

PILLSBURY UNITED COMMUNITIES

February 9, 2022

Letter of Support

Dear Chair Richardson and House Education Policy Committee Members,

On behalf of Pillsbury United Communities, we write to express strong support for HF3079, which aims to strengthen the Increase Teachers of Color Act and seek to increase the percentage of teachers of color and American Indian teachers (TOCAIT) in Minnesota.

Studies consistently demonstrate that students learn best when they are taught by educators who understand their communities. Licensed teachers who reflect the lived experience of the students in their classroom contribute to a much-needed supportive learning environment that maintains high expectations. Moreover, a critical provision within HF3079 would require districts to have plans to ensure that curriculum is “rigorous, accurate, anti-racist, and culturally sustaining” and that learning and work environments “validate, embrace, affirm, and integrate the cultural and community strengths for all students, families, and employees.”

Our state continues to grow increasingly racially and ethnically diverse, yet our K12 education workforce has not similarly evolved. Additionally, the needs of our students of color and indigenous students are not being met. While historic funding was appropriated last year for various TOCAIT programs, the legislature has not provided nearly enough support in policy changes to intentionally support the recruitment, training and retention of licensed teachers of color and American Indian teachers, which is why we see an urgent need to pass HF3079.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this important effort to increase teachers of color and American Indian teachers in our state through HF3079.

Sincerely,

Adair Mosley | President & CEO | Pillsbury United Communities

Kenzie O’Keefe | Director of Policy | Pillsbury United Communities

Samantha Diaz | Director of Office of Public Charter Schools | Pillsbury United Communities