

May 3, 2024

To: Leaders of the Executive and Legislative Branches of Minnesota State Government
Re: Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act
(HF912/Agbaje and SF716/Champion)

We urge you to prioritize, pass, and sign the African American Family Preservation Act or AAFPA (HF912/SF716) into law during the 2024 Minnesota Legislative Session. Child welfare disparities harm impacted children and families. Minnesota must address child welfare disproportionality very directly as a matter of civil rights and good government.

The AAFPA had six successful committee hearings this year. The empirical data and public testimonies presented at these hearings demonstrate the breadth and depth of failures that lead to Black overrepresentation in child protection. The hearings also show that support for the AAFPA (as a step toward systemic change) is bipartisan, cross-cultural, and statewide¹. We thank the bill authors, committee chairs and members, partner organizations, and constituent supporters for their leadership in the bill's movement through the legislative process.

Now, state leaders in the executive and legislative branches must act to ensure that Minnesota passes the AAFPA before the end of the 2024 Session. The AAFPA is included as Article 16 of the Senate Health and Human Services Omnibus Supplementary Budget Bill ([SF4699/Wiklund Second Engrossment, May 2, 2024](#)). We commend this inclusion and recommend the following:

- 1) Pass the full AAFPA bill language that the bill authors, Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, and community partners have supported this year. See sections 1-20 of Article 16 of SF4699/Wiklund Second Engrossment.
- 2) Ensure that African American community organizations and impacted families are represented in the composition and proceedings of the AAFPA Working Group. Add clarifying language to section 21 of Article 16 of SF4699/Wiklund Second Engrossment.
- 3) Provide adequate state finance (at least \$14.3M) for full and effective administration of the AAFPA, including funding for the AAFPA state pilot in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, AAFPA state grant program, and staffing of the DHS African American Child Well-Being Unit.

Respectfully,

Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
Village Arms
NAACP Minneapolis
NAACP St. Paul

Black Maternal Health Legislative Caucus
United Black Legislative Caucus
Stairstep Foundation
Black Civic Network

¹ The AAFPA was passed as a stand-alone bill by Senate Health and Human Services HHS, House Children and Families, Senate Judiciary, and House Judiciary. The bill received its fifth and sixth reviews when it was incorporated in the Senate HHS Omnibus Budget that was passed by Senate HHS and Senate Finance. See comments, letters, and testimonies at the hearings for showcase of the bill's bipartisan, cross-cultural, multi-sector, and statewide support.

African American Leadership Forum
Ujima Renewed
West African Collaborative
Family Refuge Village
Sierra Leone Community in Minnesota
Gambian Association of Minnesota
Minnesota Institute of Nigerian Development
Bethel University Dept. of Social Work

East Metro Civic Alliance
MN DHS Cultural & Ethnic Communities
Leadership Council (CECLC)
MJCF: The Coalition
National Coalition for Child Protection Reform
Parental Rights Foundation
Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families,
Children, and the Courts (CFCC)