



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.

Sincerely,

Archi Pyati
Director of Policy and Programs

Cc: The Honorable Mark Herring

Baltimore
201 N. Charles St.
Suite 920
Baltimore, MD 21201
Tel: 410-999-1900
Fax: 410-630-7539
Baltimore@tahirih.org

Greater DC | National
6402 Arlington Blvd.
Suite 300
Tel: 571-282-6161
Fax: 571-282-6162
TTY: 711
Falls Church, VA 22042
GreaterDC@tahirih.org
Justice@tahirih.org

Houston
1717 St. James Place
Suite 450
Houston, TX 77056
Tel: 713-496-0100
Fax: 713-481-1793
Houston@tahirih.org

San Francisco Bay Area
881 Sneath Lane
Suite 115
San Bruno, CA 94066
Tel: 650-270-2100
Fax: 650-466-0006
SFBayArea@tahirih.org

www.tahirih.org