fear.

Immigration enforcement in state courts can make witnesses or victims afraid to come forward for fear of arrest or detainment by ICE. In practical terms, this creates a barrier to the state’s ability to hold hearings, gather evidence, and ensure fair outcomes. Effectively denying certain residents safe participation in court raises concerns under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. The STAR Act would help ensure that Minnesota courts remain accessible and effective. Minnesota can set an example by maintaining its courts as places where justice is truly available to all its residents.

Protecting the sanctity of Minnesota’s county and state courts is essential. The 10th Amendment safeguards state authority, including courts, from federal control. Under the anti-commandeering doctrine, the federal government may not compel state courts to act on its behalf. This was recently supported by the dismissal of a federal lawsuit that challenged the state of New York’s law that prohibits federal officers from making civil immigration arrests in and around courthouses without a judicial warrant.²⁸ The STAR Act is modeled on the New York statute.

In Minnesota, ICE has detained immigrants in or near the Hennepin County Government Center, which is the home of Hennepin County Court. The county’s Chief Public Defender, Mike Berger, explained that the immigrants most affected by courthouse ICE arrests are typically those charged with lower-level offenses, since individuals with more serious charges are more likely to already be in jail when ICE targets them.²⁹ The fear of ICE arrests may deter individuals from appearing in court for their cases.

Courts exist to serve justice. A key outcome of justice is safer communities. Minnesota can only achieve safer communities when everyone can access the legal system without fear. To protect residents, the state must ensure that people can attend court safely. When individuals are

²⁸ United States v. New York, No. 1:25-CV-744 (MAD/PJE), (N.D.N.Y. Nov. 17, 2025),

<https://cases.justia.com/federal/district-courts/new-york/nynjdcce/1%3A2025cv00744/148581/66/0.pdf>.

²⁹ Katrina Pross, ICE Arrests Target Immigrants at Hennepin County Courthouse, Causing ‘Immense’ Anxiety, Sahan Journal (Jan. 28, 2025), <https://sahanjournal.com/public-safety/ice-arrests-minneapolis-hennepin-county-courthouse/>.



taken by ICE on their way to court before their cases are resolved, it prevents the state from fully realizing its judicial process.

ARTICLE 3: MINNESOTA BIVENS ACT³⁰

Protecting the Constitutional rights of Minnesotans is a vital task of state government. The STAR Act seeks to do just this by holding all government officials accountable to not only the U.S. Constitution, but to the Minnesota constitution as well. As noted legal scholar Akhil Reed Amar has concluded, “we often fail to note that federalism cuts both ways—that *states* can gain political goodwill by arming their citizens with remedies for constitutional wrongs threatened or perpetrated by *federal* officials.”³¹

When the actions of federal officers cannot be reasonably characterized as complying with the full range of federal law, state law may apply with full force.³² This Act creates a state-level law, expanding on a federal law,³³ that allows federal officers to be held accountable for depriving Minnesota residents of their rights. In Minnesota, holding state and local actors accountable has been highlighted through the case of Derek Chauvin, the police officer who murdered George Floyd. For cases like Renee Good and Alex Pretti, however, who lost their lives at the hands of federal officials, options for legal redress are few.

Suing a federal agent in federal court for the death of Ms. Good or Mr. Pretti is an uphill battle. Over the years, the Supreme Court has shrunk the availability of federal courts to plaintiffs, leaving many claims against federal officers without a damages remedy. We support this bill because it provides a way to hold federal agents accountable under state law as well as federal law. The bill clearly establishes rights by requiring government officials to abide by the Minnesota Constitution as well as confirm in writing their understanding of these rights when collaborating with state and local officers.

ARTICLE 4: MINNESOTA HEALTH CARE SANCTITY AND PRIVACY ACT

Hospitals are places where individuals seek care at their most vulnerable moments. Patients enter medical facilities expecting privacy, dignity, and treatment free from intimidation. The Fourth Amendment protects individuals from unreasonable searches and seizures, and courts have long recognized that patients have a strong expectation of privacy in spaces such as hospital rooms and in their medical information. Without clear procedures, however, hospital staff are often left

³⁰ It is our understanding that the STAR Act’s primary authors, Senator Omar Fateh and Representative Sandra Feist, have agreed to substitute the text of Senate File 3628 for Article 3 of the introduced text.

³¹ Akhil Reed Amar, *Of Sovereignty and Federalism*, 96 *Yale Law Journal* 1425, 1428 (1987).

