



Protecting Immigrant  
Women and Girls  
Fleeing Violence

February 13, 2017

The Hon. Terry McAuliffe  
Governor of Virginia  
Office of the Governor  
Patrick Henry Building, Third Floor  
1111 E. Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

**RE: Protecting Immigrant Women's Access to Emergency Services**

The Tahirih Justice Center is a non-partisan national immigration legal services organization that assists women and girls fleeing human rights abuses. A large percentage of our clients reside in Virginia, with both our headquarters and our Greater DC office located in Falls Church. The women we serve survive unimaginable violence such as female genital cutting/mutilation, human trafficking, forced abortion, sexual assault, forced marriage, domestic violence, and honor crimes. On behalf of Tahirih, I write to express our gratitude for your willingness to defeat past legislation that would only perpetuate fear and discrimination against immigrants rather than promote public safety.

As you aware, the Trump administration intends to engage with State Governors and agencies to enter into "287(g)" agreements, pursuant to the January 25, 2017 Executive Order, "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States." Additionally, legislation recently proposed in the Virginia House and Senate would encourage entanglement of Virginia police with federal immigration enforcement, by prohibiting any so-called "sanctuary" policies and/or by penalizing localities that follow them.

In light of these developments, we urge you to decline any requests to sign 287(g) agreements between Virginia agencies and the federal government. These agreements often unwittingly empower and embolden dangerous criminals to further abuse victims with impunity, putting the safety of all Virginians at risk. In addition, we urge you to continue to reject legislation that would erode community trust of the police, and deter survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking from accessing critical, life-saving emergency services.

We applaud your consistent and courageous efforts to champion sound public policy over intimidation and hostility toward the most vulnerable among us. We stand ready to offer any assistance you might need in your work on this and related issues moving forward. Please feel free to contact me at 571-356-9493 or [archip@tahirih.org](mailto:archip@tahirih.org).

Sincerely,

Archi Pyati  
Director of Policy and Programs

Cc: The Honorable Mark Herring

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