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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

December 2nd, 2014

Director Grande H. Lum
Community Relations Service
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Director Lum:

I am writing to request Department of Justice (DOJ) Transgender Law Enforcement Training for the Minneapolis Police Department and the Hennepin County Sherriff's office. Officials at both bureaus recognize the importance of addressing these concerns and have expressed their support for the training. I urge your office to assist them in improving the relationship between the Minneapolis transgender community and local law enforcement.

Last month I had the opportunity to meet with transgender leaders in my district. Following a robust discussion, a consensus emerged that many transgender people are concerned by their interactions with law enforcement officials. Participants raised concerns about racism and transphobia in the community, discrimination by law enforcement, and policies like misgendering while in prison that endangers transgender inmates. The case of CeCe McDonald was cited as a salient example of how interactions with law enforcement have created fear in the transgender community. The injustice associated with Ms. McDonald's case illustrates the necessity for transgender law enforcement training in Minneapolis.

The transgender community faces pervasive discrimination around the country. The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs released a report that confirms what many in the transgender community know from firsthand experience: violence against the LGBT population has increased dramatically and transgender Americans suffer the highest proportion of violence.

Discrimination from law enforcement has become so common that many transgender victims are too afraid to report incidents of violence.¹

In March, the Community Relations Service announced it would begin offering Transgender Law Enforcement Training for bureaus across the country. This is a vital step towards making our transgender citizens safe in our communities. It is an important opportunity to build an environment of trust in our community. I encourage you to send a representative from the DOJ to meet with leaders in the Minneapolis transgender community to discuss the program and ways to foster trust.

I look forward to working with you, the LGBT community in Minnesota, and local law enforcement to make sure everyone in our communities feel safe—no matter their gender, race, or who they love.

Sincerely,



KEITH ELLISON
Member of Congress

¹ The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs Report. (2013). *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV Affected Intimate Partner Violence*.

http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/2013_ncavp_ipvreportfinalweb.pdf