³² For example, see *Denson v. United States*, 574 F.3d 1318, 1348 (11th Cir. 2009).

³³ 42 U.S.C. § 1983.



uncertain about how to respond when law enforcement officers appear and request information about patients. This bill provides the clarity and structure that hospitals and staff urgently need.

The legislation establishes straightforward safeguards. Hospitals must designate a contact person responsible for responding when law enforcement agents request information or appear at a facility. That contact person will verify the identity and authority of the agents and handle requests for information in a consistent and legally compliant manner. The bill also requires hospitals to designate a space where law enforcement officers may wait so that patient care areas remain protected.

Importantly, the bill reinforces patient privacy. It requires hospitals to release health records only in strict accordance with state and federal law and to notify patients when their information is disclosed. Hospitals must also ensure that patient privacy concerns are considered whenever law enforcement requests access to information or facilities.

To make these policies effective, the bill requires hospitals to provide annual training for personnel and administrative volunteers. Hospitals must also submit their policies to the commissioner and post a notice informing patients of their rights. If hospitals fail to submit these policies, the commissioner will notify them and impose a fine if they do not follow up. The commissioner is also empowered to investigate complaints related to these policies. At the same time, the bill recognizes the difficult position hospital staff may face and protects personnel who act in good faith to comply with these policies by granting them immunity from liability.

The need for these protections is not hypothetical. In January 2026, Alberto Castañeda Mondragón, a 31-year-old immigrant, was hospitalized at Hennepin County Medical Center after suffering eight skull fractures and multiple brain hemorrhages following an encounter with immigration officers. While he was severely injured and disoriented, officers remained present in the hospital. Medical staff reportedly questioned the explanation given for his injuries and expressed concern about the circumstances surrounding his treatment and the presence of law enforcement in the facility. Cases like this illustrate how unclear boundaries between medical care and enforcement can place both patients and healthcare providers in extremely difficult situations.

The Fourth Amendment supports the policies in this bill because it protects individuals from unreasonable searches and seizures where they have a reasonable expectation of privacy. Hospital patients, particularly those in treatment rooms, generally expect privacy regarding their bodies, belongings, and medical care, and society recognizes this expectation as reasonable. These protections mean that law enforcement searches or intrusions in patient areas typically require a warrant or a recognized exception. By establishing procedures for verifying officers' authority, limiting access to care areas, and safeguarding medical records, this bill reinforces those constitutional protections and helps ensure that patients like Alberto Castañeda Mondragón can receive medical treatment without unlawful intrusion.

This legislation is about clarity, accountability, and trust. Hospitals should be places where patients receive care and where staff understand exactly how to protect patient rights while complying with the law. By establishing clear policies, oversight, and training, this bill strengthens patient privacy and ensures that hospitals remain safe and lawful spaces for everyone who enters them. The NSA also supports SF4242, which covers other healthcare facilities.



ARTICLE 5: MINNESOTA SAFE SCHOOL ACT

The article of the STAR Act would codify the constitutionally protected right for all children in Minnesota to access K-12 free public education, irrespective of their immigration status. The Supreme Court decision in *Plyler v. Doe* holds that undocumented children have a right to access free K-12 public school education just as other children in the United States do based on the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, and that excluding these children does not further a substantial state interest.³⁴

The STAR Act ensures that parents are not discouraged from sending their children to schools and that all children in the state of Minnesota have the right to attend schools. The right to education for everyone provides immigrant children the dignity of a safe and undisturbed learning environment, free from intimidation or loss of access to resources and programs that other students enjoy. Many of Minnesota's children have been traumatized by Operation Metro Surge, and that trauma will affect their social and educational development for years to come.³⁵

Educational research has demonstrated that raids by ICE or related federal agents disrupt attendance, achievement, and school climate and safety, not only for noncitizens but for all children, teachers, and staff.³⁶

Schools have had protection under sensitive locations policies for over thirty years. The Trump administration rescinded this approach only days after taking office, opening the possibility of law enforcement agencies directing their activities at schools for immigration enforcement.³⁷

Several Minnesota school districts have sued the federal government over its abrogation of the policy.³⁸ Faith organizations have also challenged the change in the sensitive locations policy. In *Mennonite Church USA v. DHS*,³⁹ government attorneys recently faced harsh questioning at the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals about the roll back of the policy.⁴⁰

³⁴ *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982).

³⁵ Maanvi Singh, ICE Raids Turn Life into a Daily Terror for Minneapolis Schoolkids: 'This is a Generational Trauma,' *Guardian* (Jan. 24, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jan/24/minnesota-ice-raids-children-trauma>.

