Federal Public & Community Defenders

January 26, 2026

Joint Statement on behalf of Federal Public and Community Defenders

The federal public and community defenders release the statement below in response to ongoing violence and threats to the rule of law in Minnesota:

The recent developments in the Minneapolis area, including fatal shootings by federal immigration enforcement agents, have been horrific. Over the past several weeks, federal immigration enforcement operations in Minnesota have resulted in the deaths of at least two people, sparking widespread outrage, demonstrations, and conflicting accounts over what occurred on the ground.

As federal public and community defenders, we proudly represent the overwhelming majority of individuals charged with crimes in federal court. Our nonpartisan work is rooted in the foundational principles of due process and equal protection under the law. These constitutional protections are universal—they extend to every person, no matter the charges they face. That is why our commitment to our clients, whether charged with immigration offenses, speech offenses, or allegations of serious violence, will never waver. We stand in solidarity with those who are lawfully asserting their Fourth Amendment constitutional rights to be free from unlawful seizures and racial profiling, and their First Amendment rights to free speech and peaceful assembly.

What we are witnessing on the streets of Minneapolis, and in other cities across the country, shocks the conscience. Violent encounters involving federal agents, needless civilian deaths, unwarranted use of chemical agents, arrests of innocent children and journalists, and the denial of access to counsel are antithetical to our legal system and our fundamental constitutional rights.

We are also profoundly concerned about reports of unlawful entry into homes, excessive use of force, and the targeting or detention of community members, including U.S. citizens, without probable cause.

Respect for human life, civil liberties, the right to counsel, and due process are each essential to our American way of life. We call on all federal immigration officials to immediately de-escalate tensions, fully cooperate with independent and transparent investigations, and recommit to the rule of law.

Defender Representatives to the Defender Services Advisory Group

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