



Letter to Minnesota's Congressional Delegation

From the Representatives of the People of the Twin Cities honored with the 2026 John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award

July 22, 2026

To the Honorable Members of Minnesota's Congressional Delegation:

Dear Senator Klobuchar, Senator Smith, Representative Craig, Representative Emmer, Representative Fischbach, Representative Finstad, Representative McCollum, Representative Morrison, Representative Omar, and Representative Stauber:

We write to you as representatives of the People of the Twin Cities, who were honored this year with the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award. While four of us accepted this recognition on behalf of our communities, the award belongs to the thousands of Minnesotans who responded to one of the most extraordinary tests of constitutional democracy our state has faced in generations.

The award recognized the people of Minnesota for standing up for their neighbors during Operation Metro Surge, the largest federal deployment of immigration enforcement resources to any American city in modern history. It recognized faith leaders, educators, workers, business owners, students, parents, and ordinary residents who chose to defend fundamental values of dignity, due process, and equal protection under the law at a moment when many believed those values were under threat.

Today, we believe Minnesota once again finds itself at such a moment.

Across our state, particularly in Greater Minnesota and rural communities, federal immigration enforcement actions continue to separate families, disrupt workplaces, destabilize local economies, and undermine trust between residents and public institutions. Long-time Minnesota residents, asylum seekers pursuing lawful claims, students enrolled in our schools and colleges, workers who have spent years

contributing to their communities, and parents raising American children continue to face detention and deportation proceedings that leave entire families in crisis.

These policies have real, immediate consequences for the people you represent. They are students whose education is interrupted because a parent has disappeared into detention. They are children who return home from school unsure whether their mother or father will be there when they arrive. They are employers who lose valued workers overnight. They are faith communities forced to mobilize emergency support for families who suddenly lose income, transportation, housing stability, or access to childcare.

The human consequences of these enforcement practices extend far beyond the individuals directly arrested. Entire communities experience the trauma.

These concerns are heightened by the serious constitutional questions surrounding the enforcement practices employed during Operation Metro Surge. A federal court reviewing these operations found that plaintiffs had made a clear showing that immigration authorities likely engaged in unconstitutional practices, including stops based on race or ethnicity, stops conducted without reasonable suspicion of an immigration violation, and arrests made without probable cause. That finding should concern every member of Congress, regardless of political affiliation or views on immigration policy.

Reasonable people can disagree about how to secure the border, allocate visas, handle asylum reform, and provide pathways to citizenship. However, no democracy can sustain public confidence when government agents are perceived to be stopping individuals because of their race, ethnicity, language, or appearance. No democracy should tolerate arrests conducted without probable cause. No democracy should accept a system in which entire communities feel compelled to carry passports while grocery shopping because they fear being detained based solely on how they look. The constitutional rights at stake are not partisan rights. They are American rights.

We are particularly troubled that despite these unresolved constitutional concerns and ICE's ongoing use of lethal force, Congress continues to appropriate additional funding for the very agencies responsible for carrying out these operations. The Department of Homeland Security and its enforcement arms possess extraordinary authority. With that authority comes an obligation to operate within constitutional boundaries and to maintain public trust.

At present, that trust has been profoundly broken.

For that reason, we urge Minnesota's congressional delegation to join us and call for an end to violent and arbitrary ICE arrests that racially profile Minnesota residents. We urge the delegation to oppose any additional funding for DHS immigration enforcement expansion through potential future reconciliation legislation, fiscal year 2027 appropriations, or any other legislative vehicle until meaningful reforms and safeguards are implemented. Congress should not provide additional resources for enforcement operations that continue to lead to death and generate credible allegations of racial profiling, warrantless stops, use of lethal force, unlawful arrests, family separation, and violations of fundamental constitutional rights. We also urge Congress to hold oversight hearings on DHS's use of race, language, and appearance as a basis for stops and arrests and to request a GAO report on DHS's use of lethal force in enforcement operations.

This is not a call to abandon law enforcement. It is a call to insist that law enforcement operate within the Constitution. It is not a call for political symbolism. It is a call for accountability. This is a call rooted in the belief that public institutions are strongest when they are constrained by law, guided by principle, and accountable to the people they serve.

As recipients of an award named for political courage, we recognize that courage is rarely convenient. It often requires leaders to act before consensus emerges. It requires them to defend principles even when doing so may invite criticism. It requires a willingness to place constitutional values above political calculation.

That is what Minnesotans did during Operation Metro Surge. We respectfully urge you to demonstrate that courage now.

Sincerely,

Carolina Ortiz, Associate Executive Director of COPAL MN

Imam Yusuf Abdulle, Executive Director of Islamic Association of North America (IANA)

Natalie Ehret, Founder of Haven Watch

Zena Stenvik, Superintendent at Columbia Heights Public Schools

Representatives of the People of the Twin Cities

2026 John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award Recipients