³⁶ J. Jacob Kirksey & Carolyn Sattin-Bajaj, *Immigration Arrests and Educational Impacts: Linking ICE Arrests to Declines in Achievement, Attendance, and School Climate and Safety in California*, AERA Open (American Educational Research Association) (2021), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/23328584211039787>.

³⁷ U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement, *Common Sense Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas* (Jan. 31, 2025), <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/policy/CommonSenseEnforcementActInNearProtectedAreas.pdf>.

³⁸ Minnesota School Districts and Educators Sue to Block Immigration Enforcement Near Schools, *Democracy Forward* (Feb. 4, 2026), <https://democracyforward.org/news/press-releases/minnesota-school-districts-and-educators-sue-to-block-immigration-enforcement-near-schools/>.

³⁹ Available at <https://dockets.justia.com/docket/district-of-columbia/dcdce/1%3A2025cv00403/277337>.

⁴⁰ Jim Patterson, *Decision on 'Sensitive Location' Policy Coming*, *United Methodist News* (Feb. 9, 2026), <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/decision-on-sensitive-location-policy-coming>.



Additionally, the STAR Act contains data privacy protections to protect students and their parents' sensitive immigration-related information from being collected and disseminated to federal immigration authorities as long as it is not in contravention of any existing federal or state laws. It is essential to codify data protection policies given that ICE already has contracts worth millions of dollars with some of the largest tech companies in the world.⁴¹

Anti-immigrant rhetoric and sentiment fueled by the current administration, coupled with changes in federal policy, threaten children's and parents' right to access and enjoy the benefits of a free public education. In this environment, Minnesota must take affirmative steps to promote the right to educational equality for all Minnesotans. The article of the STAR Act is the step in the right direction to accomplish that mission.

Minnesota schools must protect the integrity of a positive learning environment in which all children and parents feel safe and supported in pursuit of children's education. The STAR Act would safeguard the integrity of schools in Minnesota by limiting access for federal immigration authorities in schools, which allows students and their parents to participate in the education system without fear.

In Minnesota, ICE has already disrupted education in schools. Just hours after agent Jonathan Ross shot and killed Renee Good, ICE descended on Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis. ICE agents assaulted and detained a school staff member and a union member who were working at the school, in full view of students.⁴² Throughout Operation Metro Surge, immigration agents targeted schools for enforcement and intimidation.⁴³ Students are better able to learn and schools are better able to protect the sanctity of their classrooms if they can operate without fear of ICE or related federal intrusion. The STAR Act would help ensure that Minnesota Schools maintain their sanctity and serve as an institution for education for every single child in Minnesota without undue disruption.

ARTICLE 6: MINNESOTA HIGHER EDUCATION IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The Minnesota Higher Education Immigration Enforcement Act limits access by federal immigration officers to public and private postsecondary institutions and protects student data. These protections help ensure that all students can pursue higher education safely and strengthen Minnesota's workforce and economy.

⁴¹ Ty Roush, These Companies—Palantir, AT&T, Deloitte—Have The Biggest ICE Contracts As DHS Funding Under Fire, *Forbes Business* (Jan. 26, 2026), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tylerroush/2026/01/26/these-companies-palantir-att-deloitte-have-the-biggest-ice-contracts-as-dhs-funding-under-fire/>.

⁴² Becky Dernbach, St. Louis Park Parents Demand ICE Leave Area after Elementary Students Witness Raid, *Sahan Journal* (Jan. 14, 2026), <https://sahanjournal.com/education/saint-louis-park-aquila-elementary-ice-presence/>.

⁴³ Isabela Escalona, Minneapolis Teachers, Parents Denounce Federal Agents' Assault at Roosevelt High, Demand ICE Leave, *WorkDay Magazine* (Jan. 9, 2026), <https://workdaymagazine.org/minneapolis-teachers-parents-denounce-federal-agents-assault-at-roosevelt-high-demand-ice-leave/>.



When colleges and universities are perceived as unsafe due to immigration enforcement presence or data sharing, students may skip classes, avoid campus altogether, opt out of enrolling or re-enrolling, and face academic setbacks because of the stress or uncertainty. This Act will protect campuses from heightened immigration enforcement, which allows students to participate in and complete higher education without fear.

