



Legislation Text

File #: RES 18-1365, **Version:** 1

Supporting the Mayor's establishment of the Immigrant Legal Defense Fund for the City of Saint Paul.

WHEREAS, our nation has a tradition of accepting immigrants and refugees into our communities; and

WHEREAS, since its founding in 1849, Saint Paul has been a city that has been built through the labor of immigrants from numerous countries; and

WHEREAS, the latest American Community Survey data demonstrates that immigrants make up a significant portion of Saint Paul's population with over 18 percent of residents being foreign-born and over 28 percent speaking a language other than English; and

WHEREAS, all people, regardless of immigration status, are endowed with the same universal and inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness enumerated by the signers of the Declaration of Independence, themselves being immigrants and the children of immigrants; and

WHEREAS, the protection of the human rights of residents of the United States, including the City of Saint Paul, is not just a moral imperative rooted in the founding principles of our nation but also essential to ensuring future economic prosperity for all who live, work, and conduct commerce within Minnesota and the City of Saint Paul, and

WHEREAS, the 2013 Economic Contributions of Immigrant Minnesotans report by Dr. Bruce Corrie and Sarah Radosevich indicates, among other facts, that immigrants play an important role in strengthening the workforce of critical business sectors in the Twin Cities with foreign-born individuals comprising a percentage of the workforce in the rapidly growing Food Preparation and Service as well as the Home Healthcare industries that is higher than their percentage of the total Twin Cities population, and

WHEREAS, the same report details that immigrants, regardless of immigration status, contribute to the tax base of the State of Minnesota through payment of sales taxes, income taxes, and other taxes and fees, and

WHEREAS, a 2015 report issued by the Minnesota State Demographer indicates that, but for the net immigration of international residents, the state of Minnesota would be experiencing a net population loss of 7,000 to 12,000 residents per year, and

WHEREAS, in an increasingly global economy, immigrants play an important role in enhancing the standing of Saint Paul as an international city through their distinct and significant contributions to the city's quality of cultural and creative capital and by strengthening the city's connections to international economic markets, and

WHEREAS, creating a welcoming environment for all immigrants in the City of Saint Paul, regardless of immigration status, plays a critical role in attracting immigrants to live, work, and conduct commerce within the City of Saint Paul and thereby accrue the associated economic, fiscal, and cultural benefits of their presence within the city, and

WHEREAS, the federal government is using increasingly aggressive and hostile tactics to arrest, detain, and deport immigrants who live and work within the City of Saint Paul, creating an environment of fear that is

detrimental to the social and economic health of the city; and

WHEREAS, in the absence of federal action to protect and facilitate the naturalization of immigrants whom, at great personal risk and expense, have come to live and work within the United States, including the City of Saint Paul, it falls to local governments to take action, and

WHEREAS, the Mayor of Saint Paul and the members of the Saint Paul City Council believe it to be in the best interest of the City of Saint Paul to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all residents of Saint Paul, regardless of immigration status; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the City Council supports the Mayor's action to direct \$100,000 in funds to be spent helping to keep families together and further protecting those that call Saint Paul home through the establishment of an Immigrant Legal Defense Fund, the purpose of which shall be to support immigrants who are residents of Saint Paul by providing financial support including but not limited to providing grants to support the work being done by community based organizations.