Intensified immigration enforcement leads to a decline in enrollment among all groups of students. Declining enrollment creates financial challenges for colleges and universities, which rely on tuition revenue as significant components to create their budgets. International students generate an estimated \$488 million to the state of Minnesota and are a critical source of revenue for postsecondary institutions across the state.⁴⁴ When enrollment falls, postsecondary institutions may need to reduce programs or services. This ends up limiting educational opportunities for *all* students.

Federal enforcement actions such as Operation Metro surge have harmed the overall enrollment in universities across Minnesota.⁴⁵

Many postsecondary programs—including economically critical fields such as healthcare, manufacturing, and trades—depend on consistent enrollment to remain viable. Minnesota needs workers in these sectors, and education and training programs focused on them play an important role in preparing the workforce. When enrollment declines and programs are eliminated, Minnesota’s capacity to produce skilled workers and address labor shortages is undermined.

Colleges and universities have an ethical and financial interest to ensure every student will succeed. Policies that create safe, supportive, nondiscriminatory campus life are essential in that regard. In addition to managing the impact of physical presence of federal civil immigration enforcement agents, the STAR Act correctly limits disclosure of personal identifying information. In an age when it can take years for families to complete the process of attaining citizenship, students and parents have a right to expect confidentiality of any data related to their citizenship journeys. Minnesota is a state that has always valued education for all, because we know that the investment pays off and the long-term benefits of having a skilled and diverse workforce have kept our economy vital and led to a high rate of Fortune 500 companies per capita in our state.

ARTICLE 7: DATA PRIVACY CONCERNS

⁴⁴ Erin Adler, Minnesota Colleges and Universities Draw 15,000 International Students Who Bring \$488 Million to the State. That Could Now Be at Risk, Star Tribune (May 30, 2025), <https://www.startribune.com/minnesota-colleges-and-universities-draw-15000-international-students-who-bring-488-million-to-the-state-that-could-now-be-at-risk/601363128>.

⁴⁵ Erin Adler, College and University Leaders Say Enrollment, Attendance Suffered Due to Operation Metro Surge, Star Tribune (Mar. 1, 2026), <https://www.msn.com/en-us/public-safety-and-emergencies/health-and-safety-alerts/college-and-university-leaders-say-enrollment-attendance-suffered-due-to-operation-metro-surge/ar-AA1XiSiMurge>.



The STAR Act safeguards data by prohibiting data sharing with federal immigration enforcement, including prohibiting state or local governments from providing database access to immigration enforcement. The STAR Act also prohibits state or local government agents from inquiring about immigration status, which results in additional protections of data privacy by reducing access to protected data. The STAR Act prohibits funding programs for local government entities that are contingent on sharing immigration data with the federal government. Under this bill, government entities in Minnesota cannot threaten to unlawfully disclose immigration status to the federal government. This means that the STAR Act will result in government agencies of Minnesota not maintaining, collecting, creating, receiving, or disseminating immigration data to the federal government unless exceptions are met.

Unless an individual under the control of a public safety agency is detained for a removable offense, public safety agencies cannot share data upon the release of control of an individual for purposes of immigration enforcement. This includes data for vehicle registry information, court dates, and limited address information. This will result in public safety data remaining public safety data. That means that public safety employees can focus on their public responsibilities instead of performing immigration enforcement tasks that fall outside of the scope of the state.

The result of these provisions is a requirement for immigration enforcement to have a judicial warrant to obtain data. By setting these boundaries with data sharing with the federal government, we enable local agencies to focus time, taxpayer money and resources on constituents. Immigration enforcement and data sharing are not the responsibility of the state. The United States, through the 4th Amendment, has a history of requiring court orders when sharing data; we should strengthen this tradition.⁴⁶

Fears of a surveillance state are warranted at the current moment. Technology is rapidly changing, and our laws are not keeping up with safeguarding of data. Unnecessarily sharing sensitive data to the federal government undermines due process. Weaponization of data without probable cause threatens us all.

Localities cannot build relationships with residents when fear of separation from family members looms.⁴⁷ When unnecessary data sharing occurs with the federal government, fear is created among communities, which results in less trust and the inability for local governments to function effectively.

This bill strengthens data privacy by ensuring that data sharing is further limited, giving state constituents more autonomy and our local leaders more guidance on data privacy.

⁴⁶U.S. Const. Am IV. (Warrants Clause).

⁴⁷ Policy Brief: Disentangling Local Law Enforcement from Federal Immigration Enforcement, National Immigrant Justice Center (Jan. 2021), <https://immigrantjustice.org/research/policy-brief-disentangling-local-law-enforcement-from-federal-immigration-enforcement/>.